



The Tarot

**Its Occult Significance, Use in Fortune-Telling,
and Method of Play, Etc.**

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To enter, within the limits of this short treatise, upon any long inquiry into the History of Cards is utterly out of the question; and I shall therefore confine myself to examining briefly into what relates to their most ancient form, the Tarot, or Tarocchi Cards, and to giving, as clearly and concisely as possible, instructions which will enable my readers to utilise them for fortune-telling, to which they are far better adapted, from the greater number and variety of their combinations, than the ordinary cards. I shall also enter somewhat into their occult and Qabalistical significations.

The term “Tarot”, or “Tarocchi”, is applied to a pack of 78 cards, consisting of four suits of 14 cards each (there being one more court card than in the ordinary packs — the Cavalier, Knight, or Horseman),

and 22 symbolical picture-cards answering for trumps. These latter are numbered from 1 to 21 inclusive, the 22nd card being marked Zero, 0. The designs of these trumps are extremely singular, among them being such representations as Death, the Devil, the Last Judgment, &c.

The idea that cards were first “invented” to amuse Charles VI of France is now exploded; and it is worthy of note in this connection that their supposititious “inventor” was Jacques Gringonneur, an Astrologer and Qabalist. Furthermore, cards were known prior to this period among the Indians and the Chinese. Etteilla, indeed, gives in one of his tracts on the Tarot a representation of the mystical arrangement of these cards in the Temple of Ptah at Memphis, and he further says:

“Upon a table or altar, at the height of the breast of the Egyptian Magus (or Hierophant), were on one side a book or assemblage of cards or plates of gold (the Tarot), and on the other a vase, etc.” This idea is further dilated upon by P. Christian (the disciple of Eliphas Levi), in his “*Histoire de la Magie*,” to which I shall have occasion to refer later. The great exponents of the Tarot, Court de Gèbelin, Levi, and Etteilla, have always assigned to the Tarot a Qabalistico- Egyptian origin, and this I have found confirmed in my own researches into this subject, which have extended over several years.

W. Hughes Willshire, in his remarks on the General History of Playing-Cards, says: “The most ancient cards which have come down to us are of the Tarot’s character. These are the four cards of the Musée Correr at Venice; the seventeen pieces of the Paris Cabinet (erroneously often called the *Gringonneur*, or Charles VI cards of 1392), five Venetian Tarots of the fifteenth century, in the opinion of some not of an earlier date than 1425; and the series of cards belonging to a *Minchiate* set, in the possession of the Countess Aurelia Visconti Gonzaga at Milan, when Cicognara wrote.”

W. A. Chatto, in his “*History of Playing-Cards*,” says that cards were invented in China as early as A.D. 1120, in the reign of Seun-Ho, for the amusement of his numerous concubines.

J. F. Vaillant, in “*Les Romes, histoire vraie des vraies Bohémiens*,” Paris, 1857, says that the Chinese have a drawing divided into compartments or series, based on combinations of the number 7. [i] “It so closely resembles the Tarot, that the four suits of the latter occupy its first four columns; of the twenty-one *atouts* fourteen occupy the fifth column, and the seven other *atouts* the sixth column. This sixth column of seven *atouts* is that of the six days of the week of creation. Now, according to the Chinese, this representation belongs to the first ages of their empire, to the drying up of the waters of the deluge by IAO; it may be concluded, therefore, that it is an original, or a copy of the Tarot, and, under any circumstances, that the latter is of an origin anterior to Moses, that it belongs to the beginning of our time, to the

epoch of the preparation of the Zodiac, and consequently that it must own 6600 years of existence.”

But, notwithstanding the apparent audacity of this latter statement, it must be evident on reflection that the Tarot, consisting, as it does, of the ten numbers of the decimal scale counter-changed with the tetrad, and of a hieroglyphic alphabet of twenty-two mystic symbols, must be relegated to far earlier period in the history of the world than that usually assigned to the introduction of cards into Europe; and we may take the fact of the Tarot being the origin of the modern card as being now pretty well established by general consensus of Opinion.

It was Court de Gèbelin who, in his “*Monde Primitif*” (Paris 1781), wrote: “Were we to hear that there exists in our day Work of the Ancient Egyptians, one of their books which had escaped the flames which devoured their superb libraries, and which contains their purest doctrine on most interesting subjects, every one would doubtless be anxious to acquire the knowledge of so valuable and extraordinary a work. Were we to add that this book is widely spread through a large part of Europe, and that for several centuries it has been accessible to every one, would not it be still more surprising? And would not that surprise be at its height were it asserted that people have never suspected that it was Egyptian, that they possess it in such a manner that they can hardly be said to possess it at all, that no one has ever attempted to decipher a single leaf, and that the outcome of a recondite wisdom is regarded as a mass of extravagant designs which mean nothing in themselves? Would not people think that one was trying to amuse oneself with, and to play upon the credulity of one’s hearers?”

“Yet this is a true fact. This Egyptian book, the sole remains of their superb libraries, exists to our day; it is even so common that no *savant* has designed to trouble himself about it, no one before myself having suspected its illustrious origin. This book is composed of seventy-seven leaves or illustrations, or rather of seventy-eight, divided into five classes, which each present objects as various as they are amusing and instructive. In one word, this book is the PACK OF TAROT CARDS.”

Let us now examine the word TAROT, or TARO, and discover, if we can, its true derivation and meaning. Court de Gèbelin states that there are three words of Oriental origin preserved in the nomenclature of the Pack. These are TARO, MAT, and PAGAD. Taro, he says, is pure Egyptian; from TAR, Path, and RO, ROS, or ROG, Royal—the Royal Path of Life. MAT is Oriental, and means overpowered, murdered, crack-brained; while PAGAD, he adds, is also Oriental, form PAG, chief, or master, and GAD, Fortune. Vailant says: “The great divinity Ashtaroth, *As-taroth*, is no other than the Indo-Tartar *Tan-tara*, the *Tarot*, the Zodiac.” My derivation of the word, which I have never found given by any author, is from the ancient hieroglyphical Egyptian word “*târu*”, to require an answer, or to consult; *ergo*, that which is

consulted, or from which an answer is required. This appears to me to be the correct origin of the word, while the second *t* is an Egyptian hieroglyphic final, which is added to denote the feminine gender. The following are interesting metatheses of the letters of TARO: TORA (*Hebrew*) = Law; TROA (*Hebrew*) = Gate; ROTA (*Latin*) = wheel; ORAT (*Latin*) = it speaks, argues, or entreats; TAOR (*Egyptian*) = Täur, the Goddess of Darkness; ATOR (*Egyptian*) = Athor, the Egyptian Venus. A Mr. Lumley tells me that there is a Zend word “*tarisk*”, meaning “to require an answer”.

