

Sources of the Waite/Smith Tarot Symbols

The files in this series suggest sources for the detailed imagery in the 22 symbolic cards (Trumps plus Fool) of the Rider-Waite Tarot deck. The deck was published in December 1909 with images painted by Pamela Colman Smith in consultation with Arthur E. Waite and under his tutelage.

The approach is called Quantitative Iconography* and was developed as a method to estimate the degree of similarity between complex symbolic images. The approach was originally developed to provide a quantitative foundation** for the systematic but qualitative methods used by art historians***.

The basic approach involves analyzing a complex image into a number of individual symbolic features. In the case of the Tarot cards, 10 to 20 details were identified on each card. In the case of symbols as complex as the Waite/Smith cards, it is difficult to be all-inclusive and additional features will be added through time.

The file on each card has two parts. The first part is a table, listing each symbolic feature and examples of occult decks, traditional decks and/or 15th century decks that show this feature. The decks listed are examples and there is no suggestion that this specific deck was used as the model. Nevertheless, the examples are generally available and can be accessed by the user. This access is important since many of the identifications are subjective. For example, one viewer may decide that the Magician's lemniscus derives from the floppy hat on the Tarot de Marseille deck, while another viewer may decide that the resemblance is only superficial. Therefore, the examples listed permit the user to determine for themselves if the Waite/Smith feature could be derived from this source.

But in general the table serves to identify those individual features which were probably adapted from earlier decks. The division into Occult, Traditional, and 15th century serves to identify the genre of deck that might have served as a source. As expected, many features appear to be modeled on previous occultist decks that were well known to Waite. But, interestingly, some features are not found on the occultists decks but appear to be modeled on the traditional Continental decks. In a few cases, a feature appears on neither occultist or European decks and may have its source in historical 15th century decks and woodblock printed sheets. The table serves, therefore, to suggest the type of deck that might have served as the source of that symbolic feature.

Approaching the analysis in this way involves an important assumption that needs to be made explicit. It is quite probable that Waite depended heavily on written descriptions of the symbols. Waite had published translations of Levi and Papus**** and was familiar with other occult authors, such as Christian. So it is reasonable to maintain that these descriptions are the source of the imagery, rather than the occultist decks. But Smith, who painted the images, was a visual artist

rather than an occult scholar. So it is assumed here that she, like most artists, used a visual model rather than a verbal description. This translates into the assumption that if Waite wanted Smith to represent a specific symbolic feature, he provided her with a model from an earlier deck. This assumption seems to be validated by the number of cases in which the symbolic feature on the Waite/Smith card matches the visual feature on the earlier deck, even when the written description is general and does not specify such details.

The reader also needs to realize that the effort is toward identifying sources for the imagery, not toward providing divinatory or symbolic meanings. In many cases, of course, the identification of a source immediately suggests a meaning - or at least constrains the possible meanings. But, for the most part, drawing those conclusions is left to the reader.

In addition to the table, each file contains a number of notes and comments. For the most part, these notes refer to symbolic features that do not appear on earlier decks and appear to be original with the Waite/Smith deck. These notes identify other visual imagery that might have served as the source. When no visual model was discovered, an attempt is made to reconstruct reasons why Waite/Smith might have selected this feature for inclusion. Where possible, the reconstruction is based on material in Waite's other books.

The files in this series are very much a work in progress. They are offered in the spirit of sharing the available information even while research into the sources continues. The user is free to download and make copies for students. The user is also free to use the material, with proper attribution, in their own published work on the Tarot.

Because the research is continuing, the user is encouraged to provide additions and/or corrections to roneill@attglobal.net. If the comments are suitable, the files will be amended and credit given to the contributor.

Bob O'Neill

* O'Neill, R. V. and R. H. Gardner. 1982. Quantitative iconography. *Journal of the International Playing Card Society* XI (1): 15-23.

** Robert Sokal. *Numerical Taxonomy*.

*** see e.g., Gombrich, E. H. 1972. *Gombrich on the Renaissance. Volume 2: Symbolic Images*. Phaidon Press and Panofsky, E. 1939. *Studies in Iconology*. Oxford University Press.

**** Gilbert, R. A. 1983. *A. E. Waite, A Bibliography*. The Aquarian Press.

Based on original research by Robert V. O'Neill. To add to this collection of information, please email

<u>The Fool</u>	<u>The Magician</u>	<u>The High Priestess</u>	<u>The Empress</u>	<u>The Emperor</u>
<u>The Hierophant</u>	<u>The Lovers</u>	<u>The Chariot</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>The Hermit</u>
<u>Wheel of Fortune</u>	<u>Justice</u>	<u>The Hanged Man</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Temperance</u>
<u>The Devil</u>	<u>The Tower</u>	<u>The Star</u>	<u>The Moon</u>	<u>The Sun</u>
	<u>Judgement</u>	<u>The World</u>		

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The Fool

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Cliff	Goulinat		Visconti-Sforza
White Dog	Goulinat	Piedmontese	T. Mantegna
Dog Leaping	Wirth	T de Marseilles	T. Mantegna
Age - Youth	Goulinat	Bolognese	
Red Feather	Gebelin	Bolognese	Visconti-Sforza
Blonde Hair			Visconti-Sforza
Looking Up	Goulinat		
White shirt			Visconti-Sforza
Colorful Tunic	Wirth	T de Marseilles	
Belt of Circles	Gebelin	T de Marseilles	
Falling Boots		Gumpfenberg	Visconti-Sforza
White Rose	Westcott		Met Sheet
Staff	Goulinat	T de Marseilles	Visconti-Sforza
Purse	Goulinat	T de Marseilles	

Notes

1. White Sun - may refer to the **KETHER**, the Crown. In the Golden Dawn system, the Fool corresponds to a path leading downward from **KETHER**.
2. Mountains - probably refers to the long mystical journey through the stark mountains. This is one the ways that

Waite describes the mystical journey in his other works.

3. Laurel Wreath - an obvious symbol of Victory, but why does it appear on the Fool, at the beginning of his journey? The answer may be that Waite saw the Fool's journey as circular, and the Fool is beginning again after completing a previous cycle.
4. The 8-spoked wheel is a symbol of Spirit, thought of as a fifth element. So perhaps Waite thought of the Fool as the symbol of the spiritual journey.
5. Flames - same as the flames on the Tree of Life on the Lovers card.
6. The Hebrew letter *Shin* can be found in one of the wheels on the tunic. This is possibly a reference to the letter correspondence used by Eliphas Levi. Levi placed the Fool between Judgment and World and gave it the letter *Shin*. In the Golden Dawn system, the Fool is assigned to *Aleph*.

However, considerable caution is required before drawing any connections between the Hebrew alphabet and the Waite-Smith cards. A. Grinder points out that Waite stated in a number of places that he did not believe in any systematic correspondence. For example, "But wherever it (Fool) is placed in the series, the correspondence between Trumps Major and the Hebrew Alphabet is ipso facto destroyed" (*Shadows of Life and Thought*, 190-191), and "It may be well to add that I am not to be included among those who are satisfied that there is a valid correspondence between Hebrew letters and Tarot Trump symbols" (Intro to *The Book of Formation*, trans. by Knut Stenring, Ktav Publishing House, 13-14).

7. The symbol on the Fool's wallet is not clear. It may be a shell and represent the 'good luck' scallops that were carried on pilgrimages. It may be a bird and refer to the Golden Dawn attribution of the Fool to the element of air. Paul Foster Case (*The Tarot*, p 34) says that it is an eagle. If he is correct, the symbolism is appropriate because Waite says (*The Book of Destiny*, p 249) "To dream of an eagle in a high place ...is good for those who are starting on some great undertaking."
8. This card is assigned to the element Air in the Golden Dawn system. This may explain the hair and tunic blowing.
9. The white rose may refer to Fool setting off on a Rosicrucian journey. Waite was quite fascinated by the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. He wrote two books on the subject and regarded the Golden Dawn as a latter day Rosicrucian society. The three founders of the Golden Dawn were members of the "Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia," the inner order of the Golden Dawn was the "Rosae Rubeae et Aurae Crucis," and Waite's own revised Golden Dawn group was the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross. Roses appear on many of the cards (Fool, Magician, Empress, Strength, Death) and seemed to have represented a rich symbolic complex for Waite.

He presents extended discussions, with significant overlap, in "*The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*" p 85ff, "*Real History of the Rosicrucians*" p 11ff and an article in "*New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*." Elsewhere ("*Lamps of Western Mysticism*," p 327), he refers to "the beginning of discernment ...which lies within the centre of the Rose of Dante." He also makes the interesting comment in "*The Occult Sciences*" that the Rosicrucian symbol "has no connection with the sublime symbolism of the Oriental world: Egypt, Thebes, Eleusinia and the sanctuaries of antique initiation are innocent of its import. It is a development of the monogram of the monk, Martin Luther, which was a cross-crowned heart rising from the center of an open rose."

10. The Cliff in the foreground of the card may be another reference to Rosicrucianism. The mountain or cliff appears on the Fool, Emperor, Lovers(?), Strength (?), Hermit, Death, Temperance(?), Tower, Moon (?), and Judgment. So this forms an important symbolic element in the background of many of the cards.
11. In the Adeptus Minor Ritual, the mountain is referred to "This is the symbolic Mountain of God in the centre of the Universe, the sacred Rosicrucian Mountain of Initiation, the Mystic mountain of Abiegnus." Jung (*Aion*, p 203) says "The Mountain means ascent, particularly the mystical, spiritual ascent to the heights, to the place of Revelation where the spirit is present." The mystic, Richard of St. Victor, advises: "Ascend that Mountain and learn to know thyself." In *Lamps of Western Mysticism*, (p 269) Waite says "...that process which I will call Ascending the Mountains of the Lord."
12. In the "Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross," Waite goes through "The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz" ~1616. On page 161, he says the main character is presented with a choice of roads - the first is the short and dangerous, rocky road (Implied in the Fool card?).

