

THE TREE & THE TAROT

REDISCOVERING THE SEFER YETZIRAH - BOOK 1

**ERRATUM FOR MISMATCHED TITLES
ON THE LIMITED FIRST EDITION.**

This last verse, about the positions of the spheres, tells us to cycle the three letters YHV into six positions. Each position requires a unique order of the letters. They are required to move and shuffle their order; they are not stationary.

22 ARCHETYPES OF SPACE AND SOUL

By examining the earliest Tarot decks, we discover that many of the cards express pagan deities. If we trace these deities back through time, we can see that as far back as the Bronze Age, these gods and goddesses represented the divinity of time, space, and Soul. They represented:

- Time: the 12 months, 7 days, and 3 temperatures of the seasons.
- Space: the 12 constellations, the 7 planets, the 3 pairs of elements, breath, and heaven.
- Soul: good, neutral, and evil. 7 virtues - vices, and 12 directors.



Greco-Roman mythology was adopted and adapted from the antique cultures of the Fertile Crescent. Take, for example, a Goddess like Inanna, who represents

- Space: Venus, the planet,
- Soul: Fertility and barrenness,
- Time: One of the seven days of the week. She eventually became Veneris, which is Latin for the French Vendredi or Friday in English.

We can watch the goddess morph through time and across cultures from Inanna to Ishtar to Al-Uzza to Astarte to Aphrodite and back to Venus, represented in the earliest Tarot decks as The Star card.

The esoteric Sefer Yetzirah also shows this divine attribution of Time, Space, and Soul. For example, the letter Peh represents

- Space: Venus
- Time: a day of the week
- Soul: Fertility and barrenness.

In the Tarot, the Star card is

- Space: Venus
- Soul: Fertility-Barrenness, Love -Conceit.

These parallel attributions found in both the Tarot and the mystic letters speak to a shared philosophy that has roots in the Bronze Age Near East.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

The Tarot and the Tree attribute positive and negative aspects to the archetypes. In the same way that we shuffle the Tarot cards to read them upside down or right side up, the Sefer Yetzirah asks us to cycle the letters, turning them negative in the lower parts of the Tree and positive on the top of the Tree.

The letter paths are fixed positions with specific attributes. The letters cycle through the paths, and the path they take brings out their positive or negative character. All words in the Sefer Yetzirah used to describe how the Tree looks and functions are made up of exactly three letters. My book *The Tree and the Cycle* shows you the different ways to spell them on the Tree.

The Tree is divided into four exterior positions of



FIGURE - 33 *The Star* representing Venus and her eight pointed Star. From the 15th century Visconti-Sforza Tarot.

FIGURE - 34 Albrecht Dürer - Prudence Tarot card, 1495

extremity, stability, joy, and advice, spelled out in Simple letters. There are also four central opposing positions of life, death, love, and hate spelled out by the Double letters. When these letters spell out the four central positions, their corresponding body parts, such as the 2 eyes, 2 nostrils, 2 ears, and 1 mouth, make up the face of the Universal One. These positions affect the positive and negative characters of the letters.

In the diagram below, the Double letter positions are identified by their color: Life-givers-green, Lovers-blue-blue, Killers-red, and Haters-Yellow. Each color has three positions, including four Simple positions, which are above and below.

In this way, when the letter Gimel is on top of the Tree, she is loving Peace, and when she is at the bottom of the Tree, she is deathly evil. In the same way, when we pull the corresponding Justice card upright from the Tarot, it expresses the peace-giving



The center of the Tree, divided by Love/Hate, Life/Death

solutions of Justice; reversed, it portrays the deathly evil of Justice not working from a loving foundation.

SHUFFLE OR CYCLE THE ARCHETYPES

Twenty-two foundation letters. They are set in the cycle, sphere, or wheel in 231 Gates. The cycle rotates back and forth.²

Like the Tarot cards, the letters must be shuffled to give us different archetypal experiences. The Kabbalist Tree is a stagnant two-dimensional Tree. This differs from the Sefer Yetzirah, which asks us to cycle the letters within a three-dimensional structure.

On the Tree, the 22 letters make up the core archetypes that, when combined, create a word expressing our experience of life. In the same way, there are only 22 Trump cards, but by mixing them together in a spread, we mirror back the experience in our lives.

ONE BEING IN A DREAM OF MULTIPLICITY

Chapter 5 Long Version
One over three, three over seven, seven over twelve. All of them are attached one to the other. And a sign for this is the twenty-two objects and one body.

In the Sefer Yetzirah, we are told that there is just one being with one body made up of twenty-two letters.

[2] Sefer Yetzirah: Saadia Lambert, LV 1562, & LV Vatican: wheel, Saadia Kaplan: sphere, LV Kaplan: cycle / most versions chapter 2.

Each letter represents an aspect of Time, Space, and Soul, making one omnipresent body with “one soul for all that has ever been and all that will ever be.”

If indeed I am one being in a dream of multiplicity, it is logical that I would need mystery. If I am aware that I am every here, every there, every you, and every me, then there is no longer discovery. Why read a book when I am every beginning, every end, every plot, every character? I need my eyes to be blindfolded in mystery so that I can discover and have experience. I need to be the Fool in a hall of mirrors. On this journey of formation of learning, I face myself over and over again in all my possible states. I am the Emperor, Empress, Hanged Man, and the Devil. I am every letter that makes up the Universal Tree or Body.

In 1960, author Eden Gray said that the Fool “must pass through the experiences suggested in the remaining 21 cards, to reach in card 21 the climax of cosmic consciousness or Divine Wisdom.”

In 1982, she coined the term “Fool’s Journey” in her book A Complete Guide to the Tarot. She explained: “The Fool represents the Soul of everyman, which, after it is clothed in a body, appears on earth and goes through the life experiences depicted in the 21 cards of the Major Arcana, sometimes thought of as archetypes of the subconscious. Let each reader use his imagination and find here his own map of the Soul’s quest, for these are symbols that are deep within each one of us.”³

[3] Greer 2008

CONCLUSION

Even though we lack the documentation to prove it, the system of the Sefer Yetzirah strongly parallels the Tarot. It is not an exact match because we are looking at the system through the lens of Renaissance Europeans who are using Christian or Pagan symbols to express the archetypes. As we saw, the Sefer Yetzirah was popular among scholars at the time that the Tarot emerged. Kabbalism attracted Christian and Islamic mystics, reuniting the three paths of Abraham, the supposed author of this 10-15 page ancient text. For the Renaissance mystic, the Sefer Yetzirah worked with their syncretic Worldview, which is seen in the Tarot.

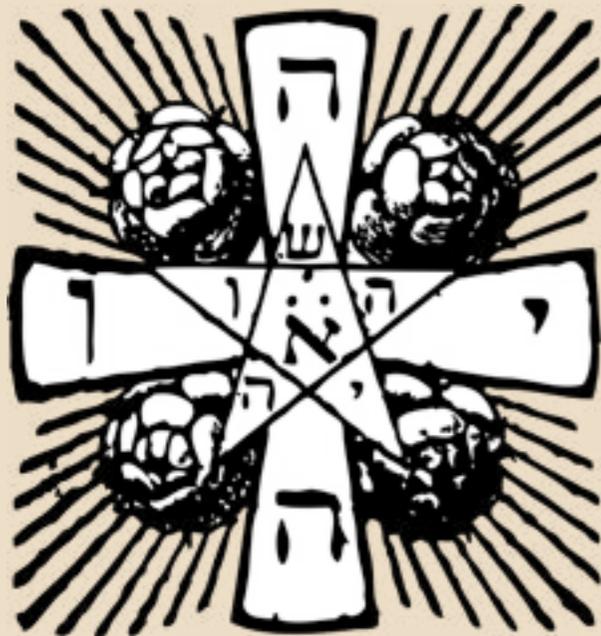
I offer a new association based on the original system from the Sefer Yetzirah. The deck I created is also not a pure Sefer Yetzirah Tarot deck. If it were, I would use only the text’s archetypes to describe the trumps. My system uses the most potent Tarot symbols or modern egregores, read through the Sefer Yetzirah structure.