There are Italian, Spanish, and German Tarot packs, and since the time of Etteilla French also, but these latter are not so well adapted for occult study owing to Etteilla’s attempted “corrections” of the symbolism. The Italian are decidedly the best for divination and practical occult purposes, and I shall, therefore, use them as the basis of the present treatise. Unfortunately the old-fashioned single-headed cards are obsolete now, and the only ones made are double-headed, which circumstance alters the symbolism in a few instances. I shall, therefore, wherever necessary, describe the omitted portion of the design, enclosing it within brackets to mark the same.

As I before observed, the Tarot pack consists of seventy-eight cards — namely, four suits of fourteen cards each, and twenty-two symbolic numbered trumps. The four suits are—

<i>Italian.</i>	<i>French.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>Answering to</i>
Bastoni	Bâtons	Wands, Sceptres, or Clubs	Diamonds
Coppé	Coupes	Cups, Chalice, or Goblets	Hearts
Spadé	Épées	Swords	Spades
Denari	Deniers	Money, Circles, or Pentacles	Clubs

Each suit consists of Ace, Deuce, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten; Fanti or Valet = Knave; Cavallo = Knight or Horseman; Dama or Reine = Queen; Re = King.

The Kings, in each instance, wear a cap-of-maintenance beneath the crown; the Queens wear the crown only. The Queen of Pentacles and the Knave of Sceptres are the only ones represented in profile. In the suit of Sceptres the King bears a wand akin to that represented on the small cards of the suit, while the other three honours bear a bludgeon similar to that which is shown for the ace. In the suit of cups, that only which is held by the Queen is covered, thus showing the essentially *feminine* properties of this suit, while the sceptre held by the King of the preceding suit shows its more *masculine* character.

If we examine the small cards carefully we shall be struck a once by the comparative similarities of pattern of the Sceptres and the Swords,

which are only distinguished from each other by the former being *straight* and the latter being *curved*. We shall also notice that the Deuces have peculiarities of their own, which distinguish them from the rest of the suit. The Deuce of Sceptres forms a cross with two roses and two lilies in the opposite angles; the Cross between the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. The Deuce of Cups shows a tessellated pavement or cloth whereon the cups stand; between them is a species of Caduceus, whose serpents are replaced by Lion-headed foliations, which recall the Chnuphis Serpent of the Gnostics, and certain familiar forms of the Elemental Spirits; *practical* occultists will know to what I allude. The Deuce of Swords forms a species of *Vesica piscis* enclosing a mystic rose of the primary colours. The Deuce of Pentacles is bound together by a continuous band in such a manner as to form a figure 8, and represents the one as being the reflection of the other, as the Universe is that of the Divine Idea.

The four Aces stand out by themselves from the rest of the pack, each forming, as it were, the Key of its respective suit. The Ace of Sceptres recalls the Club of Hercules; it is surrounded by eight detached leaves, whose shape recalls that of the Hebrew Letter Yod, or I, and is crowned with the Symbol of the Triad represented by the three lopped branches; it is the Symbol of Almighty Strength within the cube of the Universe, which latter is shown by the eight leaves, for eight is the first cubical number. The Ace of Cups is of Egyptian origin, which can be more easily seen in the Spanish Tarot. The figure, like an inverted M on its front, is all that remains of the Egyptian twin Serpents which originally decorated it. It represents the Waters of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis. It is the Symbol of the Power which receives and modifies. The Ace of Swords is a Sword surmounted by a Crown, from which depend on either side an olive and a palm branch, symbolic of mercy and severity; around it are Six Hebrew Yods, recalling the Six days of the Mosaic Creation. It is the Symbol of that Justice which maintains the World in order, the equilibrium of Mercy and Severity. The Ace of Pentacles represents Eternal Synthesis, the great whole of the visible Universe, the Realisation of counterbalanced power.

The 22 trumps are the hieroglyphic symbols of the occult meanings of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. They are numbered from 0 to 21 inclusive. (See Table...).

<i>No.</i>	<i>Italian.</i>	<i>French.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>Hebrew Letter.</i>	
1.	Il Bagatto (PAGAD)	Le Bateleur	The Juggler or Magician	Aleph.	A
2.	La Papessa	La Papesse	The High Priestess, or Female Pope	Beth.	B
3.	L'Imperatrice	L'Impératrice	The Empress	Gimel.	G
4.	L'Imperatore	L'Empereur	The Emperor	Daleth.	D
5.	Il Papa	Le Pape	The Hierophant or Pope	He.	H
6.	Gli Amanti	L'Amoureux	The Lovers	Vau.	V

7.	Il Carro	Le Chariot	The Chariot	Zain.	Z
8.	La Giustizia	La Justice	Justice	Cheth.	CH
9.	L'Eremita	L'Ermite	The Hermit	Teth.	T
10.	Rota Di Fortuna	La Roue de Fortune	The Wheel of Fortune	Yod.	I
11.	La Forza	La Force	Strength, Fortitude	Kaph.	K
12.	Il Penduto	Le Pendu	The Hanged Man	Lamed.	L
13.	Il Morte	La Mort	Death	Mem.	M
14.	La Temperanza	La Temperance	Temperance	Nun.	N
15.	Il Diavolo	Le Diable	The Devil	Samech.	S
16.	La Torre	Le Maison-Dieu	The Lightning-struck Tower	Ayin.	O
17.	Le Stelle	L'Etoile	The Star	Pe.	P
18.	La Luna	La Lune	The Moon	Tzaddi.	Tz
19.	Il Sole	Le Soleil	The Sun	Qoph.	Q
20.	L'Angelo	Le Jugement	The Last Judgment	Resh.	R
0.	Il Matto (MAT)	Le Fou	The Foolish Man	Shin.	SH
21.	Il Mondo	Le Monde	The Universe	Tau.	TH

I will now describe carefully the symbolism of each of these hieroglyphical keys.