13. A remarkable insight into Waite's vision of the Fool symbolism is provided by Waite's poem, "At the End of Things," published in *The Collected Poems of Arthur Edward Waite*. Access to the poem has been provided by the research of [A. Grinder](#) at his [A. E. Waite](#) website. Grinder is providing an invaluable service to the Tarot community by locating and posting the Miscellaneous Writings of A. E. Waite.

The poem says:

*When I heard that all the world was questing,
I look'd for a palmer's staff.*

"Palmer" is a Medieval term that refers to a pilgrim to the Holy Land.

*I cast around for a scrip to hold
Such meagre needs...
An old worn wallet was that they gave me,
With twelve old signs on its seven old skins.*

The 12 and 7 probably refer to the Zodiacal Signs and the traditional Planets. In other words, the pilgrim started off with the traditional Occult knowledge that Waite refers to as Transcendental Science. (See "The Threefold Division of Mysticism" from the periodical *The Unknown World* Volume one, number one; Aug. 15, 1894, accessible at <http://www.adepti.com>.)

Waite points out that because of the lies and deceits of past occultists, many pilgrims were misled:

*The fools fell down in the swamps and marshes;
The fools died hard on the crags and hills;
The lies which cheated, so long repeated,
Deceived...*

But the present pilgrim is protected:

*But me the scrip and the staff had strengthen'd...
The paths I've taken, of most forsaken,
Do surely lead to an open sea...*

And the pilgrim reaches the mystical goal:

*Which then was wisdom and which was folly?...
The fool, as I think, at the chasm's brink...
Did, even as I, in the end rejoice...*

14. It has been suggested that W. B. Yeats assisted Waite and Smith in designing the cards. (See [Magician](#) footnote #2 for more detail.)

It is interesting therefore to look at the character of the Fool as it appears in Yeats's early plays. The following is from Graf, *W. B. Yeats: Twentieth Century Magus* (Weiser, 2000), quoting Yeats himself.

I had my Wise Man humble himself to the Fool and receive salvation as a reward... The Fool...wears a mask...which makes him seem less a human being than a principle of the mind.

Later, Graf herself notes *These fools possess a wisdom so corrosive that it strips them of their ability to behave appropriately or to be members of the status quo...They appear to be mad, but Yeats, following Plato, suggests that theirs is a divine madness.*

In one of his poems, Yeats says *I would be - for no knowledge is worth a straw - ignorant and wanton as the dawn.*

15. The appearance of the Rose on the Fool card may also have been influenced by W. B. Yeats. Graf points out that Yeats often used the symbol of the rose in his writings. She quotes from the Variorum Editions of the Poems (Allt and Alspach, eds., Macmillan, 1987) # 811:

He saw the garden of Eden...and...came to a tall, dark tree..and told to go up...near the top of tree a beautiful

woman, like the Goddess of Life...gave him a rose. The reference is to the Shekinah of the QBLH Tree of Life, and the Fool is positioned at the top of the tree in the Golden Dawn system.

Based on original research by (in alphabetical order) [A. Grinder](#) and [R. O'Neill](#). To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](#).

The Fool	The Magician	The High Priestess	The Empress	The Emperor
The Hierophant	The Lovers	The Chariot	Strength	The Hermit
Wheel of Fortune	Justice	The Hanged Man	Death	Temperance
The Devil	The Tower	The Star	The Moon	The Sun
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The Magician

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Lemniscus	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Age - Youth	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Black Hair	Felkin	Piedmontese	T de Mantegna
Right hand up	Felkin	Vieville	
Left hand down	Felkin	Vieville	
Wand	Falconnier	Vieville	Cary Sheet
Points down	Falconnier	Bolognese	
Headband	Falconnier		
White Tunic	Falconnier		T de Mantegna
Red Cloak	Etteilla III		
Snake Belt	Falconnier		
Stone Table	Falconnier		T de Mantegna
Knife on Table	Falconnier	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Cup on Table	Falconnier	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Rod on Table	Felkin	Minchiate	
Coin on Table	Falconnier	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Carvings	Falconnier	Vachetta	

Notes

1. Rose Arbor - may be a reference to Rosicrucianism. Members of the Rosicrucian orders, such as the inner order of the Golden Dawn, were considered to be great magicians and alchemists.

2. Roses & Lilies - in the "*Pictorial Key*," Waite writes: "Beneath are roses and lilies, the *flos campi* and *lilium convallium*, changed into garden flowers..." The Latin words are from the Vulgate (Latin) Bible, the Song of Songs, Chap 2, Verse 1, "I am the Rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys. As a lily among the thistles, so is my love among the thistles, so is my love among the maidens" - so the words are translated as Rose of Sharon and Lily of the Valley. So that is the ultimate source of the symbolism.

- a. The more immediate source comes from the Golden Dawn initiation ceremonies, as outlined in the "Cipher Document." In the Zelator Initiation, (lines 12-13) are the words "Rose of Sharon. Lily of [the] Valle[y]. Also in the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross (87) is a reference to Isaiah 35:1 - "The desert shall blossom as the Rose." The Vulgate says it's "lily" rather than rose. The Hebrew word would today be translated as "Meadow Saffron."
- b. Another proximal source may be W. B. Yeats, the Nobel Prize-winning Irish poet who was a leading member of the Golden Dawn.

In an article in the *Occult Review* (Volume X, 307-317) entitled "The Tarot: A Wheel of Fortune," Waite stated that as he and Pamela Colman Smith designed the deck, "we have had other help from one who is deeply versed in the subject." Roger Parisious ("Figures in a Dance: W. B. Yeats and the Waite-Ride Tarot") suggested that this help came from Yeats. There may be a real basis for the influence of Yeats in the case of the rose and lily imagery which Yeats used in his early poetry.

In *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats* (Finneran, ed., Vol 1 - The Poems, Macmillan, 1989), we find #41 "A weariness comes from those dreamers, dew-dabbled, the lily and rose," #42 "Soon far from the rose and the lily and fret of the flames would we be," and #71 "Lilies of death-pale hope, roses of passionate dream."

Robert Schuler ("W. B. Yeats: Artist or Alchemist?" *Review of English Studies* 22:37ff) interprets this last line as relating to Yeats's interest in sexual magic. Schuler also notes that the lily and rose in alchemical literature symbolize the moon and the sun, the white and red tinctures in the alchemical process. More detail can be found in Gorski's *Yeats and Alchemy* (State University of New York, 1996).

3. At the top of the visible leg, just below the bird, is the word "*DIN*." It's Hebrew (*nun-yod-daleth*) and means judgment. It's an alternative name for the Sephira Geburah (e.g., see Scholem: *Major Trends* p 263). The Magician is not a path to or from this Sephira in the Golden Dawn system, so its presence on the card is obscure.

I have two possibilities to offer:

- a. In *Holy Kabballah* (p 427) Waite associates Geburah with gold, in the sense of the end of an alchemical operation. So perhaps the *Din* is to suggest that the Magician is an Alchemist.
- b. *Din* is also used as judgment in the sense of favorable judgment of the Just operating through nature. For example, Job 36:31 - "Thanks to them he nourishes (*Din*) the nations with generous gifts of food."

It's a bit of a stretch but perhaps the *Din* is on the card to fit in with the nature theme of the Magician card(??).

4. Waite *Works of Thomas Vaughan* p 205, "Out of this Mercury alone all the virtues of the Art is extracted...the Tincture, both red and white..." (Magician???? Rose and Lilies??)
5. The waistband formed of a snake biting its tail may have a Masonic root. Ward (*An Interpretation of our Masonic Symbols*) discusses the waistband that holds up the Mason's apron and says: "The Serpent. - The modern arrangement by which the apron is fastened - viz. a piece of webbing with a kind of hook and eye - gave a fine opportunity for some really profound symbolism, and I feel certain that it not accident which led to the universal adoption of the snake to serve this purpose."

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The High Priestess

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
B/W Pillars	Goulinat		
Lotus tops	Goulinat	Vachetta	
Veil behind	Goulinat	T de Marseille	
Cubic Throne	Falconnier	Piedmontese	Visconti -Sforza
Age - Youth	Falconnier	Minchiate	Visconti-Sforza
Black Hair	Falconnier	Piedmontese	
Blue Dress	Wirth	Piedmontese	
Blue Robe	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Cross	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Horned Orb	Wirth		
Head Veil	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Scroll	Falconnier	Piedmontese	
Part Hidden	Falconnier	Vieville	

Notes

1. Sea Behind the Veil - In 1 Kings, immediately following the description of the pillars of Solomon's Temple (7:21-22), is the description of the "Sea" (7:23-26), actually a huge ceremonial bath for ritual cleansing. The image may also be suggested by Levi, *Ritual of High Magic*, Chapter 22, who describes lotus floating on the sea.
2. B & J on the Pillars - These appear in the description of Solomon's Temple, 1 Kings 7:15-22 and 2 Chronicles 3:14-17. The pillars are named *Boaz* and *Jachim*. The immediate source is almost certainly the Order of the Golden Dawn and Freemasonry since both use the pillars in their ceremonies. 1 Kings 7:19 also mentions that "the capitals surmounting the pillars were flower-shaped" which may explain the lotus shape found on the Waite/Smith card and earlier decks.