FIGURE - 35 Knave of Nooses, 15th-century

THE TETRAGRAMMATON AND THE TAROT

APPLYING YHVH TO THE TAROT



The first to describe the Tarot cards with the Tetragrammaton was 19th-century French writer Levi in his book *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*. However, it was the later Papus who really broke it down in his book *Tarot of the Bohemians*, asserting that the Tarot was both generated by it and to be understood by it.

“The authors who have philosophically studied the Tarot are all unanimous in asserting the analogy that exists between the Tetragrammaton and the four colors. (the minor suits) Guillaume Postel, and above all, Eliphas Levi, have developed these studies with great results, and they show us the four letters of the Tetragrammaton applied in the symbolism of every cultus.”

Papus, like Agrippa before him, believed that adding the second Heh created a transition from the spiritual world to the physical world. He emphasized that the sacred name is constructed of three letters only with a transformative Heh.

“This second Heh represents the complete Being, comprising in one Absolute Unity the three letters which compose it: Ego, Non-Ego, Affinity. It indicates the passage from the noumenal to the phenomenal or reciprocal; it serves as a means of ascension from one scale to another.”

[1] Papus 1889 a, pp.31-32
[2] Papus 1889 a, p.13

The Tetragrammaton is the four-letter name of the Hebrew God: YHVH or Yod, Heh, Vav, Heh. It is articulated as Yahweh or Jehovah. In the last few centuries, the name has had a central place in decoding the Tarot, so I think it is worth looking at.

In the Hebrew Zohar, the four letters of the Tetragrammaton refer to the figures of father, mother, son, and daughter. The 16th-century Christian Qabbalist Postel and the 19th-century Michelangelo Lanci recognized this, but the idea that God’s name included the female gender sent ripples of fear through communities of God-fearing people.

FIGURE - 36 This Rosycross-Tetragrammaton from 1888 has each of the Hebrew letters YHVH, יהוה in each of the arms of the cross. Occultists added Shin to the name, making it YHVShH for Yeshua or Jesus. This can be seen in the central Pentagram.

Papus broke it down like this:

- Yod: The active principle pre-eminent. The Ego
- He: The passive principle pre-eminent. The Non-Ego
- Vau: The Median letter, the link, which unites the active to the passive. The Affinity between the Ego and the Non-Ego.
- These three letters express the Trinitarian law of the Absolute.
- The second, He marks the passage from one world to another. The Transition.

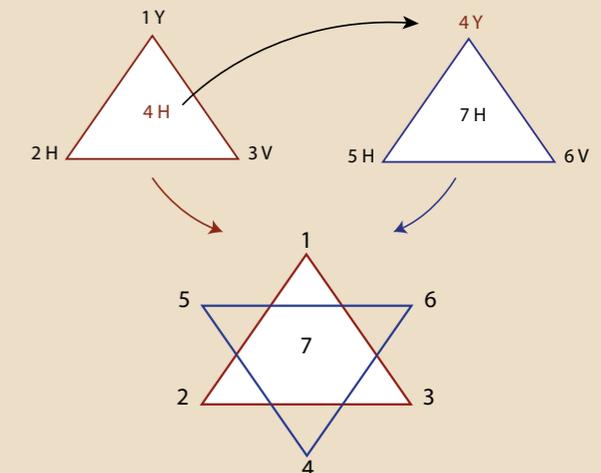
The Four Worlds

Kabbalists describe our evolution from Spirit to Soul to a material body by a series of Worlds called the “Seder hishtalshelus,” meaning the order of development. Within this order are four perceptible worlds that were interpreted and used by the Qabbalist occult. Papus associated the Tetragrammaton with these four worlds of the Kabbalah. His associations did not exactly match, as can be seen below:

Papus	Traditional
Y-Spirit Archetypal world	Atzilut/h - eternal, unchanging Divine world
H -Soul, Creative	Briah -“Heaven” or duality
V - Astral body Formative	Yetzirah - Formation, abode of souls and lower angels
H - Physical Material	Assiah - Action. The corporal world of time.

Papus’ entire system of understanding the Tarot was based on applying the Tetragrammaton to a system of 3,4 and 7.

The 3-4 point system uses a triangular formation called a ternary, which associates YHV to each of the three points and the second H to the center. For example, when Papus associated the numbered pips, he started with 1,2,3 and placed each consecutive number on the triangle’s points corresponding to the order YHV. The 4th number was put in the center as the final Heh. Because 4 was the cumulative result of the first three and a symbol of transition, it started the second pyramid as Yod. This new ternary had 4 at the top, followed by 5 and 6 at the other points, and then 7 in the middle as the second Heh.



This system creates ternaries for:

- The 4 court cards which make 1 ternary with the last knave or page as the transition between the court cards and the numbered pips.
- The ten numbers of the pips make 3 ternaries, with the 10 as the final Heh in the last ternary. It becomes the transition between the pips and the 21 trumps.
- The Major Arcana removes the Fool and creates 3 x 7 ternaries or 21 cards. Each of the three groups corresponds to a world of either Divinity, Man, or Nature. This gave the Fool three ways to experience the 21 cards.

If I were to paint a true Sefer Yetzirah deck, the Knights would be female, and the Pages would be male. The Magician would be female, and the World card would have the awakened Fool in the center of the four creatures. However, the story of the Tarot prompts us to look at the phenomenal world as a mirror of the Soul.

In the Sefer Yetzirah, the three pairs of Mother-Fathers in the Soul have equal influence on men and women. Also, the other 19 female letters and their masculine manifestations have equal influence on both genders. Pairs of both males and females make up the name YHVH and its manifested attributes. This double-gender pair is thus an Elohim. The question is, which gender do we start within the phenomenal world?

In the Tarot, the phenomenal world is ruled by the masculine Emperor and Heirophant, whereas their female spouses rule the Soul. This idea is logical even through the lens of the Sefer Yetzirah. The Mothers rule the world of consciousness because they are consciousness, and the Fathers rule the world of the material because they are life. Therefore, seeing their roles reversed in the mirror would put

- Air: Father
- Mother: Water
- Son: Fire
- Daughter: Earth

This idea of the mirror sits well with me. It creates a balance between the two genders and supports all the ancient alchemical and astrological associations, so I use it.

The Simple letters, YHV, have had centuries of interpretation culminating in a system used to understand the Tarot. The idea that the Tarot is built in a system of threes and sevens sits well with me.

TIME OR WHEEL Y, THE EMPEROR H, THE POPE V

For a long time, I thought the Empress and the Emperor were a pair. They are, but not in the way I initially thought. Through my research on these associations, I realized that in the earliest decks, the Empress and the High Priestess had to be together in the same pair, or the order of the following pairs would be upset. Having the two wives together in the Soul and the two spouses outside the Soul, in the phenomenal world, is actually closer to the Sefer Yetzirah's philosophy. This is because the female letters emanate the phenomenal world that is outside the Soul. This is the world of the Living God - the material plane. Empress Mem created the earth and the third dimension, a structure for life. The Emperor is that life. The Emperor is not in the inner sanctum of the Soul with the primordial creators, but rather, he exists in the outer rings of Life's experience as the leading god of structure and order. Therefore, his association with the Empress is not in the pair HV but rather in the fact that he is her emanation.