1. *The Juggler or Magician.* Before a table covered with the appliances of his art stands the figure of a juggler, one hand upraised holding a wand (in some packs, a cup), the other pointing downwards. He wears a cap of maintenance like that of the kings, whose wide brim forms a sort of aureole round his head. His body and arms form the shape of the Hebrew letter Aleph, to which this card corresponds. He symbolises *Will*.

2. *The High Priestess, or Female Pope.* A woman crowned with a high mitre or tiara (her head encircled by a veil), a stole (or a solar cross) upon her breast, and the Book of Science open in her hand. She represents *Science, Wisdom, or Knowledge*.

3. *The Empress.* A winged and crowned woman seated upon a throne, having in one hand a sceptre bearing a globe surmounted by a cross, while she rests the other upon a shield with an eagle blazoned therein on whose breast is the cross. She is the Symbol of *Action*, the result of the union of Science and Will.

4. *The Emperor.* He is crowned (and leaning against a throne, his legs form a cross, and beside him, beneath his left hand, is a shield blazoned with an eagle). In his right hand he bears a sceptre similar to that of the Empress. His body and arms form a triangle, of which his head is the apex, so that the whole figure represents a triangle above a cross. He represents *Realisation*.

5. *The Hierophant or Pope.* He is crowned with the papal tiara, and seated between the two pillars of Hermes and of Solomon, with his right hand he makes the sign of esoterism, and with his left he leans

upon a staff surmounted by a triple cross. (Before him kneel two ministers.) He is the symbol of *Mercy* and *Beneficence*.

6. *The Lovers*. This is usually described as representing Man between Vice and Virtue, while a winged genius threatens Vice with his dart. But I am rather inclined to the opinion that it represents the Qabalistical Microprosopus between Binah and Malkuth (*see my [Kabbalah Unveiled](#)*), while the figure above shows the Influence descending from Kether. It is usually considered to mean *Proof* or *Trial*; but I am inclined to suggest *Wise Disposition* as its signification.

7. *The Chariot*. This is a most complicated and important symbol, which has been restored by Eliphas Levi. It represents a Conqueror crowned and bearing a sceptre, riding in a cubical chariot, surmounted by four columns and a canopy, and drawn by two horses, one of which looks straight forward, while the other turns his head towards him. (Two wheels are shown in the complete single-headed figure.) It represents *Triumph*, and *Victory* of Justice and Judgment.

8. *Justice*. A woman crowned and seated on a throne (between two columns), holding in her right hand an upright sword, and in her left the scales. She symbolises *Equilibrium* and *Justice*.

9. *The Hermit*. An old and bearded man wrapped in a mantle, and with his head covered with a cowl, bearing in his right hand the lantern of occult science, while in his left he holds his magic wand half hidden beneath his cloak. He is *Prudence*.

10. *The Wheel of Fortune*. A wheel of *seven* spokes (the two halves of the double-headed cards make it *eight* spokes, which is incorrect) revolving (between two uprights), On the ascending side is an animal ascending, and on the descending side is a sort of monkey descending; both forms are bound to the wheel. Above it is the form of an angel (or a sphinx in some) holding a sword in one hand and a crown in the other. This very complicated symbol is much disfigured, and has been well restored by Levi. It symbolises *Fortune*, good or bad.

11. *Strength or Fortitude*. A woman crowned with crown and cap of maintenance, who calmly, and Without effort, closes the jaws of a furious lion. She represents *Strength*.

12. *The Hanged Man*. This extraordinary symbol is almost unintelligible in the double-headed cards. Properly, it represents a man hung head downwards from a sort of gibbet by one foot (his hands are bound behind his back in such a manner that his body forms a triangle with the point downwards), and his legs a cross above it. (Two sacks or weights are attached to his armpits.) He symbolises *Sacrifice*.

13. Death. A skeleton armed with a Scythe (wherewith he mows down heads in a meadow like grass). He signifies *Transformation*, or *Change*.

14. Temperance An angel with the sign of the Sun on her brow Pouring liquid from one vessel into another. She represents *Combination*.

15. The Devil. A horned and winged demon with eagle's claws (standing on an altar to which two smaller devils are bound by a collar and cord). In his left hand he bears a flame-headed sceptre. He is the image of *Fate* or *Fatality*, good or evil.

16. The Lightning-struck Tower. A Tower whose Upper part is like a crown, struck by a lightning-flash. (Two men fall headlong from it, One of whom is in such an attitude as to form a Hebrew letter *Ayin*.) Sparks and *debris* are falling. It shows *Ruin*, *Disruption*.

17. The Star. A nude female figure pours water upon the earth from two vases. In the heavens above her shines the Blazing Star of the Magi (surrounded by seven others), trees and plants grow beneath her magic influence (and on one the butterfly of Psyche alights). She is the star of *Hope*.

18. The Moon. The moon shining in the heavens, drops of dew falling, a wolf and a dog howling at the Moon, and halted at the foot of two towers, a path which loses itself in the horizon (and is sprinkled with drops of blood, a crayfish emblematic of the sign Cancer, ruled over by the Moon, crawls through water in the foreground towards the land). It symbolises *Twilight*, *Deception*, and *Error*.

19. The Sun. The Sun sending down his rays upon two children, who suggest the sign Gemini. (Behind them is a low wall.) It signifies *Earthly Happiness*.

20. The Last Judgment. An Angel in the heavens blowing a trumpet, to which a standard with a cross thereon is attached. The Dead rise from their tombs. It signifies *Renewal*, *Result*.

0. The Foolish Man. A man with a fool's cap, dressed like a jester, with a stick and bundle over his shoulder. Before him is the butterfly of pleasure luring him on (while in some packs a tiger, in others a dog, attacks him from behind). It signifies *Folly*, *Expiation*.

21. The Universe. Within a flowery wreath is a female figure nude save for a light scarf. She represents Nature and the Divine Presence therein. In each hand she should bear a wand. At the four angles of the card are the four cherubic animals of the Apocalypse. Above, the Eagle and the Man; below, the Lion and the Bull. It represents *Completion*, *Reward*.