3. Pomegranates and Date Palms on Veil - These appear in the description of Solomon's Temple. Palm trees were carved on the wooden doors to the Holy of Holies (1 King 6:33-35). Palm leaves were also on the stands in the temple (1 Kings 7:36). Pomegranates were cast and placed on the filigree of each of the two pillars (1 Kings 7:18-20, 2 Chronicles 3:16).
4. *TORA* on scroll - This comes from Levi's playing with the letters to make *TORA(H)* and *ROTA* (Wheel) out of *TARO(T)*.
5. Moon under her Foot - The immediate source is probably the Cipher Document of the Golden Dawn that assigns this card to the Moon. This is a departure from earlier Occult decks which show the moon under the foot of the Empress. In the introduction of *Alchemists through the Ages* (p 36), Waite says: "The woman of the future will be clothed with the sun and Luna shall be set beneath her feet. The blue mantle typifies the mystical sea." (Note that "clothed with the sun" may be "clothed with the Son" and represented by the cross on the card.)
6. The bottom of the gown appears to be turning into water. This is the source of the river that flows through the rest of the Trumps: Empress, Emperor, Chariot, Death. It may come from the idea that four rivers flowed from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10).
7. The Golden Dawn assigned the Priestess to Hebrew letter *Gimel* = English G = Enochian *Ged*. *Ged* looks like a fishhook and may be suggested in the folds of the gown, a little less than 3/4 below the Priestess' hand. However, see [The Fool](#), footnote 6 for a caveat about assuming that the Hebrew letters can be found in the Waite-Smith designs.
8. [Tom Tadfor Little](#) pointed out that the title "High Priestess" first appears (as "La grandpretresse") in the Grandpretre tarot, issued in France probably around 1800 and inspired by Court de Gebelin's book *Le Monde Primitif*, which launched the occult tarot revival. Before that, the card (when it is not replaced by a completely different subject) is invariably called the Papess (female pope): "la papessa" in Italian, "la papesse" in French. To read more of Little's study on the history of the Major Arcana, please visit [The Hermitage: A Tarot History Site](#).
9. So how did the Papess card turn into a high priestess? Again borrowing from Little: by the time of the Counter-Reformation, the female pope was often considered an inappropriate subject for the cards and was dropped from many decks, though not from the Tarot de Marseille which was the base for the occultist decks. Some insight into the transition can be gained by looking at a number of suggestions that have been offered as the source for the original 15th century image.
 - a. There was a custom of using female figures to depict institutions or abstractions, so a female pope might represent the papacy or the church at large. Kaplan, Vol 2, p 160, shows a reproduction of a painting by Vassari that celebrates the victory of Spain, Venice and the Papacy over the Turks. Here the Papacy is represented by a female Pope. However, if the Papess had been intended to represent such an abstraction, one would expect the card to be labelled "The Church."
 - b. Renaissance art also depicts the legendary Pope Joan. For example, she appears among the historical popes in the 15th century Cathedral of Sienna. Joan was an Englishwoman who entered a monastic order disguised as a man. She rose in prominence and was elected pope, only to have her secret revealed when she collapsed in childbirth during a procession. The legend was quite popular during the time of the invention of the tarot, and persisted for centuries. However, Pope Joan is ordinarily depicted as giving birth or holding her baby.
 - c. Gertrude Moakley (*The Tarot Cards*, 1966) has called attention to a small heretical sect, the Guglielmites, which was active in Milan about a century before the tarot cards were invented. They elected one of their members, Manfreda, as pope! Manfreda was a relation of the Visconti family who ruled Milan and commissioned the earliest surviving tarot cards. On that deck, the Papess is shown in the habit of the Umiliata, the order that Manfreda belonged to. However, beyond the deck specifically produced for the Visconti about 1450, the local Milanese phenomenon of Guglielmites is unlikely to be the source for the image on earlier decks, for example, the 1442 deck mentioned in an inventory of the Este estate in Ferrara.
 - d. Little ([The Hermitage: A Tarot History Site](#)) develops the idea that the Papess did not represent an individual person so much as a dualistic principle to balance the male Pope card, just as the Empress forms the female dual of the Emperor. This dualism, evident in many of the Tarot trumps, may stem from Catharism, a popular dualist heresy that flourished in the city states of northern Italy.

As a public entity, Catharism was eradicated by the Inquisition by the middle of the 14th century (Lambert, M. 1998. *The Cathars*. Blackwell, Oxford) but dualistic concepts continued to influence Italian culture well into the 15th century and beyond. This explanation is appealing because it helps explain why the Papess evolved into the High Priestess even as its dual, the Pope, evolved into the Hierophant.

- e. However, there are also hints that the Papess image was associated with a Pagan goddess/priestess from the beginning. For example, the Papess may represent Isis who was very much a part of Late Medieval and Renaissance thinking. Peter Comestor wrote an influential history of God's People in 1160 that discusses Isis as the inventor of letters and writing. Isis also appears as a complete chapter in the History of Jacopo da Bergamo (1483). And we should not forget Plutarch's influential work: "Isis and Osiris" from which we can get the modern associations with the crescent moon and water seen in the Waite-Smith deck.

An image of Isis appears in the Appartamento Borgia in the Vatican (Yates: Giordano Bruno, plate 5). She is seated on a throne between two pillars with a veil stretched between them and a book in her lap. There is also a Renaissance image of Isis with the orb and horn crown (Shumaker: *Occult Sciences in the Renaissance*, p 247).

- f. There is a figure of the High Priestess of Venus in Leon Battista Alberti's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499). She appears in Chapter 31:

- <http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-books/HP/hyp435.htm>

There are also images at:

- <http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-books/HP/hyp429.htm>
- <http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-books/HP/hyp431.htm>

This image may be completely unrelated to the Tarot image but does suggest that the High Priestess of a pagan goddess was part and parcel of the Renaissance imagination.

- g. The Papess image may also represent a Sibyl. The Sibyls were pagan prophetesses who were believed to have predicted the Virgin Birth and other aspects of Christianity. Although unfamiliar to us, the Sibyls were an important part of late medieval and Renaissance culture because of the Sibylline Books, the earliest dating back to the 4th century. Cohn (*The Pursuit of the Millenium*, Oxford University Press, 1970, p 33) points out that "uncanonical and unorthodox though they were, the Sibyllines had enormous influence - indeed save for the Bible and the works of the Fathers, they were probably the most influential writings known to medieval Europe.

They often dominated the pronouncements of dominant figures in the Church, monks and nuns such as St. Bernard and St. Hildegard whose counsel even popes and emperors regarded as divinely inspired...From the fourteenth century onward translations began to appear in the various European languages...these books were being read and studied everywhere."

Imagery derived from the books was widespread and therefore available to the illiterate. Finiguerra's "Picture Chronicle" ~1460 (99 images representing history) shows Sibyls. Phillippus de Barberiis "Opuscula" (1481) has illustrations of the 12 Sibylls. They are found on French Cathedrals of the period. The church of San Francesco di Rimini (~1450) has images of Sibyls as does the Cambio of Perugia and the study/library of Pope Julius II in the Vatican. They were common illustrations in prayer books (Books of Hours). Sibylls are in the pavement of the Sienna Cathedral. They were probably a part of the original floor plan (~1400) and were executed ~1480.

The easiest access to images of the Sibyls is in Levenson, Oberhuber and Sheehan *Early Italian Engravings from the National Gallery of Art*. There you will find, for example, the Sybil of Persia: seated, elaborate robe, book in her lap, face partially covered by a veil.

Based on original research by (in alphabetical order) [T. Little](#) and [R. O'Neill](#). To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](#).

The Fool	The Magician	The High Priestess	The Empress	The Emperor
The Hierophant	The Lovers	The Chariot	Strength	The Hermit
Wheel of Fortune	Justice	The Hanged Man	Death	Temperance
The Devil	The Tower	The Star	The Moon	The Sun

[Judgement](#)

[The World](#)

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The Empress

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Stone Bench	Wirth	Minchiate	Cary Sheet
Shield	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Cushions		Vandenborre	
Orbed scepter	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Left Hand on leg	Goulinat		
12 Star Tiara	Wirth		
Pearl Necklace	1JJ		
Gold Lapel	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
White Gown	Goulinat	Gumpfenberg	Cary Sheet
Flowers on Gown			Visconti-Sforza

Notes

1. Woods/Stream/Waterfall/Wheat - Waite identifies this card as Mother Nature - "...a field of corn is ripening in front...the fruitful mother...universal fecundity." There is wheat growing, indicating the Goddess Ceres. This is reinforced by the crown of 12 stars which comes from Revelations 12:1 - "Now a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the Moon, and with the 12 stars on her head for a crown." This is "...the Earthly Paradise..." Notice this is the first of the four cards that shows a stream/river - probably the four rivers that flow from the Garden of Eden - Genesis 2:10 "A river flowed from Eden...and from there it divided to make four streams."
2. The sign of Venus is on the Shield, the cushion and appears as flowers on the gown - In the Golden Dawn system, this card is assigned to Venus.
3. Laurel Wreath - Perhaps the crown of laurel continues to emphasize the "Mother Nature" theme or perhaps it implies that she is victor/ruler over the natural world and productivity.
4. Waterfall - Following the passage in Revelation about the woman crowned with 12 stars, she gives birth to a son,

and the Serpent tries to destroy them both. Revelation 12:15, "The serpent vomited water from his mouth, like a river, after the woman, to sweep her away in the current, but the earth came to her rescue; it opened its mouth and swallowed the river."

The image is somewhat alien to our modern eye, but has an incredibly rich occult heritage. Consider the following from Wilmshurst *The Meaning of Masonry* (p 183), "at a certain stage of progress, the candidate is likened to an ear of corn by a fall of water."