In all early orders, the Emperor is typically the fourth card, and the Pope is always the fifth card. HV is the first pair of Simple letters in both the Sefer Yetzirah order and the Hebrew alphabetical order. Therefore, if H is the Emperor, V is the Pope. This association of HV is also seen in the Golden Dawn decks. Like the Emperor, the Pope is a leader in life, but in his case, he transmits Wisdom from his wife, the Papess, who guards the gate of the inner sanctum. Emperor H and Pope V make up the divine pair in the name YHV.

The Noblat order associates Y, which means movement in the Sefer Yetzirah, with the Wheel. The Dick sheets associate it with Time-the Hermit. Both choices involve movement, which is the meaning of Yod.

Seen through the lens of the Tarot, the name reads:

- Y - Wheel/Time,
- H - Structure,
- V - Wisdom.

Structure and Wisdom in the Cycle of Time.

With the Sefer Yetzirah, the three are:

- Y - movement
- H - seeing
- V - hearing.

Seeing and hearing in movement.

Including Y, all three letters are Simple letters existing in the phenomenal world of experience. They are not in the Soul with the creators. They are, however, important letters. The simple letters are the directors of the experience.

CONCLUSION

In the 1960s, Eden Gray coined the term 'The Fool's Journey,' which explained how all the 21 trumps were archetypes for the Fool to experience on his journey back to Source. This works well with the idea of the Sefer Yetzirah. Despite originating in the Soul, the Fool experiences life in the phenomenal world. This world is made up of 12 letters called the directors. They represent the senses, movement, laughter, and other tools needed to direct the experience of virtue and vice, as seen in the 7 Double letters. Only once the Fool has completed the 21-card journey can he go back to Source to start a new journey.

Today's collective view of each card or our egregore is intertwined with all the layers of Tarot history. The same history that changed, adapted, discredited, renewed, reviewed, and redesigned the symbolism of each card for almost 600 years.

The objectives of my research and this book were to find its most traditional viewpoint, recognize the original Sefer Yetzirah, and meld both with the contemporary egregore.



FIGURE - 37 Visconti-Sforza Tarot Wheel of Fortune

IV - THE CARDS EXPLAINED



FIGURE - 38 "Cary Sheets" - paper print, 1500

THE MAJORS ARCANAS DETAILED

Unlike the minor arcana, which mirrors our experience in relationships and work, the trumps reflect the underlying spiritual meaning of our experience. They reflect the voyage of our Soul. They have also been called the great mysteries or the greater arcana.

Each trump has a list of attributes that briefly describe its association with its Hebrew letter and its place in Time, Space, and Soul. The following points clarify some of the more unfamiliar categories that I use:

Letter: Each of the Hebrew letters, like the Tarot cards, symbolizes an archetype. In this section, the corresponding letter and its attributes in the Soul are listed.

Paired with: Each letter except for the Mother letters is paired with another letter. For example, the Double letters Gimel and Daleth are paired. They are paired as two planets, Jupiter and Mars; they are paired as two soul characteristics, Peace and Wisdom, and they are paired as body parts: left eye and right eye. The corresponding Tarot pairs are especially auspicious if they show up in a reading.

Opposite: This section only applies to the 6 Simple letter pairs that represent the 12 constellations. On the Sefer Yetzirah Tree, these pairs are on the three outer rings of the Cyclical Tree. Each ring has two pairs facing each other with the correct zodiacal correspondences. Due to space, these are not listed here but can be found in the section The 12 Constellations in Tree and Tarot.

Space: This indicates the card as either the 3 elements, 7 planets, or 12 constellations.

Universal Body: Each letter makes up the body of the Universal One, and this section describes which body part it is and what it is paired with.

Time: This section describes the card's association with the Hebrew month and the corresponding month from our Gregorian calendar.

My description: This includes the traditional, Qabbalist, and Sefer Yetzirah viewpoints. To help you identify the main influencers on contemporary Tarot, their names, and the decks that they created, there is a Lexicon at the end of the book.

Collective egregore:

We have hundreds of descriptions of these cards today. I was curious how our collective consciousness would describe each of the cards. The biggest possible database of all the diverse opinions is, of course, AI. I therefore asked AI to give me a description of each card, which I summarize in this section.



FIGURE - 39 Knave of Tethers, 15th-century

THE MINOR ARCANA

HISTORY

Unlike the major arcana, which deals with the big mysteries of the Soul's voyage, the minor arcana is often called the lesser mysteries. These lessons deal with our everyday issues with other people and our work. The pips reflect on how the ten spheres of the Tree affect emotions, intellect, actions, and materialization. They mirror back our activities in daily life rather than the underlying spiritual flow seen in the trumps.

Finding the original meaning of the non-representational pip cards is more complicated than that of the pictorial trumps. The 15th-century Sola Busca illustrated them, but they did not use the same symbols we see in the Tarot today. Only in the late 18th century did Eteilla make the first minor arcana with added symbolism. Pamela Colman Smith was the first artist to fully illustrate them in the RWS deck.

Gébelin

Our first real reference to the four suits is in 1787 from Gébelin. He said that the four suits were related to the four states of the Egyptians:

1. The Sword represented the Sovereign and the entire Military Nobility.
2. The Cup, the Clergy, or the Priesthood.
3. The Wand, or Hercules' Club, symbolized

FIGURE - 40

Visconti-Sforza Tarot, Ace of Staves, 15th-century

Agriculture.

4. The Coin, Commerce of which money is the sign.¹

Levi switched the order of the suits we just saw with Gébelin. He set the wheels in motion for how later occultists would understand the minor arcana. He associated the 4 letters YHVH of the Tetragrammaton with the four suits and switched the leading suit from those of Swords to those of the Wands. In his book on Transcendental Magic, he explains:

"... the Club is the Egyptian Phallus or Hebrew Yod; the Cup is the cteis² or primitive Heh; the Sword is the conjunction of both, or the lingam, represented in Hebrew preceding the captivity by Vau; while the Circle or Pentacle, image of the world, is the Heh final of the Divine Name."³

Levi associated the Ace to ten of the minor arcana with the ten spheres. This became the standard way to define each card ever after, including my own associations. The difference is, of course, that he used the Kabbalist Tree, and I refer to the Sefer

Yetzirah directly. Here is his association:

[1] Gébelin 1787 p.20

[2] The Cteis was a circular and concave pedestal, or receptacle, on which the Phallus rested. It was the Greek version of the Yoni-Lingam and used in Freemasonry.

[3] Levi 1854 b, p.78

FIGURE - 41

Visconti-Sforza Tarot, 10 of Swords, 15th-century

1 KETHER.

The four Aces.

Four brilliant beams adorn His crown of flame.

2 CHOKMAH.

The four Twos.

Four rivers ever from His wisdom flow.

3 BINAH.

The four ⁴Threes.

Four proofs of His intelligence we know.

4 CHESED.

The four Fours.

Four benefactions from His mercy come.

5 GEBURAH.

The four Fives.

Four times, four sins avenged His justice sum.

6 TIPHERETH.

The four Sixes.

Four rays unclouded make His beauty known.

7 NETSAH.

The four Sevens.

Four times His conquest shall in song be shown.

8 HOD.

The four Eights.

Four times, He triumphs on the timeless plane.

9 YESOD.

The four Nines.

Foundations four His great white throne maintain.

10 MALKUTH.

The four Tens.

One fourfold kingdom owns His endless sway, As from His crown there streams a fourfold ray.⁵

[4] Note the use of He as God in Kether. If this is the state before division the deity should be asexual.

[5] Levi 1854 E, p.79

Papus

In *The Tarot of the Bohemians*, Papus developed his predecessor's system of relating the four suits with the four letters of the Tetragrammaton YHVH.

He explained⁶:

Y: The Sceptre (wands): the Active or the Male principle.

H: The Cup: the Passive or Feminine principle.

V: The Sword: the union of the two by its crucial form.

H: Lastly, the Pentacles: the second He.