Thus the whole series of the twenty-two trumps will give a connected sentence which is capable of being read thus:—The Human *Will* (1) enlightened by *Science* (2) and manifested by

Action (3) should find its *Realisation* (4) in deeds of *Mercy* and *Beneficence* (5). The *Wise Disposition* (6) of this will give him *Victory* (7) through *Equilibrium* (8) and *Prudence* (9), over the fluctuations of *Fortune* (10). *Fortitude* (11), sanctified by *Sacrifice* of Self (12), will triumph over *Death* itself (13), and thus a *Wise Combination* (14) will enable him to defy *Fate* (15). In each *Misfortune* (16) he will see the Star of *Hope* (17) shine through the twilight of *Deception* (18); and ultimate *Happiness* (19) will be the *Result* (20). *Folly* (0), on the other hand, will bring about an evil *Reward* (21).

To prepare the pack for Fortune-telling, write at the top of each card its number and signification when in its proper position, and at the bottom its meaning when reversed. To facilitate this, and to assist in reading them I here append a list of the cards with the meanings, which, I think, will be found to answer all practical purposes R. means Reversed.

MEANINGS OF THE CARDS

1. ***The Juggler.***—Will, Will-Power, Dexterity; R. Will applied to evil ends, Weakness of Will, Cunning, Knavishness.
2. ***The High Priestess.***— Science, Wisdom, Knowledge, Education; R. Conceit, Ignorance, Unskilfulness, Superficial Knowledge.
3. ***The Empress.***— Action, Plan, Undertaking Movement in a matter, Initiative; R. Inaction, Frittering away of power, Want of Concentration Vacillation.
4. ***The Emperor.***— Realisation, Effect, Development; R. Stoppage, Check, Immature, Unripe.
5. ***The Hierophant or Pope.*** Mercy, Beneficence Kindness, Goodness; R. Over-kindness, weakness, Foolish exercise of generosity.
6. ***The Lovers.***— Wise Dispositions, Proof, Trials Surmounted; R. Unwise Plans, Failure when put to the test.
7. ***The Chariot.***— Triumph, Victory, Overcoming obstacles; R. Overthrown, Conquered by Obstacles at the last moment.
8. ***Themis, or Justice.*** Equilibrium, Balance, Justice; R. Bigotry, Want of Balance, Abuse of Justice, Over-severity, Inequality, Bias.
9. ***The Hermit.***— Prudence, Caution, Deliberation; R. Over-prudence, Timorousness, Fear.

- 10. *The Wheel of Fortune.***— Good Fortune, Success, Unexpected Luck; R. Ill-Fortune, Failure, Unexpected Ill-Luck.
- 11. *Strength, or Fortitude.***— Power, Might, Force, Strength, Fortitude; R. Abuse of Power, Overbearingness, Want of Fortitude.
- 12. *The Hanged Man.***— Self-sacrifice, Sacrifice, Devotion, Bound; R. Selfishness, Unbound, Partial sacrifice.
- 13. *Death.***— Death, Change, Transformation, Alteration for the worse; R. Death just escaped, Partial change, Alteration for the better.
- 14. *Temperance.***— Combination, Conformation, Uniting; R. Ill-advised combinations, Disunion, Clashing interests, &c.
- 15. *The Devil.***— Fatality for Good; R. Fatality for Evil.
- 16. *The Lightning-struck Tower.*** Ruin, Disruption, Over-throw, Loss, Bankruptcy; R. These in a more or less partial degree.
- 17. *The Star.***— Hope, Expectation, Bright promises; R. Hopes not fulfilled, Expectations disappointed or fulfilled in a minor degree.
- 18. *The Moon.***— Twilight, Deception, Error; R. Fluctuation, slight Deceptions, Trifling Mistakes.
- 19. *The Sun.***— Happiness, Content, Joy; R. These in a minor degree.
- 20. *The Last Judgment.***— Renewal, Result, Determination of a Matter; R. Postponement of Result, Delay, Matter re-opened later.
- 0. *The Foolish Man.***— Folly, Expiation, Wavering; R. Hesitation, Instability, Trouble arising herefrom.
- 21. *The Universe.***— Completion, Good Reward; R. Evil Reward, or Recompense.
- 22. *King of Sceptres.***— Man living in the country, Country Gentleman, Knowledge, Education; R. A naturally good but severe man, Counsel, Advice, Deliberation.
- 23. *Queen of Sceptres.***— Woman living in the country, Lady of the Manor, Love of Money, Avarice, Usury; R. A good a virtuous Woman, but strict and economical, Obstacles, Resistance, Opposition.
- 24. *Knight of Sceptres.***— Departure, Separation, Disunion; R. Rupture, Discord, Quarrel.
- 25. *Knave of Sceptres.***— A Good Stranger, Good News, Pleasure, Satisfaction; R. Ill News, Displeasure, Chagrin, Worry.

- 26. *Ten of Sceptres.***— Confidence, Security, Honour, Good Faith; R. Treachery, Subterfuge, Duplicity, Bar.
- 27. *Nine of Sceptres.***— Order, Discipline, Good Arrangement, Disposition; R. Obstacles, Crosses, Delay, Displeasure.
- 28. *Eight of Sceptres.***— Understanding, Observation, Direction; R. Quarrels, Intestine disputes, Discord.
- 29. *Seven of Sceptres.***— Success, Gain, Advantage, Profit, Victory; R. Indecision, Doubt, Hesitation, Embarrassment, Anxiety.
- 30. *Six of Sceptres.***— Attempt, Hope, Desire, Wish, Expectation; R. Infidelity, Treachery, Disloyalty, Perfidy.
- 31. *Five of Sceptres.***— Gold, Opulence, Gain, Heritage, Riches, Fortune, Money; R. Legal proceedings, Judgment, Law, Lawyer, Tribunal.
- 32. *Four of Sceptres.***— Society, Union, Association, Concord, Harmony; R. Prosperity, Success, Happiness, Advantage.
- 33. *Three of Sceptres.***— Enterprise, Undertaking, Commerce, Trade, Negotiation; R. Hope, Desire, Attempt, Wish.
- 34. *Deuce of Sceptres.***— Riches, Fortune, Opulence, Magnificence, Grandeur; R. Surprise, Astonishment, Event, Extraordinary Occurrence.
- 35. *Ace of Sceptres.***— Birth, Commencement, Beginning, Origin, Source; R. Persecution, Pursuits Voilence, Vexation, Cruelty, Tyranny.
- 36. *King of Cups.***— A fair Man, Goodness, Kindness, Liberality, Generosity; R. A Man of good position, but shifty in his Dealings, Distrust, Doubt, Suspicion.
- 37. *Queen of Cups.***— A fair Woman, Success, Happiness, Advantage, Pleasure; R. A Woman in good position, but intermeddling, and to be distrusted; Success, but with some attendant trouble.
- 38. *Knight of Cups.***— Arrival, Approach, Advance; R. Duplicity, Abuse of Confidence, Fraud, Cunning.
- 39. *Knave of Cups.***— A fair Youth, Confidence, Probity, Discretion, Integrity; R. A Flatterer, Deception, Artifice.
- 40. *Ten of Cups.***— The Town wherein one resides, Honour, Consideration, Esteem, Virtue, Glory, Reputation; R. Combat, Strife, Opposition, Differences, Dispute.