Then consider Waite's (*Works of Thomas Vaughan* p 245ff) account of a mystic/chemist's vision/dream: "whispers of a soft wind...it was in the leaves of the trees, so that I concluded myself to be in some wood...it was not a wood but a building...the Temple of Nature...I could see...a most exquisite, divine beauty...Attired she was in thin loose silk...(She speaks:) 'I have many names, but my best and dearest is Thalia for I am always green and shall never wither ...I will shew thee the original of Nilus'...I could see a stupendous cataract or waterfall..."

In my personal opinion, the image of the waterfall is particularly instructive - by looking at his other writings, it becomes apparent that Waite and Smith lived in a world of symbolic imagery that is extremely difficult for us to enter or intuit today.

Based on original research by Robert V. O'Neill. To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](mailto:Robert.V.O'Neill).

<u>The Fool</u>	<u>The Magician</u>	<u>The High Priestess</u>	<u>The Empress</u>	<u>The Emperor</u>
<u>The Hierophant</u>	<u>The Lovers</u>	<u>The Chariot</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>The Hermit</u>
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<u>The Devil</u>	<u>The Tower</u>	<u>The Star</u>	<u>The Moon</u>	<u>The Sun</u>
	<u>Judgement</u>	<u>The World</u>		

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The Emperor

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Square Dais	Westcott	Vachetta	
Stone Throne	Westcott		T d Mantegna
Ram Heads	Westcott		
Crown	Westcott	T de Marseille	T d Mantegna
Red White Stones in Crown	Westcott	Vachetta	
Trefoil	Gebelin	Vieville	Cary Sheet
Elderly		T de Marseille	T d Mantegna
White Beard		T de Marseille	T d Mantegna
Body Armor		Parisian	Cary Sheet
Armored Legs		Parisian	V di Madrone
Uncrossed Legs	Westcott	Parisian	Visconti-Sforza
Red Tunic		Vieville	
Red Robe		T de Marseille	
Ankh	Goulinat		
Hands on Throne	Felkin	Dellarocca	
Orb	Westcott	Vachetta	T d Mantegna
No Shield	Westcott	Vachetta	T d Mantegna

Notes

1. Mountain/River - Like the Fool card, the harsh mountains may suggest the long treacherous journey ahead. This is the second river from the Garden of Eden. The mountains and river may also suggest that the Emperor rules over more austere aspects of nature, to complement the reign of the Empress.
2. Ram on shoulder and throne - This card is assigned to Aries in the Golden Dawn system. The color of Aries is red and may explain the scarlet cloak.
3. Waite probably associated the Emperor with the alchemical King, depicted as a bearded man enthroned with scepter and orb (Fig 9, *The Book of Lambspring* from Waite's Hermetic Museum). This is reinforced by the white and red stones in the crown - white and red being the fundamental, antithetical ingredients in alchemy (Waite: *The Alchemical Writings of Edward Kelly*, p 51). The same theme of red/white is seen in the roses and lilies on the Magician card. So this may be another hint toward the Rosicrucian/Alchemical underpinnings of Waite's system.

Based on original research by Robert V. O'Neill. To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](mailto:Robert.V.O'Neill@gmail.com).

<u>The Fool</u>	<u>The Magician</u>	<u>The High Priestess</u>	<u>The Empress</u>	<u>The Emperor</u>
<u>The Hierophant</u>	<u>The Lovers</u>	<u>The Chariot</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>The Hermit</u>
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The Hierophant

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Stone Pillars	Wirth	T d Marseille	Cary Sheet
Dais	Westcott	Vachetta	Visconti-Sforza
Throne	Westcott	Vieville	T d Mantegna
Dotted Circle		Vieville	
Black/White Tiling	Felkin		Goldschmidt
Crossed Keys		Vachetta	T d Mantegna
Triple Crown	Wirth	T d Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Earlaps	Wirth	T d Marseille	Cary Sheet
Triple Cross	Wirth	T d Marseille	
RH Blessing	Wirth	T d Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
3 - Fingers	Wirth	T d Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
White Tunic	Westcott	Dellarocca	Visconti-Sforza
Red Cloak	Wirth	T d Marseille	
White Trim		Dellarocca	
3 Crosses	Felkin	Dellarocca	
2 Attendants	Wirth	T d Marseille	Charles VI
Tonsured	Wirth	T d Marseille	

Notes

1. Crossed Circles - The Golden Dawn used the crossed circle for CHOKMAH (Regardie p 505) and this may refer to the Hierophant's position on the Tree. It may also refer to the Badge of the Hegemon, an officer in Golden Dawn ceremonies (Regardie p 351).

2. Rose/Lily Cloaks on attendants - This theme is repeated from the Magician card. The Rose/Lily theme appears in the Golden Dawn initiation ceremony for the Zelator grade. This suggests that Waite had initiation ceremonies in mind - "Hierophant" is the title of an official in the Golden Dawn Ceremonies. For additional information and other possible associations, see footnote #2 under the [Magician](#) card.

The Black/White Tiling is found in Masonic Lodges (*Freemason's Monitor* (1818, p 37); the three vertical crosses are found on sashes used in Masonry (Wilmschurst: *Meaning of Masonry* p 46) and Regardie (p 350) also describes a vertical sash worn in Golden Dawn ceremonies on which three crosses may appear as indicators of completed initiations.

3. This card is assigned to the Hebrew letter Vav - which is transliterated as *V* or *U*. The *U* may be suggested at the tops of the pillars and his vestments and the *V* in the vestments of the attendants. However, see [The Fool](#), footnote 6 for a caveat about assuming that the Hebrew letters can be found in the Waite-Smith designs.
4. "Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross" p 463 - The circle with the point in the center is the alchemical symbol for gold = the end of the quest = perfection. (Waite uses this on Hierophant, Justice, Temperance)
5. Waite probably associated this image with the alchemical "King." He shows the "King" enthroned with triple crown in *The Alchemical Writings of Edward Kelly* (p 145) and again in *The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry* (p 351). The image is taken from Edward Kelly *The Theatre of Terrestrial Astronomy*.

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The Fool	The Magician	The High Priestess	The Empress	The Emperor
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The Lovers

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Central Sun	Wirth	Vandenborre	
Straight Rays	Wirth	T d Marseille	
Angel	Wirth	T d Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Angel Mature		Vandenborre	
Red Wings			Visconti-Sforza
Cloud	Goulinat	Vieville	Rosenwald Sheet
Apple tree		Parisian	
He Right, She Left	Etteilla	Parisian	Rosenwald Sheet
Both Blonde		Vieville	Visconti-Sforza
Mature	Etteilla	T d Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
She looks up		Vieville	Rosenwald Sheet
He looks at her	Etteilla	Parisian	Visconti-Sforza

Notes

1. The angel with red wings and flame hair also appears on the Judgement card and is described in the Golden Dawn Practicus ritual as "...MICHAEL, the Great Archangel, the ruler of Solar Fire..." (Regardie, p 172).
2. Apple tree/Serpent/Flame Tree/Naked Figures is obviously drawn from the Genesis story of the Garden of Eden. This suggests that the Flame Tree behind the male is the Tree of Life, associated with the QBLH tree of life. The same theme will be repeated again in the tails of the figures on the Devil card.
3. This card is assigned to Gemini which may explain why Waite changed the image to 2 figures. The traditional TdM image shows a man between two women.

4. There are hints in Waite's other works that he associated this image with Rosicrucianism and also with QBLH.

In *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross* (p 169), he quotes from one of the early Rosicrucian writings (*The Chemical Marriage of Christian Rosencreutz*): "There were two lovers and about them was a Cupid." In *The Secret Doctrine in Israel* (pp 254f), he says "the Higher Eden is the place of Divine Nuptials, while the garden...was the place of nuptials below...the nuptial intercourse which was infinite and holy in the world above, in the world below, descended through what is termed the Fall of man into the...order of animal things."

That is, the false significance of the male-female duality occurred (mythically) in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve perceived their "nakedness." Order is restored during lawful intercourse because the male/female duality is dissolved into Unity in the ecstasy of mutual orgasm. And you thought QBLH was about Sephira and Letters!!!!

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The Chariot

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
River		Parisian	
Solid Cube	Levi	T de Marseille	T d Mantegna
Four pillars	Levi	T de Marseille	V di Madrone
Starred Canopy	Levi		V di Madrone
Shield on Front	Levi	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Lingham & Yoni	Levi		
Winged Disk	Levi		
Black/White Sphinxes	Levi		
Egyptian Headdresses	Levi		
Laurel Wreath		Parisian	
Mature	Levi	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Circle/star tiara	Levi		
Scepter in Right Hand	Levi	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Moons on Shoulders	Levi	T de Marseille	
Breastplate	Levi	T de Marseille	T d Mantegna
Square on chest	Levi		

Notes

1. The river in the background may represent another of the Four Rivers from Eden (Empress, Emperor, Chariot, Death).
2. The primary source for this card is the Chariot card drawn by Eliphas Levi (1856, *Dogme et rituale de la haute magie*) which can be seen in Waite's "*Transcendental Magic*" on page 389. But there are also fine details that appear to be

taken from Wirth's card, e.g., the positions of the Charioteer's hands and the crowns on the sphinxes. Notice that the square front of the chariot plus the triangle formed by the Charioteers head and hands represents a septenary - possibly indicating that the Chariot card completes the first septenary of the trumps.