He saw them representing:

- The Sceptre (Wands): Enterprise and Glory
- The Cup: Love and Happiness
- The Sword: Hatred and Misfortune
- The Pentacle: Money and Interest⁷

This order became the predominant order and created the negative view of the Swords, which the Golden Dawn adopted. There were contradictions in their system because:

- They made the suit of Swords one of suffering despite its overall unifying principle.
- They associated Air with Aleph, the first letter in the aleph-bet, implying that it should come first.
- Crowley, when defining the Ace of

Disks, said that this card of material manifestation "is the twin sister of Air and its bride."⁸ Qabalists use the axiom Kether (The crown sphere) in Malkuth (the last sphere) to express the union of Spirit-Air with Materiality-Earth. The idea is not a

[6] Papus 1889 E p.31

[7] Papus 1889 E p.233

[8] Crowley b 1944, p.30

marriage of Fire with Earth.

Because Air is created before Fire in the Sefer Yetzirah, I agree with the first description from Gébelin that the airy Swords lead the four suits. I do not at all see it as military but rather, as the Sefer Yetzirah, Pythagoreans, and occultists see it: as mind.

Papus also associated the minor arcana with the 36 astrological decans⁹ of the year. As if this wasn't enough to describe each card, he also created a separate system (within the same book) of attributions for the Ace to 10, which applied to each suit. It was a yoyo of successive successes and failures, victories and oppositions. However, the definitions of the cards contradicted his other systems. For instance:

- While seven is considered a sacred number in his system, he always associated the sevens with only 'partial success.'
- His fives are victorious despite being associated with Gevurah (Severity)
- His sixes create failure despite being associated with Tipareth (Beauty)
- The numerology of the five and six resemble the Sefer Yetzirah rather than the Kabbalist Tree.

The multitude of systems Papus used to define each card made his final descriptions conflicting and confusing. I ended up taking almost all of them out of my historical definitions of each card.

Golden Dawn

The Golden Dawn was definitely influenced by Papus, but their attributions came primarily from associating the numerical pips with the numerical spheres of the Kabbalist Tree, as Levi did. Like with Papus, their astrological assignments usually contradict and

[9] In astrology, a decan is the subdivision of a constellation into roughly three parts. Each part is influenced by a planet.

override the Kabbalist association. This can be seen in the historical definitions I give to each card.

The Kabbalist Tree had not been created when the early Renaissance authors created the first Tarot decks. They most likely drew their numerology directly from the Sefer Yetzirah and, or from the mystical numerology of the Pythagoreans. Let us take a look at that system.

PYTHAGOREAN NUMBERS

The 10 numbers, as seen by the Greek Pythagoras (c. 570 – c. 495 BC), influenced the magic of the early Hermetics. The numerology is very similar to that of the Sefer Yetzirah, and it was most likely a strong influence in the numerology of the pips. I, therefore, include this system in my interpretation of the minor arcana.

Numbers to the Pythagoreans were sacred, as can be seen in this prayer:

*“Bless us, divine number, thou who generated gods and men! O holy, holy Tetractys, thou that containest the root and source of the eternally flowing creation! For the divine number begins with the profound, pure unity until it comes to the holy four; then it begets the mother of all, the all-comprising, all-bounding, the first-born, the never-swerving, the never-tiring holy ten, the keyholder of all.”*¹⁰

In this Pythagorean prayer, the number four is said to be the mother of the ten. This is expressed in the symbol of the Tetractys, seen here. To understand it and make one, take the four numbers and represent them by dots corresponding to their value: e.g., 1 dot on the top row, 2 dots on the second row, 3 dots on

[10] Extracted from T. Dantzig 1930 p.42

the third row, and 4 dots on the fourth row. This will create 10 dots, or a decad, in one triangular shape called the Tetractys. This is because 1+2+3+4=10. Thus, “*the holy four; then it begets the mother of all.*”

The 10 makes up the body of the One or the final Heh in YHWH. The first four numbers are explained as:

1. Monad – Unity - Source of all numbers
2. Dyad – Reflection and Polarity
3. Triad – The Spirit - Harmony, Understanding
4. Tetrad – Kosmos or physical world - stability and structure

Each number has a sacred meaning, but the four, like the Tetragrammaton, are the foundational system. The other six numbers are explained throughout this chapter.

The Pythagorean concept of the four first numbers is in sync with the first four letters in the cosmogony of the Sefer Yetzirah:

1. Monad – Unity - Source of all numbers - **Aleph**
2. Dyad – Reflection and Polarity - **Bet**
3. Triad – The Spirit - Harmony, Understanding - **Mem**
4. Tetrad – Kosmos or physical world - stability and structure - **Shin**, who is the product of the first three, is a unique soul.

THE WAY I SEE IT

These different systems used for defining the minor arcana are all valid and interesting to me.

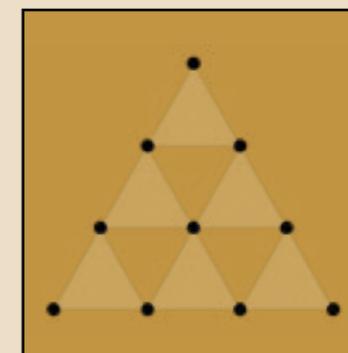
As I explained in the chapter on the Tetragrammaton, I find the system of applying the four letters to the Tarot logical. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I see the four suits starting with the Swords because of their nature as air.

I use Gébelin's system of attributing each numbered pip to the ten spheres of the Tree. In my case, rather than referring to the Kabbalist Tree, I use the Sefer Yetzirah directly, as well as the Pythagorean numbering system.

The four tools of the Magician, intellect, emotion, action, and manifestation, are affected by the numerology of the ten spheres. For example, 2 is the sphere of polarity, so the Cups/emotions will experience it as a connection.

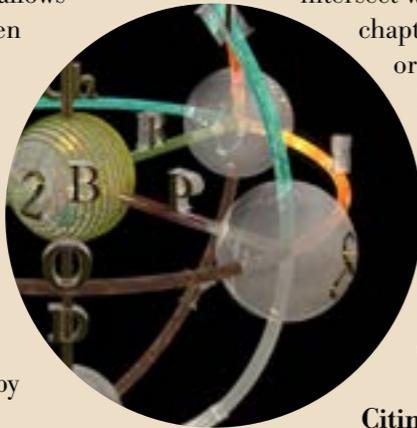
In contrast, the Swords/intellect will experience it as communication, the Wands as cooperation, and the Pentacles as balance.

In the Kabbalist Tree, the meaning of each sphere is defined by the letters that intersect in it. In the Sefer Yetzirah, we are told that the spheres are belimah, meaning Nothingness. This is because the letters revolving through them are always changing, and the sphere needs to reflect this change rather than represent only one of the words being spelled in it. The letters on the Cyclical Tree are not stationary as in the Kabbalist Tree and, therefore, cannot define the sphere. However, they do have stationary positions for the letters. Each one of these positions has a meaning and affects the letters that land in it. For example, the



sixth sphere has the path of killers running through it, and the 5th sphere has the path of Lovers running through it. These stationary positions for the cycling letters do affect the nature of the sphere.

- Each sphere in the phenomenal world (outside of the Soul) has four Simple letter paths and one Double letter path running through it.
- Each of the outer spheres is connected to the center by a Double letter. In the diagram below, we can see the letter P connects Sphere 8 to the central Sphere 2.
- There are also two rings of Simple letters which intersect in Sphere 8. **Each** ring allows two letters to intersect in any given sphere. Thus, there are 4 Simple letter paths in each outer sphere.
- In this diagram, the four Simple letters are represented by their elemental value. Besides the earthy O (far left), we have one watery letter (above), one firey letter (right), and one airy letter from below, which intersect in Sphere 8. Each letter is affected by the path they are in.



Sefer Yetzirah.