- 41. *Nine of Cups.***— Victory, Advantage, Success, Triumph, Difficulties surmounted; R. Faults, Errors, Mistakes, Imperfections.
- 42. *Eight of Cups.***— A fair Girl, Friendship, Attachment, Tenderness; R. Gaiety, Feasting, Joy, Pleasure.
- 43. *Seven of Cups.***— Idea, Sentiment, Reflection, Project; R. Plan, Design, Resolution, Decision.
- 44. *Six of Cups.***— The Past, passed by, Faded, Vanished, Disappeared; R. The Future, that which is to come, Shortly, Soon.
- 45. *Five of Cups.***— Union, Junction, Marriage, Inheritance; R. Arrival, Return, News, Surprise, False projects.
- 46. *Four of Cups.***— Ennui, Displeasure, Discontent, Dissatisfaction; R. New Acquaintance, Conjecture, Sign, Presentiment.
- 47. *Three of Cups.***— Success, Triumph, Victory, Favourable issue; R. Expedition of business, Quickness, Celerity, Vigilance.
- 48. *Deuce of Cups.***— Love, Attachment, Friendship, Sincerity, Affection; R. Crossed desires, Obstacles, Opposition, Hindrance.
- 49. *Ace of Cups.***— Feasting, Banquet, Good Cheer; R. Change, Novelty, Metamorphosis, Inconstancy.
- 50. *King of Swords.***— A Lawyer, a Man of Law, Power, Command, Superiority, Authority; R. A Wicked Man, Chagrin, Worry, Grief, Fear, Disturbance.
- 51. *Queen of Swords.***— Widowhood, Loss, Privation, Absence, Separation; R. A Bad Woman, ill-tempered and bigoted, Riches and Discord, Abundance together with Worry, Joy with Grief.
- 52. *Knight of Swords.***— A Soldier, a man whose profession is arms, Skilfulness, Capacity, Address, Promptitude; R. A conceited fool, Ingenuousness, Simplicity.
- 53. *Knave of Swords.***— A Spy, Overlooking, Authority; R. That which is unforeseen, Vigilance, Support.
- 54. *Ten of Swords.***— Tears, Affliction, Grief, Sorrow; R. Passing Success, Momentary Advantage.
- 55. *Nine of Swords.***— An Ecclesiastic, a Priest, Conscience. Probity, Good Faith, Integrity; R. Wise distrust, Suspicion, Fear, Doubt, Shady character.

- 56. *Eight of Swords.***— Sickness, Calumny, Criticism, Blame; R. Treachery in the Past, Event, Accident, Remarkable Incident.
- 57. *Seven of Swords.***— Hope, Confidence, Desire, Attempt, Wish; R. Wise Advice, Good Counsel, Wisdom, Prudence, Circumspection.
- 58. *Six of Swords.***— Envoy, Messenger, Voyage, Travel; R. Declaration, Love proposed, Revelation, Surprise.
- 59. *Five of Swords.***— Mourning, Sadness, Affliction; R. Losses Trouble (same signification, whether reversed or not.)
- 60. *Four of Swords.***— Solitude, Retreat, Abandonment, Solitary, Hermit; R. Economy, Precaution, Regulation of Expenditure.
- 61. *Three of Swords.***— A Nun, Separation, Removal, Rupture, Quarrel; R. Error, Confusion, Misrule, Disorder.
- 62. *Deuce of Swords.***— Friendship, Valour, Firmness, Courage; R. False Friends, Treachery, Lies.
- 63. *Ace of Swords.***— Triumph, Fecundity, Fertility, Prosperity; R. Embarrassment, Foolish and Hopeless Love, Obstacle, Hindrance.
- 64. *King of Pentacles.***— A dark Man, Victory, Bravery, Courage, Success; R. An old and vicious Man, a Dangerous Man, Doubt, Fear, Peril, Danger.
- 65. *Queen of Pentacles.***— A dark Woman, a generous Woman, Liberality, Greatness of Soul, Generosity; R. Certain Evil, a suspicious Woman, a Woman justly regarded with Suspicion, Doubt, Mistrust.
- 66. *Knight of Pentacles.***— A useful Man, Trustworthy, Wisdom, Economy, Order, Regulation; R. A brave Man, but out of Employment, Idle, Unemployed, Negligent.
- 67. *Knave of Pentacles.***— A dark Youth, Economy, Order, Rule, Management; R. Prodigality, Profusion, Waste, Dissipation.
- 68. *Ten of Pentacles.***— House, Dwelling, Habitation, Family; R. Gambling, Dissipation, Robbery, Loss.
- 69. *Nine of Pentacles.***— Discretion, Circumspection, Prudence, Discernment; R. Deceit, Bad faith, Artifices, Deception.
- 70. *Eight of Pentacles.***— A dark Girl, Beauty, Candour, Chastity, Innocence, Modesty; R. Flattery, Usury, Hypocrisy, Shifty.
- 71. *Seven of Pentacles.***— Money, Finance, Treasure, Gain, Profit; R. Disturbance, Worry, Anxiety, Melancholy.