3. The source for the stars on the canopy is probably Freemasonry. Many Lodges have the ceiling of the meeting room painted to represent the sky. The significance is suggested by Webb 1818. *The Freemason's Monitor* (Kessinger Reprint) p. 36: "Here...we receive instruction relative to the form, supports, covering ...of a lodge...From east to west Freemasonry extends...its dimensions are unlimited and its 'covering' no less that the canopy of heaven. To this object the mason's mind is continually directed and thither he hopes at last to arrive..."
4. Levi describes the Charioteer as having "3 superimposed squares" on his breastplate. The square that Levi refers to is probably not the four-sided figure, but the Masonic Square - a right angle with 2 equal arms. The Masonic degree of Master uses 3 squares as part of its symbolism. Levi's image of the Chariot is not at all clear, but it is possible that the three overlapping squares are represented with the point of the right angle pointed up and fastened to the breastplate by a number of rivets.

The "3 superimposed squares" do not appear to be represented on the Waite/Smith card. But there is an outside possibility that they are represented by the white square on the Charioteer's chest. The square is interpreted as a four-sided figure and the superimposition by the fact tht the three additive primary colors produce white light.

5. The square may also be a reference to the Tattwa for earth (Francis King - *Magic, The Western Tradition*, Fig 54 and p 26, and Israel Regardie - *The Golden Dawn*, pp 456-8). The possibility is made stronger by similar Tattwa-like forms on the chest of Justice and Temperance. The possibility is made weaker by the fact that the earth Tattwa should be yellow in color.
6. In the GD system, the Chariot is assigned to the Hebrew letter *Cheth* which means a fence or enclosure; this may be the source for the enclosed or walled city in the background. However, see [The Fool](#), footnote 6 for a caveat about assuming that the Hebrew letters can be found in the Waite-Smith designs.
7. In the GD system, Chariot is assigned to Cancer ruled by the Moon. The symbols for Cancer and the Moon appear on the sword belt around the Charioteer's waist. This may also account for the moons on the shoulders
8. The symbol in the shield on front of the chariot is a Hindu symbol which, like the Chinese yin-yang, represents duality and unity: the erect male penis (lingam) penetrating the female genitals (yoni). Perhaps it refers to the sexual maturity of the Charioteer, having completed the first third of the journey.
9. Above the shield is a winged orb. Waite shows a similar symbol on page 157 and 183 of "*The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry*." In the first instance he calls it an Egyptian symbol, and in the second instance he calls it the "Winged Wheel of the Spirit." He offers no further comments, but given the presence of two examples in this book, Waite probably associated the symbol with Freemasonry.
10. Much of the symbolism in Levi's card probably comes from Plato:

"As to the soul's...nature...Let it be likened to...a team of winged steeds and their...charioteer...Now of the steeds...one is good and the other is not...He that is on the more honorable side (that is, the right side) is upright and clean-limbed, carrying his neck high, with something of a crooked nose; in color, he is WHITE with black eyes; a lover of glory, but with temperance and modesty; one that consorts with genuine renown, and needs no whip, being driven by the word of command alone. The other is crooked of frame, a massive jumble of a creature, with thick short neck, snub nose, BLACK skin, and gray eyes; hot-blooded, consorting with wantonness and vainglory; shaggy of ear, deaf, and hard to control with whip and goad. Now when the driver beholds the person of the beloved...the obedient steed, constrained now as always by modesty, refrains from leaping upon the beloved. But his fellow, heeding no more the driver's goad or whip, leaps and dashes on, sorely troubling his companion and his driver...."

"For a while they struggle...the driver's memory goes back to that form of beauty, and he sees her one again enthroned by the side of temperance upon her holy seat; then in awe and reverence he falls back upon his back, and therewith is compelled to pull the reins so violently that he brings both steeds down on their haunches, the good one willing and unresistant, but the wanton sore against his will..." *Phaedrus*, 246-254 (E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Princeton University Press, 1961).

11. It's not clear that Waite understood this source for Levi's image. Waite/Smith reversed the position of the black/white sphinxes and lost the good/evil expressions on their faces to something more like happy/sad. Nevertheless, the following is from Waite's translation of Levi's *Transcendental Magic; Its doctrine and ritual*, George Redway, 1896. I am

quoting from the pirated version published by Occult Publishing House, Chicago, 1910, Kessinger Reprint, p 77:

- "...represented in the Tarot by a crowned warrior...posed upon a cube, to which two sphinxes are harnessed, straining in opposite directions, while their heads are turned the same way." (That is, they are looking at the same object of desire but pulling the chariot in contradictory directions.)
- p 380: "A double sphinx or two sphinxes joined at the lower parts are harnessed to the chariot; they are pulling in opposite directions, but one is turning his head so that they are looking in the same direction. The sphinx with head turned is black, the other is white."

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Strength

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Phallic Hill			Visconti-Sforza
Field Behind			Visconti-Sforza
Plain Sky	Falconnier	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Lemniscus	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Mature	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
White tunic	Felkin	Vachetta	T d Mantegna
Closing Mouth	Falconnier		
Left on Top	Gebelin	Vieville	Cary Sheet
Lion Standing	Falconnier	Vachetta	T d Mantegna
Licking Hand	Wirth		
Facing Left		Vieville	
She behind Lion	Goulinat	Vieville	
Lion looking up	Wirth	Vieville	V d Madrone
Tail between legs			Visconti-Sforza
Looking down	Wirth	Parisian	V d Madrone

Notes

1. Waite probably associated this card with alchemy. In his *Hermetic Museum* (Volume 1, *The Golden Tract*, p 42), we find "they conducted me to the Lion...they said that when I had bound him without being harmed by his sharp claws and terrible teeth, I should know all the rest." The same work (Vol 1, p 348) shows women riding lions with a distant mountain similar in shape to the one on the card.

2. Sash of Roses - the sash is wound around the waist with the end left hanging. This resembles the "tow-chain" that is placed around the waist of the initiate for the Masonic degree of Master Mason. The use of roses may, once again, be a suggestion of the Rosicrucians. The flowers in the hair and waistband may also be an alchemical reference (Waite *Hermetic Museum*, Vol 1, p 44): "I found white and red roses and stuck them in my cap."
3. This card is assigned to the zodiacal sign Leo in the GD system. This may explain why it is numbered 8 in the Waite deck. The numbers 8 and 11 (Justice and Strength) were switched in order to make the zodiacal signs come out right. The switch is indicated in the Cipher Document.

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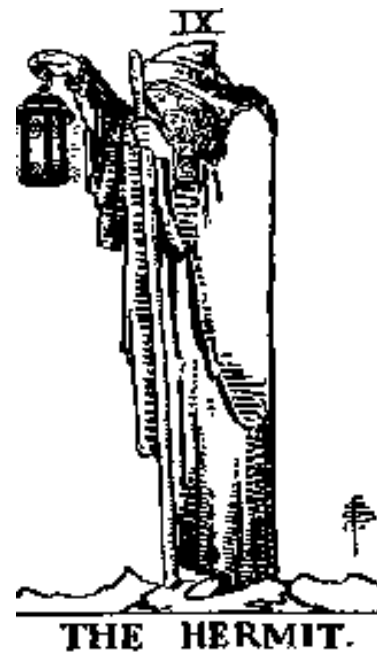
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The Hermit

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
On Peak			Charles VI
Grey Sky	Wirth	Dellarocca	Met Sheet
Standing still	Westcott	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Grey Robe	Wirth	Dellarocca	
Peaked Hood	Westcott	T de Marseille	Charles VI
Hood on Head	Wirth	Parisian	
Face Shows	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Elderly	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
White Beard	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Looks Down	Etteilla III	Gumppenberg	
Right Hand Lamp	Wirth	T de Marseille	Met Sheet
Lamp Black	Goulinat	Dellarocca	
Cylindrical	Wirth	Gumppenberg	Met Sheet
Holds Up	Wirth	T de Marseille	Charles VI
Left Hand Staff	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Plain Wood	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Faces Left	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza

Notes

1. The portrayal of a desolate peak seems to refer to the Rosicrucian mystical journey. The Welsh alchemist and mystic, Thomas Vaughan cites a "Letter of the Rosy Cross" which "describes, under the allegory of a mountain, a certain

profound state of introspection" (Waite: *The Secret Tradition in Alchemy*, p 285).

In *Azoth or Star of the East* (p 161), Waite states that "Solitude is essential to such a work and the education of the superior conditions is best effected among the primeval sublimities of Nature, in mountain fastnesses in the divine desolation of the wilderness."

2. Hexagonal glow in the lantern - The hexagon appears on the magic lantern illustrated by Levi (*Transcendental Magic*, p 252). In *The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry* (p 36), Waite shows a similar symbol, a radiant hexagon which he describes as "The Hexagon, encompassed by a solar glory." The Frontispiece in Waite's *Hermetic Museum* shows the hermit following the bright hexagonal light being carried before him by a female spirit.

A further hint may be offered in Waite's poem: "At the End of Things" from *The Collected Poems of Arthur Edward Waite*. (The text of the poem can be accessed at <http://www.adepti.com> thanks to the research of [A. Grinder.](#))

The poem describes a spiritual pilgrim:

*And a star I stole for the good of my soul,
Lest the darkness came down on my sins...
I carried the star; that star led me...
Did my star more than the cozening guide?
The fool, as I think, at the chasm's brink...
Did, even as I, in the end rejoice.*

The card suggests that the Hermit is now holding the star aloft so that others may find it. For example, in *Lamps of Western Mysticism* (p 307), we find "I put up this Lamp of the Heights as a beacon for others hereafter."

Based on original research by (in alphabetical order) [A. Grinder](#) and [R. O'Neill](#). To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](#).