The form of the Kabbalist Tree is two-dimensional, with the center of beauty being Tipareth, Sphere 6, and the sphere of severity and guilt being Gevurah, Sphere 5. As we saw in the sections on Ten Numbers, the structure of the Sefer Yetzirah's Cyclical Tree is built around you and me in a three-dimensional form. Sphere 5 is the highest in the world of experience, and sphere 6 is the lowest.

In the Sepher Yetzirah, the letters cycle through the spheres and are affected by the fixed paths that intersect within them. In the example of ONG in chapter 2 of the Sefer Yetzirah, the letter Ayin-O or laughter helps spell the three-letter word Delight when it is in the highest sphere 5, but it turns to sadness in the lowest sphere 6 in order to spell the three letter word: plague or punishment (depending on the translation). **The Sefer Yetzirah attribution makes my fives positive and my sixes negative in contrast to the Golden Dawn decks.**

Citing Other Decks

We only have written definitions of the pips since the 19th century, and the earliest ones from Papus are too conflicting to understand his final opinion on the subject. Oscar Wirth did not include pips in his deck, leaving me with the four authors of the classic Golden Dawn decks to cite. Unless indicated, all their definitions of the pips that I refer to come from these books:

- MacGregor Mathers and Harriet Felkin: Book T - The Tarot, 1888
- A.E. Waite, The Pictorial Key to the Tarot, 1910

I use the meaning of the five letter paths, along with Pythagorean numerology, as a guide for each pip's numerical interpretation.

This numerology is not always in sync with the later occultists from the 18th century who used the Kabbalist Tree to interpret the letters and numbers. By not following the Sefer Yetzirah, they developed a system that sometimes contradicts the original system. The biggest difference that affected the Golden Dawn's minor arcana is that the 5th and 6th spheres are inverted in the Kabbalist Tree vis a vis those of the

- Paul Foster Case: Oracle of the Tarot, 1933
- Aleister Crowley: Book of Thoth, 1944

The Sefer Yetzirah keeps its definitions simple. One problem with contemporary Tarot is that there is often so much about one card that it makes it easy to cherry-pick what we want to read. Mathers and Crowley give titles to their cards, which help us understand their core meaning. Case does the same thing with a 'Keyword.' However, Waite gives no singular definition,

and his sense of the cards is lost in his descriptives. I, therefore, only add the common meaning he has with the others. This may mean disregarding certain aspects that he believed were more essential. To fully grasp an author's perspective on a card, it is necessary to study their system.

The numbered pips that I created for the Dreams & Divinities Tarot are inspired by the early Tarot decks.



FIGURE - 42



FIGURE - 43

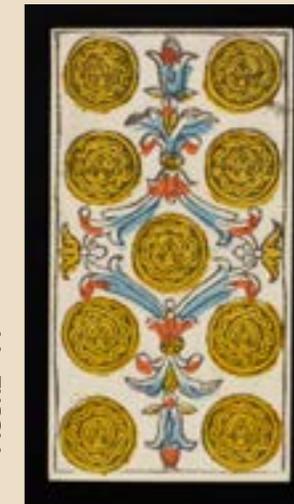


FIGURE - 44

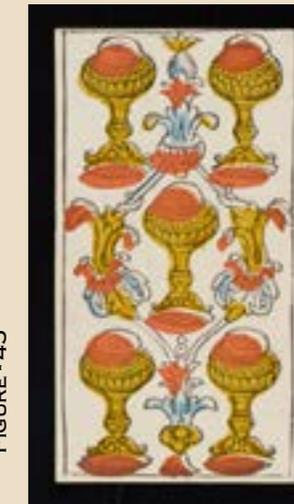


FIGURE - 45



FIGURE - 46



FIGURE - 47



FIGURE - 48



FIGURE - 49

THE COURT CARDS

HISTORY

In the 1377 Treatise of Morals and Instruction of Human Conduct, Moralizations on the Game of Cards. (Betts 1998, pp.87-89 and S.Kaplan, 1978, p. 25) Brother Johannes von Rheinfeld explains the mysterious court cards:

“In the game which men call the game of cards, they paint the cards in different manners, and they play with them in one way and another. The common form, as it first came to us, is thus: Four kings are depicted on four cards, each of whom sits on a royal throne. And each one holds a certain sign in his hand, of which signs some are reputed good, and others signify evil.”

He explains further that in some decks, there were only four Queens; in others, there were Kings and Queens. These court cards were part of the four suits, and together, they eventually became our minor arcana or the pips.

Deciphering the court cards is a slightly more simple task than that of the nonrepresentational pips. However, it is still trickier than the heavily symbolic trumps.

Almost all 15th-century decks and later had:
The King and Queen are seated, indicating an internal power such as intellect or emotion.
The knights on horseback, indicating action
The Pages are standing, indicating a slower movement.

Balancing the genders

Knights in the early deck were almost always male, but in the Cary - Yale Visconti deck from the mid-1400s,

there is a female Knight of Staves (Wands) and a female Knight of Swords. There are also female pages. It is assumed that the deck consisted of 4 knights and 4 pages of both sexes.

Female pages or knaves were common in the early decks, as seen in:

The 15th-century Tarocco* of Bologna. (the Tarocco removed the 2-5 of the pips, making it only 62 cards.)
The Budapest Museum owns Italian card sheets from the early 15th century, known as the Budapest sheets. The Rosenwald sheets from 1500.
The 17th-century Tarocco of Sicily.

The poor girls got the boot over time, and knights and knaves became almost always masculine.

Papus associated the court cards with the 4 letter name of God, YHVH, and made the Knights neuter in text and masculine in image. He laid out this system of association:

- Y: The King represents the active, the man, or male. He leads all the numerical pips representing Yod and rules the Divine world
- H: The Queen represents the passive, the woman, or female. She leads all the numerical pips represented by the first Heh. She rules the human world.
- V: The knight represents the neuter, the adolescent. He represents all the numerical pips representing Vav and rules the Material world
- H: Lastly, the knave represents the transition from one world to another, in this case to the Major Arcana, where the ternary system continues.

The system was still off-balanced as male/ female/ neuter/male.

This patriarchal trend lasted right down to Aleister

Top row: Female and male Knights and Pages. Bottom: Kings and Queens. 15th-century Visconti-Sforza Tarot



FIGURE - 50



FIGURE - 51



FIGURE - 52



FIGURE - 53



FIGURE - 54



FIGURE - 55



FIGURE - 56



FIGURE - 57

Crowley, who restored the balance with a Prince and Princess instead of a knight and a page. All the other Golden Dawn members had three males and only one female Queen.

The Court Cards as Personalities

The idea that each court card refers to someone other than ourselves comes from Papus. He went as far as describing their physical character, which I find groundless. However, it did influence the way some of the Golden Dawn interpreted their court cards. Papus described it like this:

KING. The King of Sceptres symbolizes a dark man, a friend. He generally represents a married man, the father of a family.

QUEEN. A dark woman, a friend. Represents a serious woman, a very good counselor, and often the mother of a family.

KNIGHT. A dark young man, a friend.

KNAVE. A dark child, a friend. Also represents a message from a near relation.¹

Which Element for which Court Card?

As we saw in the last section on the pips, in the 18th century, G ebelin put the airy Swords first in line. In the 19th century, Papus changed this to firey wands. He indirectly associated the court cards with the elements through the Tetragrammaton: Yod with Wands, thus Fire, and Yod with Kings, equating them with Fire.

Heh, with Cups, thus Water, and Heh, with Queens, making them equated with Water.

Vav with Swords, thus Air, and Vav with Knights,

equating them with Air.

Second, Heh with Pentacles, thus Earth, and Heh with Knaves, making them equated with Earth.²

He did, however, also associate Kings with the Intellectual realm despite its airy affiliation.³

The Golden Dawn adopted this order.