72. Six of Pentacles.— Presents, Gifts, Gratification: R. Ambition, Desire, Passion, Aim, Longing.

73. Five of Pentacles.— Lover or Mistress, Love, Sweetness, Affection, Pure and Chaste Love; R. Disgraceful Love, Imprudence, License, Profligacy.

74. Four of Pentacles.— Pleasure, Gaiety, Enjoyment, Satisfaction; R. Obstacles, Hindrances.

75. Three of Pentacles.— Nobility, Elevation, Dignity, Rank, Power; R. Children, Sons, Daughters, Youths, Commencement.

76. Deuce of Pentacles.— Embarrassment, Worry, Difficulties; R. Letter, Missive, Epistle, Message.

77. Ace of Pentacles.— Perfect Contentment, Felicity, Prosperity, Triumph; R. Purse of Gold, Money, Gain, Help, Profit, Riches.

The following additional remarks may be serviceable to the to the inexperienced Cartomancer. They are chiefly taken from Etteilla.

24. Knight of Sceptres.— This card is not to be read singly; it means the Departure of the card which follows it. R. Again, notice the card which follows it; if a Woman, Quarrel with a Woman; if Money, then Loss of Money, &c.

25. Knave of Sceptres.— R. Notice between what cards the News falls, which will show whence it comes, and of what nature it is.

34. Deuce of Sceptres.— R. If the cards fall 49 R., 34 R., you will be surprised by a change. If 47, 49 R., 34 R., it will be happy; but the reverse if they fall 54, 49 R., 34 R.

38. The Knight of Cups.— This shows the arrival of the card which follows it, as 38, 54, the arrival of affliction or grief; 38, 39, the visit of a fair young man, etc.

43. Seven of Cups.— Explains the card which follows; thus, 43,

30, 33, The idea of attempting some undertaking. This will again be modified by the following cards.

44. Six of Cups.— Shows either that what precedes it is past, has occurred already; or if R., what is going to happen.

46. Four of Cups.— The following cards might show what the displeasure or anxiety was about; the preceding cards, whence it originated.

51. *Queen of Swords.*— This is not necessarily to be taken by itself; it may signify that the person symbolised by the cards near it has just lost, or is likely soon to lose, wife or husband. In some instances it may merely signify that if two people are married, the one will die some time before the other, but not necessarily that the event will occur immediately.

53. *Knave of Swords.*— R. If 72, 53 R. An unexpected present. If 53 R., 54, unexpected grief, etc.

55. *Nine of Swords.*— R. The card following will show whom or what to distrust, &c..

56. *Eight of Swords.*— R. Shows Treachery or Deceit in the past, and will be explained by the neighbouring cards.

57. *Seven of Swords.*— R. The cards which come next will show whether it will be good to follow the advice given or not. Also, the preceding cards will show from whom, and why, the advice comes.

60. *Four of Swords.*— R. The cards near will show whether it is health or money that requires care.

61. *Three of Swords.*— R. May show simply that something is lost, or mislaid for a time.

62. *Deuce of Swords.*— R. If confirmed by the other cards may simply mean that the friends are not *of much use* to the inquirer in the matter under consideration.

65. *Queen of Pentacles.*— R. (If this card does not signify any particular *person*). If 65 R., 31 R., It is not said that there will be a Lawsuit. If 31 R., 65 R., If you gain your case you won't be much the better for it.

67. *Knave of Pentacles.*— R. Consult the following cards to see in what the person is prodigal. If 67 R., 57 R., it may simply mean that the person is too fond of giving advice, intermeddles too much with other people's business.

71. *Seven of Pentacles.*— R. The next card will show the reason of the anxiety, and so on.

73. *Five of Pentacles.*— Shows simply that there is some one whom the person loves.

The Court-Cards, and especially the Kings and Queens, may be taken to represent persons; in this case their additional meaning should not be read. The Swords represent very dark people; Pentacles, those not so dark; Cups, rather fair people; Wands or Sceptres, those much

fairer, and so on. Many Wands together might signify feasting, many Cups lovemaking, Swords quarrelling and trouble, Coins or Pentacles money.

Where the mode of reading the cards requires that the person consulting should be represented, he should take one of the Kings to represent himself, according to his complexion. If a lady consults the cards, let her take one of the Queens; if she be rather fair, the Queen of Cups; if she be very fair, the Queen of Wands or Sceptres. If the inquirer be quite a youth or a boy, let him take one of the Knights; if a very young girl, let her take the Knave, etc. Etteilla's plan was to take two of the Keys for Significators, that answering to the Pope for a man, that answering to the High Priestess for a woman; but I do not think this is so well. The worst of Etteilla's system is that he so completely destroys the meanings of the Keys in his attempted rearrangement of them, as to make them practically useless for higher occult purposes.

I shall now give several modes of laying out the cards for divination. The reader can adopt whichever he prefers, or he can combine them.

Whatever mode of laying out be adopted, it is necessary that the person inquiring should carefully shuffle the cards, with two objects in view; firstly, that of turning some of the cards upside down; secondly, that of *thoroughly* altering their position and sequence in the pack. They should then be cut. During the shuffling and cutting the inquirer should *think earnestly* of the matter concerning which he is anxious for information; for unless he does this the cards will rarely read correctly. This shuffling and cutting should be thrice repeated. The backs of the cards should be towards the person shuffling.

FIRST METHOD.— The full pack of seventy-eight cards having been first duly shuffled and cut, deal the top card on a part of the table which we will call B, the second card on another place which we will call A. (These will form the commencement of two heaps, A and B, into which the whole pack is to be dealt.) Then deal the third and fourth cards on B, and the fifth on A; the sixth and seventh on B, and the eighth on A; the ninth and tenth on B, and the eleventh on A. Continue this operation of dealing two cards on B, and one on A, till you come to the end of the pack. A will then consist of twenty-six cards, and B of fifty-two.

Now take up the B heap of fifty-two cards. Deal the top card on a fresh place which we will call D, and the second card on another place C. (This will form the beginning of two fresh

heaps, C and D.) Then deal the third and fourth cards on D, and the fifth on C; the sixth and seventh on D, and the eighth on C, and so on as before through these fifty-two cards. There will now be three heaps: A = 26 cards, C = 17 cards, and D = 35 cards.