The Fool	The Magician	The High Priestess	The Empress	The Emperor
The Hierophant	The Lovers	The Chariot	Strength	The Hermit
Wheel of Fortune	Justice	The Hanged Man	Death	Temperance
The Devil	The Tower	The Star	The Moon	The Sun
	Judgement	The World		

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Wheel of Fortune

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Wheel Free-floating	Eteilla	Minchiate	Visconti-Sforza
No Turn Handle		Minchiate	Visconti-Sforza
Sphinx Atop	Levi		
Sphinx Seated	Levi		
No Platform	Goulinat	Vieville	Met Sheet
Sphinx has Sword	Levi	T de Marseille	
Sword over shoulder	Gebelin	T de Marseille	
Egyptian Headdress	Levi		
4 Winged Beasts	Levi		
Fox-face Ascending	Levi	Vieville	Met Sheet
Fox-face Naked		Gumpfenberg	
Serpent descending	Goulinat		
ROTA	Levi		
Tetragrammatron	Levi		
Triple Circle	Levi		
8 spokes	Levi	Vieville	Met Sheet
Signs on 4 Spokes	Levi		

Notes

1. Just about the whole image is taken from Levi (figure p 173 and a description p 381 of *Transcendental Magic* and an image from Levi's *Key of the Mysteries*, all translated and published in English by Waite). Levi's description says the descending figure is Typhon - usually shown as a crocodile. But Waite/Smith had available an article by Westcott, a

recent book by Sir Wallis Budge and a figure in another Levi work - all justifying the representation of Typhon as a serpent.

2. The illustration in Levi shows signs on the spokes - but not these signs. These signs are (from the top clockwise) mercury, sulphur, water, salt. These are standard Golden Dawn signs (see Regardie, *Golden Dawn*, p 60).
3. The 4 beasts are from Revelations 4:7-8 "The first animal was like a lion, the second like a bull, the third animal had a human face, and the fourth animal was like a flying eagle." A footnote in the Jerusalem Bible states that following Iraeneus the four beasts came to symbolize the four evangelists.

Also relevant is Rev 7:1 "Next I saw four angels, standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the world..." In turn, this imagery comes from Ezekial 1:5-15 which records his vision of the Chariot "I saw what seemed four animals...each had four faces, each had four wings...they had human faces, and all four had a lion's face to the right and all four had a bull's face to the left and all four had an eagle's face...there was a wheel on the ground by each of them..."

Based on original research by Robert V. O'Neill. To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](mailto:Robert.V.O'Neill).

<u>The Fool</u>	<u>The Magician</u>	<u>The High Priestess</u>	<u>The Empress</u>	<u>The Emperor</u>
<u>The Hierophant</u>	<u>The Lovers</u>	<u>The Chariot</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>The Hermit</u>
<u>Wheel of Fortune</u>	<u>Justice</u>	<u>The Hanged Man</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Temperance</u>
<u>The Devil</u>	<u>The Tower</u>	<u>The Star</u>	<u>The Moon</u>	<u>The Sun</u>
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Justice

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Sword	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Right Hand	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Circle & Dot		Vieville	
Scales	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Stone Pillars	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Drape	Gebelin	T de Marseille	
Cubic Throne		Delarocca	Charles VI
Dais	Goulinat	Minchiate	Charles VI
Mature	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Blonde	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Red Gown	Goulinat	T de Marseille	
Green Robe		Sicilian	
Green Stole		Bolognese	
Crown	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
3 Peaks	Wirth	Delarocca	
Square	Goulinat		
Foot Out	Gebelin	Minchiate	

Notes

1. Circle-in-Square Clasp - May come from the Freemasonry concept of "Squaring the Circle." Waite mentions (*Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*, p 473) the circle in square as meaning the four elements coming from the unity and says that it appears in the initiatory instructions for the Masonic grade of "Freres Chevaliers de Rose-Croix." It may also

be a reference to the Tattwa for earth sub air (Francis King, *Magic, The Western Tradition*, Fig 54 and p 26, and Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, pp 456-8). The possibility is made stronger by similar Tattwa-like forms on the chest of Chariot and Temperance. The possibility is made weaker by the fact that the Tattwa should be a blue circle in a yellow square.

2. The scales on this card explain its attribution to Libra in the GD system. The color Green is also associated with Libra and may explain the cloak color. The number of this card in most traditions is 8. The number was changed in the Cipher Document so the attribution to Libra would be possible.
3. "Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross" p 463 - The circle with the point in the center is the alchemical symbol for gold = the end of the quest = perfection (he uses this on Hierophant, Justice, Temperance) p 473 - Circle within a square - unity within the Quaternary of elements

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<u>The Fool</u>	<u>The Magician</u>	<u>The High Priestess</u>	<u>The Empress</u>	<u>The Emperor</u>
<u>The Hierophant</u>	<u>The Lovers</u>	<u>The Chariot</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>The Hermit</u>
<u>Wheel of Fortune</u>	<u>Justice</u>	<u>The Hanged Man</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Temperance</u>
<u>The Devil</u>	<u>The Tower</u>	<u>The Star</u>	<u>The Moon</u>	<u>The Sun</u>
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The Hanged Man

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Single Upright		Sicilian	
No lopped Branches		Parisian	Visconti-Sforza
Beam alive		Sicilian	
Inverted	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Arms behind	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Hands untied		Vieville	Charles VI
Legs crossed	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Left leg behind	Westcott	Vieville	Charles VI
Rope	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Youth	Wirth	Vieville	Visconti-Sforza
Blonde	Wirth	Vieville	Visconti-Sforza
Red Tights		T de Marseille	
Blue Tunic		T de Marseille	Charles VI
Red Belt		Vieville	
Slippers	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rothschild Sheet
Hair falling	Wirth	T de Marseille	Charles VI
Eyes Open	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Relaxed	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza

Notes

1. Radiant Halo - My speculation is that Waite is making reference to the Adeptus Minor initiation ritual of the Golden

Dawn. The red cross (formed by the red tights on his legs) over the triangle (formed by his arms) is an emblem of the Golden Dawn (Regardie, p 28 but he says the triangle should be white). This symbol is used in the initiations of the First, or Outer, Order and is found inverted on the World card.

The Tarot cards, starting from the World, formed a part of these initiations. By the time you get to the Adeptus Minor Ritual, you have reached the Hanged Man. During the ritual the initiate is bound to a cross (Regardie p 228f) and takes an oath "I further promise and swear that with the Divine Permission I will, from this day forward, apply myself to the Great Work - which is, to purify and exalt my Spiritual Nature so that with the Divine Aid I may at length attain to be more than human, and thus gradually raise and unite myself to my higher and Divine Genius...." Following the oath, the adept says "...if ye be crucified with Christ, ye shall also reign with Him...It is written that he who humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Regardie, p 230). And later, "...teach him the value of self-sacrifice, so that he shrink not in the hour of trial...It is written: 'If any man will follow after Me, let him take up his cross and deny himself, and follow me'...I accept the Bonds of Suffering and Self-Sacrifice" (Regardie, p 235f).

So the halo may refer to the idea that the initiate is now consciously taking on the mission of the mystic. In traditional terms, he has taken an oath to follow the path of the "saint" - hence the traditional halo.

2. This same 3 and 4 symbolism may also be suggested in the background colors on the cards. There are 3 sets of cards with the same color, there are 3 cards in each set and they are separated by adding 4 to the previous card.
 - a. Yellow: start from Empress +4 = Chariot +4 = Justice
 - b. Gray: start from Hierophant +4 = Hermit +4 = Death
 - c. Blue: start from Priestess +4 = Lovers +4 = Wheel
3. "Azoth or Star in the East" p 166 "... the life of contemplation consists wholly in the soul's surrender without reservation to God..." (Hanged Man??)
4. Moakley (in *The Tarot Cards...* 1966, New York Public Library, NY) suggested that the Hanged Man image was a "Shame Painting." In the 15th century, it was common to paint images of traitors in this inverted position. Often the images were a kind of graffiti painted on walls in the city.
5. The original imagery may also have been influenced by Dante. Freccero (*Dante: The poetics of conversion*, 1986, Harvard University Press, Cambridge) develops the theme of conversion in Dante. Conversion implies a death and resurrection of the self. The journey begins, not with a direct climb toward God; instead the first steps are downward. "It has the effect of shattering the inverted values of this life"(p 4).
6. Upside-down is actually rightside up! The inversion of values is truly the first step of the mystical journey. (See e.g., Augustine - "Descend so that you may ascend." *Confessions* IV, xii and Ephesians 4:7 - "He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth.")

"So the traveler moves in one absolute spiral direction which is to the left as he descends and to the right as he ascends, after having turned upside-down at the earth's center. When he called his clockwise descent 'a *sinestra*' and his counter-clockwise ascent 'a *destra*,' Dante was evoking a tradition as old as Pythagoras and as authoritative as Aristotle" (Freccero p 74).

"When the pilgrim reaches the end of his leftward spiral at the bottom of hell, he turns upside-down, "converts," and sees things from the other perspective" (p 86). "A puzzling detail at the center of Dante's cosmos, the pilgrim turning upside-down on the hide of Satan, in fact derives from the blending of a passage in Plato's *Timaeus*, the one Platonic work that Dante might have known directly, with a commonplace Christian motif" (p 181).

(The reference is to Plato, *Timaeus* 43e - The circles "barely held together, and though they moved, their motion was unregulated, now reversed, now side-long, now inverted. It was as when a man stands on his head, resting it on the earth, and holds his feet aloft by thrusting them against something; in such a case right and left both of the man and of the spectators appear reversed to the other party.")