This confused affiliation has created a debate in the Tarot community about whether Kings are Air or Fire.

The most common argument for Kings being Air is that the intellect and/or heart must initiate action, which is commonly represented by Fire. Action is secondary to the intellect and/or emotions. Another common and logical argument is that in the earliest decks, Kings are seated, implying contemplation, and knights are on horseback, meaning movement and action.

THE WAY I SEE IT

In the Sefer Yetzirah, Spirit-Breath is the first Father, who fathers Air before Fire is even conceived, so I see Fire as the Prince rather than the airy King.

Thus, associating the order of elements as seen in the Sefer Yetzirah with the court cards:

All Kings are the airy/intellectual part of the suit

All Queens are the watery/emotional & intuitive part of the suit

All Princes are the firey/active part of the suit

All Princesses are the earthy/manifesting part of the suit.

[2] Papus 1889 a, p.5

[3] Papus 1889 a, p.5

Understanding how the Personality is Defined

The Court Cards of the Tarot reflect the personality of someone important to the question at hand. This is logical because all the same characteristics have already been attributed to the querent's personality in the Ace-10 of each suit. This remixing of the suit's attributes would need to serve a different purpose, which I agree is for influential people linked to the question.

The personality of each card is created by combining the elemental expression of the court card with the elemental expression of the suit. For example, let us look at the King of Cups: Kings are Air-intellect, and Cups are the Water-emotion. Thus, the King of Cups

is the airy part of Water or the logic and reasoning of the heart. In comparison, the Queen of Swords is the watery part of the airy suit. She is, therefore, the emotional mind. Since there are 4 suits and 4 court cards, we get 16 personalities by tapping into the essential essence of each of the four elements and their unique relationships with each other.

Mathers-Felkins and Crowley are the only ones who give clear Kabbalist references to the court cards, so I only refer to them.

The Sefer Yetzirah keeps its attributions short, which I find necessary if we want to avoid cherry-picking through a paragraph of explanations.



FIGURE - 58

Minchiate card, 19th-century
Page of Coins



FIGURE - 59

Minchiate card, 19th-century
Knight of Cups



FIGURE - 60

Minchiate card, 19th-century
Page of Cups

TWO WAYS TO UNDERSTAND THE MAJOR ARCANA

I have found two different ways to associate the Marseille number order with my cards. The first way is seen in my booklet and is based on a synchronization of the 19th-century occultist's order and the Sefer Yetzirah. The second method is seen in this book and is based on the synchronization of the earliest decks and the Sefer Yetzirah.

Occultist version

The booklet to the first edition of the Dreams & Divinities Tarot has a diagram like the one on the facing page with the 22 trumps. It has the three letters of the Soul in the winged disk, the seven Double letters in the central column, and 6 pairs of 12 Simple letters in the two outer columns. The diagram on the facing page has the same order, and unlike the booklet, it shows you the direction that the numbers follow as they zig-zag down the Tree. Although the booklet does not give the cards associations to the Hebrew letters, astronomical bodies, or many of the other details seen in this book, its system is based on a syncretic model of later Qabballism with the Sefer Yetzirah.

Through the research that I did for this book, I saw that a logical version of associations to the 22 mystical letters was already present in our oldest decks. It doesn't require us to make the sun and the moon into constellations as the later Qabballists did. It also makes the Empress the creator, Mother Mem. This order presents itself and is maintained across the different number of orders of our earliest decks. How could I refuse it?

So, what are the differences between the two ways?

Both the Dreams & Divinities Tarot booklet and this book give the same short definitions for the meaning

of the cards and their meanings in divination. What is different is the order in which the cards are arranged in the diagram's columns. This order depends on which cards are the 3 Mothers, 7 Doubles, or 12 Simple letters. In the second diagram seen on page 184, you can see how, despite the numbering staying the same, the order of the cards in these three columns has changed.

Another difference between the two systems is the meaning of the World card. The basic meaning of the card is the same in both the booklet and this book: the World is a card of completion, marking the end of each soul journey before beginning the next. The difference is whether Bet rules the World or not.

In the occult view, the end sphere must house the material consort of the Spirit. The Qabballist understanding of their Tree has the male creator in the 1st sphere of Keter. (originally, this was a neutral sphere that emanated the female and male aspects of polarized Spirit as Binah and Chokmah.) His bride, or shekhina, is the material plane. She lives furthest from the Spirit in the 10th sphere called Malkuth, which means the Kingdom (the letter Bet in the Sefer Yetzirah is called the Holy Palace). It is in Malkuth that Spirit and matter are reunited, which is summed up in the Qabalistic aphorism "Kether is in Malkuth." The bride's titles are The Gate, The Gate of Death, The Gate of Tears, The Gate of Justice, The Gate of Prayer, The Gate of the Daughter of the Mighty Ones, The Gate of the Garden of Eden, The Inferior Mother, the Queen, Malkah, the Bride, Kallah, the Virgin.¹

.....

[1] List extracted from zero-point.tripod.com/holistic/Malkuth.html

Bet is also the gate of death, the lesser Mother, the gate into the garden. She makes Spirit manifest but as her groom. Nevertheless, the essential idea is the same; it is just a gender reversal. In the Sefer Yetzirah, the end sphere where the marriage of Spirit to the material takes place is Sphere 2, ruled by Bet, not Sphere 10. I therefore associated Bet, the omega, with the World card.

You can see in the diagram that Bet, as the World, is still in the position of the second sphere while being the last sphere as well. In a Cyclical Tree, the beginning and the end touch each other like in a circle. Sphere 2 and the end sphere are the same central sphere that all consciousness passes through as it goes in and out of the Soul. Because Bet is the central gateway between completion and newness, life and death, she was my candidate for this card. However, as we saw in the chapter on associations, this could not have been traditionally the case.

As we saw in the chapter on associations, Bet needs to remain at the beginning of the list as one of the Soul cards. She needs to be the High Priestess, or all the other pairs of cards will be upset. The World was never meant to represent the beginning of the cycle. It was the last card of a cycle before Prudence brought us home to the Soul, where the High Priestess, as number 2, represented by Bet, allowed the cycle to continue.