20			53															42			9			
19				52		Significator														41				8
18					51													40			7			
17						50												39			6			
16							49											38			5			
15								48										37			4			
14									47									36			3			
13										46				35							2			
12											45		34								1			

The cards will thus form a triangle within a species of arch; and the Significator of the Inquirer is to be placed in the centre of the triangle face upwards. The top card is to be dealt on number 1, the second card on number 2, the twelfth card on number 12, and so on up to number 66, when the remaining 11 cards are to be put aside and not used in the reading.

Then 1 to 11 and 34 to 44 inclusive will show the past; 23 to 33 and 56 to 66 inclusive will show the present; and 12 to 22 and 45 to 55 inclusive will show the future.

Now read them simply in order from 1 to 44 for the past, from 23 to 66 for the present, and from 12 to 55 for the future.

Then combine the Significator with every two cards, thus—S. 34 1; S. 33 2; S. 34 3; and so on up to S. 44 11, for the past. Then take S. 56 23; S. 57 24; and so on for the present. And then take S. 45 12; S. 46 13; up to S. 55 22, for the future.

Again vary the combinations by taking S. 44 1; 5. 43 2; up to S. 34 11, for the past; S. 66 23; 5. 65 24; up to S. 56 33, for the present; and 5. 55 12; S. 54 13; up to S. 45 22, for the future.

Finally, combine them all together, thus—66 1; 65 2; 64 3; and so on up to 34 33; placing them in a single packet one on the other as you do so; and when this is finished, deal the whole 66 cards in one large circle, placing the Significator as a starting-point, when 33 will be the first card and 66 the last card on either side of the Significator. Now gather them up thus in pairs for the last reading, S. 66; 33 1; 34 2; and so on up to the last card, which will be a single one. Draw two other fresh cards at random from the 11 cards which have not been used in the reading, and place them face upwards one on either side to form a surprise. Read these three from right to left as conclusion.

This mode is rather difficult at first, but practice will give facility.

These Tarot Cards may be used like the ordinary packs for games, as well as for divination; and it may be as well to give the general rules and mode of play. The Game of Tarot may be played by either two or three persons. The full pack of 78 cards is shuffled and cut in the

ordinary manner. The dealer deals them out in three hands by five cards at a time, and places the remaining three cards at his own right-hand side. There will thus be three hands of 25 cards each, and three cards besides. The players sort their hands, and the dealer discards the three most useless cards in his own hand and exchanges them for the before-mentioned three cards. The deal is taken in rotation by each player. The method of dealing is the same, whether *two* or *three* players participate, three hands being dealt out in each instance, but if only two players contend with each other, the third hand is untouched by either party.

The points constituting the game are 100, which may be marked on a cribbage board, on paper, or by an ordinary bezique-marker.

Before the hands are played out their score is reckoned in the following way:

The 22 trumps are not all of the same value.
21, 20, 19, 18, 17, are called the Five Greater Trumps.
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, are called the Five Lesser Trumps.

Whoever has three of the Greater or three of the Lesser Trumps in his hand, scores 5 points for the same; 10 points if he has four; and 15 points if he have all five. If the player has *any* ten trumps in his hand they will score 10 points, *any* thirteen trumps 15 points. It does not matter if Greater or Lesser Trumps, which have been already scored, form part of such ten or thirteen; all scores are independent of other combinations. Furthermore, for any cards to be scored they must be shown to the adversary at the time of scoring; this rule holds good in all cases. The non-dealer scores and leads first. If three play, the player on the dealer's left hand begins.

Seven cards bear the distinguishing title of Tarot Trumps; they are:

The Universe, 21; the Mat, or Foolish Man, 0; the Pagad, Juggler, or Magician, 1; the King of Sceptres; the King of Cups; the King of Swords; and the King of Pentacles.

If the player has any two of these Tarot Trumps, he can ask his opponent for a third; if the latter cannot reply by showing a third Tarot Trump, the former can score 5 points; but if he has the third it must be given up to the asker, who then does not score, but gives him some card of small value in exchange. For every three Tarot Trumps actually held in the hand, the holder marks 15 points.

Sequences of trumps or of cards of the same suit count; for every four cards in sequence, 5 points; for every seven cards, 10 points; for ten cards, 15 points. All cards forming these scores must be shown to the adversary.

0, *The Foolish Man*, is the lowest card in the pack in playing the hand; can take no card of any suit, and may be played to a card of any suit. For instance, if the adversary leads a King, and you have only the Queen of that suit remaining in your hand, but have also the 0, you can play this instead of the Queen, and thus save her from being taken. A King cut counts 5 points to whosoever cuts it. In each suit King is highest, then come Queen, Knight, Knave, Ten, Nine, etc., down to Ace, which is lowest, and can only take the 0. The Trumps reckon from 21, which is highest, to 1, which is lowest. You must follow suit if you can; if not, you may trump. Each trick should be kept separate for counting afterwards. Of course, the principal care of the player should be directed towards saving his own important cards, and taking those of the adversary. The player who takes a trick leads next. When all the hand is played out, the tricks on either side are counted as follows:—

For every trick in which there is a Tarot Trump, 5 points (the 0 counts to its *original* possessor, while the Pagad, 1, counts to the player who takes it). For every trick with a

Queen, 4 points; with a Knight, 3 points; with a Knave, 2 points; for every other trick, 1 point.

At the end of each hand the points made by each player are added up separately, then the lesser is taken from the greater, and only the *excess* points of the more fortunate player are scored. The same is done in each hand, and the player who, in this way, first reaches 100 points (*or over* in the final hand) wins the game.

For my reader's convenience I append a table of the points which can be scored:

<i>Scored in Hand.</i>		<i>Points.</i>
For any 3 of the Greater Trumps held in hand	=	5
For any 4 of the Greater Trumps held in hand	=	10
For all 5 of the Greater Trumps held in hand	=	15
For any 3 of the Lesser Trumps held in hand	=	5
For any 4 of the Lesser Trumps held in hand	=	10
For all 5 of the Lesser Trumps held in hand	=	15
For any 10 Trumps held in hand	=	10
For any 13 Trumps held in hand	=	15
For any 2 Tarot-Trumpes called unanswered	=	5
For any 3 Tarot-Trumpes actually held in hand	=	15
For every Sequence of 4 Cards	=	5
For every Sequence of 7 Cards	=	10
For every Sequence of 10 Cards	=	15
<i>Scored in Play</i>		<i>Points</i>
For a King, cut	=	5
For each Trick containing a Tarot Trump	=	5

The each Trick containing a Queen	=	4
For each Trick containing a Knight	=	3
For each Trick containing a Knave	=	2
For every Trick of two plain Cards	=	1

If three players contend, of course the third player will form an additional factor in the game. Then, when the three compare their various scores in the same hand, only he who has most should score, and then only the amount by which he exceeds the player who comes second. The other players do not score at all.