Freccero p 182 - "By turning upside down at the center of the universe, the pilgrim and his guide right the topsy-turvy world of negative transcendence from which they began. Satan, the prince of this world, seems right side up from the perspective of hell; after crossing the cosmic starting-point, however, Dante sees him from God's perspective, planted head downward with respect to the celestial abode from which the angel fell. Moreover, the pilgrim will ascend the mountain in the same absolute direction that characterised his spiral descent into hell.

Because of his inversion, however, the direction can no longer be described as a descent 'a *sinestra*' but is rather an ascent 'a *destra*.' In short, one of the symptoms of the pilgrim's spiritual disorder in the first part of the poem is that up seems down and left seems right. As it happens, this is precisely a symptom of the disorder of the newly incarnate soul in Plato's *Timaeus*. The 'circles' of reason and passion in the soul are disrupted when it is yoked to a mortal body."

7. Another possibility is that the image represents St. Peter who was crucified in the inverted position. Consider this from the Apocryphal (and Gnostic influenced) Acts of Peter: "I beseech you the executioners, crucify me thus, with the head downward...and the reason wherefore, I will tell...Learn ye the mystery of all nature, and the beginning of all things... For the first man (this refers to the Gnostic myth of the first man "Anthropus") fell head downwards and showed forth a manner of birth such as was not heretofore; for it was dead, having no motion. He, then, being pulled down...established this whole disposition of all things, being hanged up an image of the creation wherein he made the things of the right hand into left hand and the left hand in the right hand, and changed about all the marks of their nature, so that he thought those things that were not fair to be fair, and those that were in truth evil, to be good. Concerning which the Lord saith in a mystery: Unless you make the things of the right hand as those of the left, and those of the left as those of the right, and those that are above and those below and those that are behind as those that are before, ye shall not have knowledge of the kingdom."

Acts of Peter, chapter 37f (James 1924 The Apocryphal New Testament. Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press. 1975 reprint).

8. According to Dante and the Acts of Peter, therefore, the inverted hanged man can finally see and understand things the way they really are.

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Death

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Cliff			Visconti-Sforza
River		Vachetta	
Viking Boat		Vachetta	
Skeleton	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Red Plume		Vachetta	
White Horse		Bolognese	Met Sheet
Fallen king	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Bishop		Dellarocca	Visconti-Sforza

Notes

1. The basic theme of the card is Death. However, Waite says in *The Pictorial Key* that it is “more fitly represented...by one of the apocalyptic visions than by the crude notion of the Reaping Skeleton.” He is possibly referring to Revelation 6:8, “another horse appeared, deadly pale, and its rider was called Plague.” The death theme explains the black color of armor and banner and the four figures: temporal and spiritual, male and female, old and young - death comes to everyone.
2. Atop the cliff in the background we see a path, towers, and a sun that silhouettes a city, i.e., the mystical journey to the New Jerusalem. Notice the similarities to the imagery on the Temperance card. In Renaissance art, the “new earth” (i.e. following the apocalypse) is typically represented as a city, the New Jerusalem. This representation appears on 15th-16th century World cards.

In *The Pictorial Key*, Waite says: “Behind it lies the whole world of ascent in the spirit...between two pillars on the ...horizon there shines the sun of immortality.” The image of the rising sun may come from the Golden Dawn Consecration ceremony for the Vault.

Regardie p 264f: “I have passed through the gates of Darkness unto Light. I have fought upon Earth for good. I have

finished my work. I have entered into the invisible. I am the Sun in his rising...the Opener of the day...I am the Lord of Life, triumphant over Death...I am the preparer of the Pathway, the Rescuer unto the Light! Out of the Darkness, let the Light arise." This is essentially a Rosicrucian image of the mystical journey and notice the roses on the bishop's cloak, the woman's hair and the banner.

3. A number of other themes also come together in this card - the red plume from the Fool card and the fourth river from the Garden of Eden. The bishop wears the three crosses from the Hierophant card and also the crossed circles from that card. A vertical strip of cloth with three crosses appears in Masonic ritual attire. The crosses represent the 3 basic initiations that the wearer has experienced: Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master.

The submissive kneeling woman resembles the Strength card, particularly the flowers in the hair. Besides the obvious cross-reference to the Moon card, the two towers may also hint at Boaz and Jachin, the pillars of Solomon's Temple that appear on the High Priestess card. The pillars were situated in the west and so the rising sun would have been visible between them as one looked to the East. These pillars also appear in the rituals of Freemasonry and the Golden Dawn. There would also be a reference to the Knights Templars, also known as The Knights of Christ of the Temple of Jerusalem.

4. The rose on the banner is drawn in the manner of the Rosicrucian symbol. Examples of this same symbol can be found in Waite's *The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry* (pp 227, 248, 550). In the background of the card, along the near shoreline there appear to be three black crosses. These may represent tombstones in keeping with the Death theme, but may also hint at the Cross, the second element of the "Rosy Cross" symbol. In *The Real History of the Rosicrucians* and *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*, Waite depicts the Rosicrucians as an occult "church within the church" of Christianity.

Into the cloth of Rosicrucianism, Waite weaves the Knights Templar, Alchemy, Kabbalah, Levi, Papus, Masonry, and the Golden Dawn. The three founders of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn were members of the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*. The Higher or Inner Order of the Golden Dawn was known as *Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis*. When the Golden Dawn broke up and Waite formed his own version of the society, he called it the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross.

The rose is not a symbol commonly associated with the Templars; however, on the Gothic Cathedrals that they helped to design, there was a large rosette over the ogive archway. In the Adeptus Minor initiation of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the initiate is introduced to the "Vault of the Adept." This is a reconstruction of the tomb in which the mythical Christian Rosenkreutz was buried for 120 years, and from which he arose. On the ceiling of the "Vault" was a stylized white rose (same sort of rose as seen on the Death card but with 22 petals). It would be the first thing seen when the lid was removed from the coffin and the resurrected mystic opened his eyes. So its presence on the Death card may symbolize a note of optimism - there is a rebirth following the Death represented here. Waite may be suggesting that this is not the Death that comes at the end of life, but the Mystical Death.

5. The Bishop's hat/crown is shaped like a long-nosed fish, such as a gar or pike. The Golden Dawn assigned this card to the Hebrew letter *Nun* which means fish. However, see [The Fool](#), footnote 6 for a caveat about assuming that the Hebrew letters can be found in the Waite-Smith designs.
6. Many of the details on the card appear to be drawn from the advanced Templar orders of Freemasonry. There were a number of such advanced programs within the English lodges (e.g., Knight of the Red Cross, Knight Templar, and Knight of Malta), and the original Order of the Golden Dawn society was set up as a sort of advanced Masonic degree program. Two of the officials at the Templar initiation ceremonies are the Sovereign Master (enthroned and wearing a crown) and the Prelate in robes and bishop's miter.

There is a possible connection to the King and Bishop on Waite's card. In addition, other officials wear gauntlet gloves with a cross (see pp 124 & 131 *Knight Templarism Illustrated*, C. A. Blanchard, 1911). As a part of their ceremonial garb, masons wear a sheepskin apron. The way the apron is worn and the symbols on the apron indicate the levels or degrees that the wearer has achieved.

The apron of the Templar orders shows a Skull and Crossbones as seen on the reins of Death's horse. The historical Knights Templars didn't wear black armor but Waite says (*A New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* Vol 1, p 114): "There are grades of Christian Chivalry which connect with Black, and in particular the Order of the Temple." The "battle banner" of the Templars was divided into a black and white half by a vertical stripe. The banner on the Waite-Smith Death card is solid black, so the match with the Templar banner is questionable - but suggestive, nonetheless.

The cross on the chest of the Death figure is made deliberately hard to see, perhaps to obscure the reference of the Templars. The Templars wore a red cross on white, their sergeants-at-arms wore red on Brown/Black. The

representation on the Death card is closer to the uniform of the Teutonic Knights, an early offshoot from the Templars who wore a black mantle with a white cross. The Hierus, one of the officers in the Golden Dawn ceremonies, wore a black mantle with a white cross (Regardie p 349) - but the cross is over the heart, not centered.

The advanced Masonic grade of Knight Commander of the Temple has the cross as one of its symbols (Waite *The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry* p 287) and the Sovereign Grand Inspector-General, a grade from the Masonic order of Teutonic Knights (*Ibid.* p 287) wears a Teutonic cross on the chest (*Ibid.* p 269),

7. There are also higher Masonic orders associated with Rosicrucianism. In the grade of the Red Cross of Rome and Constantine (Waite "The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry" p 239), the cubic stone (i.e., the 'perfect ashlar' suggested in the High Priestess throne and the cubic Chariot) now becomes the Rose, seen on Death's banner. The initiation for the grade of Sovereign Prince Rose-Croix of Heredom includes a ceremony of Death: "Death must be tasted in its bitterness" (Waite *The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry*, pp 237 and 320).
8. The Templars had a fleet of ships, so the ship in the background may be another veiled reference. The Templar ships were probably merchant ships typical of the Mediterranean rather than the "Viking" style ship on the card. On the other hand, the Teutonic Knights ruled areas along the Baltic Sea and might well have had ships like those shown on the card. So Waite might also be making veiled reference to all of the warrior monks, not just the Knights Templar.
9. Although the image of Death on Horseback is found on older decks, the specific image on the Waite/Smith deck is from a Durer print: "The Knight, Death, and Time." The horse is a close copy from the print. What I find interesting is that the Waite-Smith card does not represent the figure of "Death" from the Durer print, but the figure of the Knight!! Perhaps another Waite-esque reference to the Templars?
10. Directly below the 'Viking Ship' there is a black object that looks like an upside-down letter *F*. It's a stretch, but this could be the Enochian letter *Drun*. The Golden Dawn assigned the Death card to Hebrew *Nun* = English *N* = Enochian *Drun*. The Enochian alphabet can be found on page 652 of Regardie: *The Golden Dawn*.
11. There appears to be a cave entrance in the background cliff - right above the ship. There also appears to be an arrow on that hillside, pointing to the cave. The arrow may be mistaken for a spur on the riders heel, except there is a gap between the arrow and the heel and it is not actually attached.