In this book, I wanted to go beyond the

OCCULT - SEFER YETZIRAH VERSION - BOOKLET

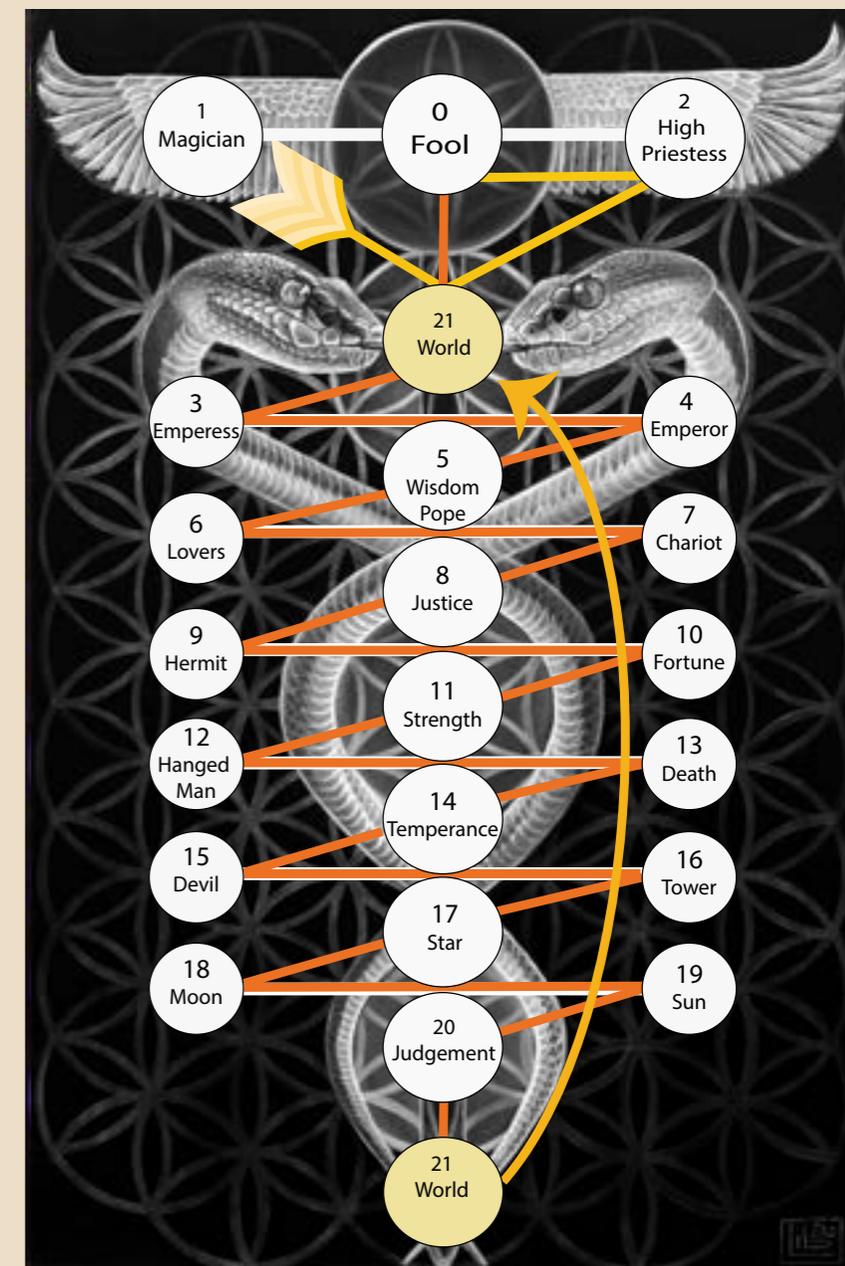


FIGURE - 61

18th to 19th-century occult ideas of the Tarot and explore a more traditional way to read the cards. This meant having Bet as the High Priestess rather than the World, as well as making the Sun and Moon planets again.

With this arrangement, the Sun and Moon become planets again. In the second diagram, you can see that they are now no longer in the outer columns of the Simple letters but rather in the center with the other Double letters, which represent the planets.

The only thing I deviated from was the way I placed the cards relating to the Simple pair of letters SO. The Devil and the Tower are paired to the letters SO/Samech-Ayin, making the Devil S-anger and Tower O-laughter. Laughter is so inappropriate for the Tower, yet it works for the Devil. O-Ayin's astrological association with Capricorn also makes it a good match. It is not possible to inverse the letters SO because they correspond to the zodiac. Therefore, I made the Devil 16 and the Tower 15.

The booklet is perfect for a quick reference to the meanings of the cards, but to truly understand each one, one needs the book's order of letters for a deeper understanding.

TRADITIONAL - SEFER YETZIRAH VERSION - THIS BOOK

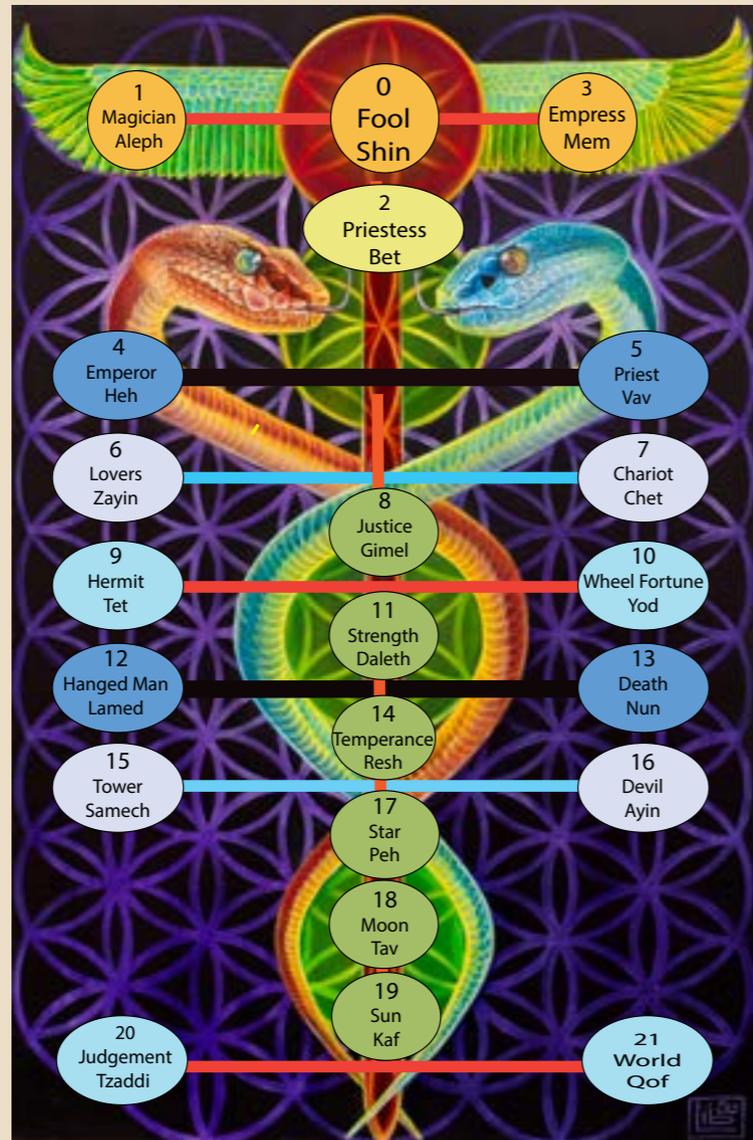


FIGURE - 62 With this association, the World symbolizes only the completion of the voyage. After Sphere 21, the Goddess Prudentia brings us back to Sphere 2 to start a new Journey.

DIVINATION

There is a multitude of ways to read the cards. I prefer the simpler spreads because they give me a more direct message. However, you will need to see what works best for you. The array of divinatory spreads is available in books and online. I will just share my three favorites.

Pick a card for the day.

Reflect on a daily archetype by selecting one card that mirrors your main focus.

Three card spread

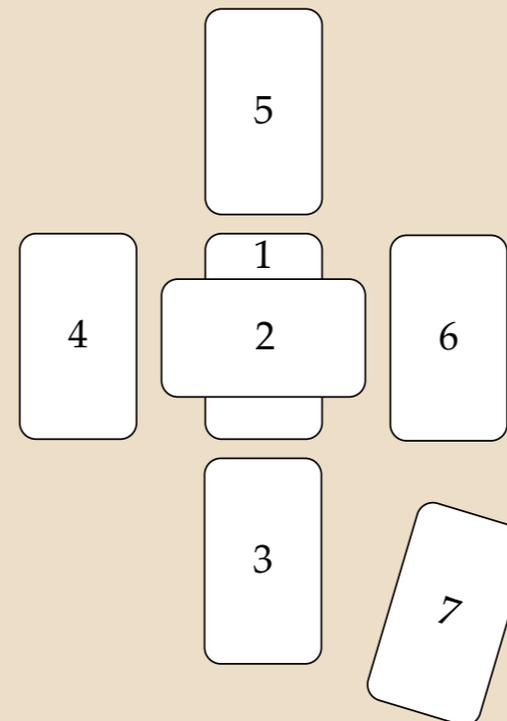
Another quick way to do daily readings is a three-card spread. After shuffling, lay out three cards in a row.