Before concluding this short treatise, I will say a few words on the occult and Qabalistical signification of these wonderful Tarot Cards. It has been long known that the ordinary 52 card pack was susceptible of some peculiar numerical significations, *e.g.*:

52 Cards in the pack, suggest 52 weeks in the year.
13 Cards in each suit, suggest 13 lunar months in the year, 13 weeks in the quarter.
4 suits in the pack, suggest 4 seasons in the year.
12 Picture Cards in the pack, suggest 12 months in the year, 12 signs of the Zodiac.

Furthermore, if we add together:

The pips on the plain cards of the four suits	=	220
The pips on the 12 Picture Cards	=	12
Twelve Picture Cards reckoned as 10 each	=	120
The number of cards in each suit	=	<u>13</u>
We shall obtain the number of days in the year	=	365

But concealed behind their apparently arbitrary and bizarre designs, the Tarot Cards contain a far more complicated system of recondite symbolism. We find the number ten multiplied by the mystical number four, and combined with a primitive hieroglyphic alphabet of twenty-two letters.

Eliphas Lèvi says in his "*Histoire de la Magie*": "The absolute hieroglyphical science had for its basis an alphabet of which all the gods were letters, all the letters ideas, all the ideas numbers, and all the numbers perfect signs.

"This hieroglyphical alphabet of which Moses made the great secret of his Cabala, and which he retook from the Egyptians; for, according to the *Sepher Yetzirah*, it came from Abraham; this alphabet, we say, is the famous Book of Thoth, suspected by Court de Gèbelin to be preserved to the present time under the form of that peculiar pack of cards, which is called the Tarot. . . The ten numbers and twenty-two letters are what are called in the Cabala the thirty-two paths of science,

and their philosophical description is the subject of that primitive and revered work known as the *Sepher Yetzirah*, which is still to be found in the collection of Pistorius and others. The Alphabet of Thoth is the original of our Tarot, only in an altered form. The Tarot which we have is of Jewish origin, and the types of the figures cannot be traced back further than the reign of Charles VI.”

The *Sepher Yetzirah* referred to in the above quotation has been recently translated by my friend [Dr. Wynn Westcott](#), who is a skilful and erudite Qabalistical student, so that it can now be read in English. It certainly gives, in my opinion, the Qabalistical Key of the Tarot; and shows at once, by evident analogy, the ancient and religious origin of its bizarre symbolism. It consists of thirty-three short sections (the thirty-third being merely recapitulatory) divided into five chapters, and elucidated by thirty-two occult paragraphs called the “Paths”. In fact, it may be called a treatise on the ten and the twenty-two. The numbers from one to ten are said to symbolise the Spirit, Air, Water, Fire, Height, Depth, East, West, North, South. The twenty-two letters are divided into three Mother Letters, A, M, SH, referring to Air, Water, and Fire; seven double letters, B, G, D, K, P, R, TH, referring to the seven planets, etc.; and twelve simple letters, H, V, Z, CH, T, I, L, N, S, O, Tz, Q, referring to the twelve signs of the Zodiac, etc.

Christian, the disciple of Lèvi, in his recent work on Magic, has made the explanation of the twenty-two hieroglyphics of the Tarot form part of the initiatory ceremonies of the Egyptian mysteries of Crata Repoa.

The symbols of three of the twenty-two Trumps of the Tarot were thus restored by Eliphas Lèvi.

7. *The Chariot.*— A cubical chariot with four columns, surmounted by an azure and star-decked canopy. Within the chariot and between the four columns stands a Conqueror crowned with a circlet, from which rise and shine three pentagrams of gold. On his cuirass are three right angles; and on his shoulders the Urim and Thummim symbolised by the two crescents of the Moon in increase and decrease. In his hand is a sceptre surmounted by a globe, a square, and a triangle. His attitude is proud and tranquil. To the Chariot is attached a double sphinx, or rather two sphinxes joined together; one of them turns its head, and they both look in the same direction. The sphinx which turns its head towards the other is black and menacing, the other is white and calm. On the square which forms the front of the Chariot we see the Indian lingam surmounted by the flying globe of the Egyptians.

10. *The Wheel of Fortune.*— A wheel of seven spokes, the cosmogonical wheel of Ezekiel, with a dog-headed figure ascending on one side (Anubis, the Egyptian Mercury); and a demon descending on the other (the Egyptian evil deity, Typhon); the former of these bears a caduceus, the latter a trident; both figures are bound to the wheel.

Above them is a sphinx at the balance-point of the wheel, holding a drawn sword between its lion's claws.

12. *The Devil.*— Throned on a cube above the Universe is a goat-headed, satyr-like figure, bearing on its brow the pentagram, apex upward, so as to make it a symbol of Light. With one hand it points upwards to the symbol of the Moon in increase, with the other downwards to that of the Moon in decrease, thus symbolising the eternal equilibrium of Mercy and Justice; the first two fingers and thumb of each hand are extended as in giving the sign of benediction. One arm is feminine, the other masculine. The torch of intelligence is placed between its horns, as the Magical Light of the Universal Equilibrium. The caduceus which holds the place of the generative organs signifies the eternity of life; the belly is covered with scales to represent Water; the circle above it is the atmosphere; the Wings are the emblem of the Volatile; and the deformed and goat-like feet rest upon the earth.

Space does not allow me to enter further into the subject, on which, indeed, several volumes might be written without exhausting it. I can only hope that this short treatise will suffice to give my readers some idea of the recondite meaning of the Tarot Cards, and how to employ them in divination.

[i] This is partly taken by Vaillant from Court de Gèbelin's "*Monde Primitif*" vol. 8, p. 387.