- 1) Past influences
- 2) Current situation
- 3) Direction the situation is heading



Six or Seven-card Spread

I grew up with Tarot and learned divination with the Celtic Cross and its ten original positions. This divination style was used in the British Isles before it was popularized by A.E. Waite in 1910. Nowadays, there are various versions of this method. I work best with just the first six cards, and sometimes I add a seventh. If one is to add a seventh, it should be clear in one's intentions before doing the spread.



Directions for Six or Seven-card Spread:

- 1) Current situation for the querent.
- 2) Obstacles to the current situation. This card is laid perpendicular to the first card. I always read it upside down because it creates conflict in the question.
- 3) Subconscious: foundation of the problem.
- 4) The Past: what past event or influence led to this?
- 5) Hopes and Solutions
- 6) Direction the situation is heading
- 7) Strengths: This card reflects what will help you solve the problem.

DREAMS & DIVINITES TAROT

For seven years, a group of seven women meticulously painted the Dreams and Divinities Tarot deck. This extraordinary 78-card Tarot deck and its accompanying guidebook were inspired by visions, dreams, and an in-depth exploration of the archetypal cards, offering a fresh perspective on classical Tarot symbolism and interpretations.

I personally curated, designed, and produced the first edition of 777 decks with great attention to detail, just the way I would have wanted them for myself. The cards are extra-large and heavy, reminiscent of antique Italian Tarot cards. Printed on recycled paper with ecological inks and varnishes, the cards were produced in Italy by a company using solar-powered electricity.

Seven internationally recognized women symbolists painted the deck:
Amanda Sage
Carrie Ann Baade
Heidi Taillefer
Ila Rose
Liba
Martina Hoffmann
Viandara Elfaerian

The collaborative journey involved Viandara Elfaerian's contribution to the design process. My digital remixes of Amanda Sage's aces brought the 2-10 of the Minor Arcana to life. At the same time, brainstorming sessions with Carrie Ann Baade and Martina Hoffmann were instrumental in shaping the deck's unique character.

Dreams & Divinities promotes a planetary movement of 'Conscious Art' through publications, exhibits, and events. It brings together artists, writers, musicians,

and performers to celebrate Universal Love through artistic collaboration and community.

Liba Waring Stambollion
February 2024
www.DreamsAndDivinities.com



FIGURE - 63

The deck, along with Dreams & Divinities books can be purchased through my personal shop:
www.artwork-liba.com/shop

REDISCOVERING THE SEFER YETZIRAH

This trilogy was inspired by *three questions* concerning the origins, the form and the impact of the most ancient Hebrew esoteric system: the Sefer Yetzirah. We have examined the first question about the Tree and the Tarot. The next questions are explored in the sequels, coming out in 2024.

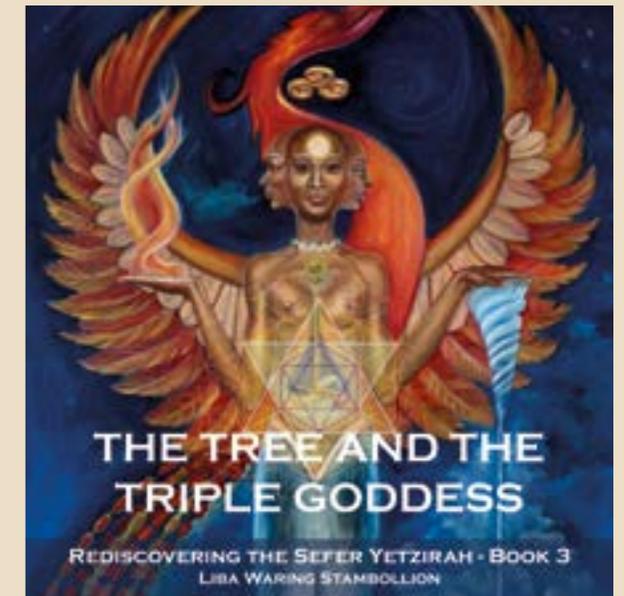
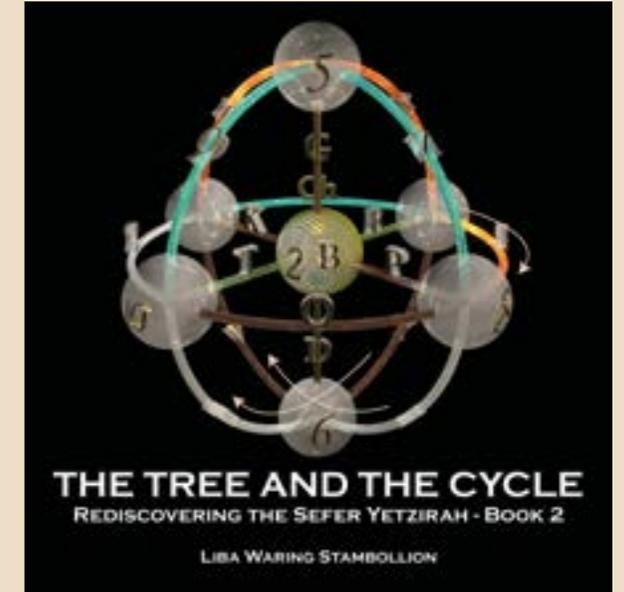
If the text asks us to cycle the letters in a wheel or sphere, why isn't the Tree spherical?_

In *The Tree and the Cycle*, embark on a revolutionary journey through the enigmatic verses of the Sefer Yetzirah. Without the influence of later schools like Kabbalism, discover how these ancient verses describe the blueprint for a three-dimensional Tree designed to cycle 22 letter paths through 10 spheres.

For the first time, witness a Tree that rotates the 22 letters within exactly 231 positions (or '231 gates') to write the very words that define our reality. Through the use of dozens of diagrams, 'The Tree and the Cycle' demystifies and accompanies us on this eye-opening journey into self-discovery and formation.

How could an Abrahamic Genesis story have three Mothers as the Primal Creators?

Embark on a journey through time and mythology with *The Tree and the Triple Goddess*. This work's groundbreaking research traces the ancient esoteric system of the Sefer Yetzirah back to the dawn of writing in Near East cuneiform tablets—a time when Gods and Goddesses ruled together. Discover how the three creator Mothers of the Sefer Yetzirah were turned into Kings, and the goddesses of the Near East lost all their powers to the new gods, including the god of the Abrahamic religions. Rediscover lost wisdom, restore the divine feminine-masculine balance, and unveil the hermetic system of the Sefer Yetzirah hidden within regional mythology.



Reuchlin

Full Name: Johann Reuchlin
 Life: 1455-1522
 Nationality: German
 Occupation: Catholic Humanist, Writer
 Notable Contribution: Books on Kabbalism

Smith

Full Name: Pamela Colman Smith
 Life: 1878-11951
 Nationality: British
 Occupation: Occultist, Painter
 Notable Contribution: Illustrating the Rider Waite Smith Tarot

Sforza

Full Name: Francesco Sforza
 Life: 1401 – 1466
 Nationality: Italian
 Occupation: Duke of Milan
 Notable Contribution: He and his wife, Bianca Maria Visconti, were influential patrons. They brought us our first Tarot decks in the 15th century.



FIGURE - 64 Francesco Sforza

Waite

Full Name: Arthur Edward Waite
 Life: 1857-1942
 Nationality: British
 Occupation: Poet, Writer, Mystic
 Notable Contribution: Rider Waite Smith Tarot

Wirth

Full Name: Joseph Paul Oswald Wirth
 Life: 1860-1943
 Nationality: Swiss
 Occupation: Occultist, Artist, Author
 Notable Contribution: Known for his Tarot and his books about the subject.

Visconti

Full Name: Bianca Maria Visconti
 Life: 1860-1943
 Nationality: Italian
 Occupation: Duchess of Milan
 Notable Contribution: Along with her husband Francesco Sforza, they were patrons of the arts and commissioned the Visconti-Sforza Tarot decks.



FIGURE - 65 Bianca Maria Visconti

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