The cave may be a hint at Dante's journey into the underworld, the Mystic's "dark night of the soul," which may be the logical path from the Death card to the Moon, Sun, and New Jerusalem symbols at the top of the background cliff. At the beginning of the Divine Comedy, Dante finds himself in a dark wood, perhaps suggested on the Death card by the black trees near the cave entrance. Dante has become exhausted trying to scale the sheer mountain to reach God. His guide, Virgil, appears and tells him that he must "go another way" and leads him down into the Inferno, symbolizing the death of the self needed for the mystical journey. Only then can Dante climb the Mount Purgatory and reach Paradiso.

This may be hinted at in Waite's commentary on the Card (*Pictorial Key*) where he says: "transformation and passage from lower to higher," that is, from the cave entrance to the top of the cliff. He also states: "the exotic and almost unknown entrance, while still in this life, into the state of mystical death." In Waite's *Azoth or the Star in the East* (p 190), we find: "It is the portentous darkness of initiation, the passage of the soul through Hades, the Kingdom of Pluto...which precedes the evolution of the inner light."

The reference to Dante's mystical journey may also be hinted at by the rose on Death's banner since Dante describes one of the levels of Paradiso as a great rose.

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<u>The Fool</u>	<u>The Magician</u>	<u>The High Priestess</u>	<u>The Empress</u>	<u>The Emperor</u>
<u>The Hierophant</u>	<u>The Lovers</u>	<u>The Chariot</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>The Hermit</u>
<u>Wheel of Fortune</u>	<u>Justice</u>	<u>The Hanged Man</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Temperance</u>
<u>The Devil</u>	<u>The Tower</u>	<u>The Star</u>	<u>The Moon</u>	<u>The Sun</u>
	<u>Judgement</u>	<u>The World</u>		

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Temperance

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Mountains			Visconti-Sforza
Pond		Piedmontese	
Radiant Halo			Charles VI
White Tunic		Dellarocca	T d Mantegna
Circle/Dot	Wirth	Minchiate	
Square	Felkin		
Triangle	Felkin		
Blonde	Wirth	Vieville	Visconti-Sforza
Youth	Wirth	Vieville	Visconti-Sforza
Right Foot in water		Piedmontese	
Left Foot on Land		Vandenborre	Visconti-Sforza
Gold Chalices	Felkin		
Matched	Felkin	Piedmontese	Charles VI
Pours Water	Wirth	T de Marseille	Charles VI
LH to RH	Felkin	T de Marseille	T d Mantegna

Notes

1. Twin Mountains/Path/Radiant Crown - The symbol is similar to the twin towers, path and rising sun on the Death card. It probably represents the same mystical journey. Temperance lies on the central path of the Tree of Life in the Golden Dawn system, so the goal, KETHER = the Crown, is represented here.
2. Irises - another word for Iris is "flag" and this may be an obtuse further reference to the similarities with the Death

card, where the rider carries a “flag.” There may also be an obtuse hint in Waite's reference to the works of Bayley. In his *Lost Language of Symbolism*, the iris is shown forming the center of the Mystic Rose (II, p 236). A simpler explanation is provided by Hulse (*The Key of It All*, II, p 390) - the Goddess Iris is the Goddess of the Rainbow - in Hebrew the word for Rainbow is Tav-Shin-Qoph (keshet). This is exactly the same word used to designate Sagittarius (see *Sefer Yetzirah* 5:4 in Kaplan), the astrological designation of this card in the Golden Dawn system.

3. Red Wings - probably reference once again to the archangel Michael represented with red wings on the Lovers and Judgment cards.
4. Square/Triangle on Chest - these derive directly from Levi's description of the card in *Transcendental Magic*. The figure may also be a reference to the Tattwa for earth sub fire (Francis King - *Magic, The Western Tradition*, Fig 54 and p 26, and Israel Regardie - *The Golden Dawn*, pp 456-8).

The possibility is made stronger by similar Tattwa-like forms on the chests of Justice and Chariot. The possibility is made weaker by the fact that the earth Tattwa should be yellow in color and the triangle should be red. Levi mentions that the square triangle forms the septenary, and Waite echos this in *Pictorial Key*. This card is the end of the second set of seven cards - the end of the internal development and the beginning of the “dark night of the soul.”

5. *Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross* p 463 - The circle with the point in the center is the alchemical symbol for gold = the end of the quest = perfection. (He uses this on Hierophant, Justice, Temperance.)
6. In *The Secret Tradition Freemasonry* (p 35), Waite shows an abstract Masonic symbol that shares many of the features that he and Smith added to the Temperance card. The Masonic symbol has the Tetragrammaton (seen at the neckline of the angel on the card) with a triangle below (surrounded by a circle instead of a square). The Masonic symbol has wings and a radiant halo and the circle and point appears below the triangle at the joint of a Masonic compass.

Based on original research by Robert V. O'Neill. To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](mailto:Robert.V.O'Neill).

<u>The Fool</u>	<u>The Magician</u>	<u>The High Priestess</u>	<u>The Empress</u>	<u>The Emperor</u>
<u>The Hierophant</u>	<u>The Lovers</u>	<u>The Chariot</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>The Hermit</u>
<u>Wheel of Fortune</u>	<u>Justice</u>	<u>The Hanged Man</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Temperance</u>
<u>The Devil</u>	<u>The Tower</u>	<u>The Star</u>	<u>The Moon</u>	<u>The Sun</u>
	<u>Judgement</u>	<u>The World</u>		

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The Devil

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Goat Head	Levi	Gumppenberg	Rosenwald
Curved Horns on Devil	Levi	Gumppenberg	Rosenwald
Pentacle	Levi		
Beard	Levi	Gumppenberg	Met Sheet
Squatting	Etteilla III		
Bat Wings	Wirth	T de Marseille	Met Sheet
Eagle Talons	Westcott	T de Marseille	Met Sheet
Furred thighs	Westcott	Gumppenberg	Rothschild
Torch	Levi		
Points Down	Westcott		
Right Hand up	Levi	T de Marseille	Met Sheet
Open Palm		T de Marseille	
Cubic throne	Levi	Piedmontese	
Two Figures	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rothschild
Horned Figures	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Chain/Rope	Wirth	T de Marseille	

Notes

1. The image is basically Levi's "Baphomet" which is illustrated in Waite's translation of Levi's *Transcendental Magic*. In the Golden Dawn system, the Devil is assigned to Capricorn, the Goat.
2. Levi's figure of Baphomet shows an upright pentacle on the forehead. However, there is another figure that shows the

goat head fitted inside an inverted pentacle. I am informed that this figure appears in Levi original work, possible as the frontpiece. I have not been able to confirm this and Waite's translation of Levi's work does not contain this figure. However, Chapter 5 of Levi's work opens with: "The pentagram with two points in the ascendant represents Satan as the goat of the Sabbath...." The reversed Pentagram is also mentioned in the Golden Dawn Portal ritual (Regardie, p 213).

3. In Levi's figure, the torch is between the horns atop the head. However, the downward pointing torch is mentioned in Levi's *Sanctum Regnum* and in Papus, and in the Golden Dawn Portal ritual (Regardie, p 212). In *The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry* (p 396), Waite shows the downward pointing torch in an image of "The Symbolic figure of Hermetic Magic. From a design of Eliphas Levi." The image shows the torch in the hand of a long-haired woman.
4. The lines in the palm form the sigil for Saturn. The official astrological attribution for the Devil in the Golden Dawn is Capricorn = Goat, which is ruled by Saturn.
5. The flame and fruit in the tails of the demons refer back to the Lovers card. Their 'chains' may reference the "tow chain" which is worn around the neck of the candidate in the first of the Masonic initiations.

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<u>The Fool</u>	<u>The Magician</u>	<u>The High Priestess</u>	<u>The Empress</u>	<u>The Emperor</u>
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	<u>Judgement</u>	<u>The World</u>		

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The Tower

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Square	Felkin	Dellarocca	Rothschild
Three Windows	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Crown Top	Westcott	T de Marseille	
Gold Crown		Piedmontese	
Round Crown	Westcott		
Lightning	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rothschild
Z-Shaped	Wirth	Vachetta	
Window Flames		Vachetta	
Clouds	Wirth	Vachetta	
Sparks	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rosenwald
Two Falling	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rothschild
Man on Left	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Woman on Right		Piedmontese	
Crowned	Wirth	Piedmontese	
He blue tunic		Dellarocca	

Notes

1. Tower on Peak - The theme of stark mountains arises again, and suggest that this card relates to an experience on the "mountain journey" of the mystic.
2. The lightning is shaped like the "Flaming Sword" a concept from QBLH in which a single line is drawn through all of the sephiroth from the first (Kether) to the tenth (Malkuth), describing a lightning bolt. The crown atop the tower may reference the first sephiroth, Kether = Crown, but that would place it at the wrong end of the Lightning Bolt.

The specific shape of the Lightning Bolt may have been influenced by W. B. Yeats. (See [Magician](#) footnote #2 for hints that Yeats influenced the design of the cards.)

The Tower became a powerful symbol in Yeats's later poetry (Melchiori, *The Whole Mystery of Art*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), and he actually purchased and lived in an old Tower. Graf (*W. B. Yeats Twentieth Century Magus*, Weiser, 2000) shows that he regarded the Flaming Sword or Lightning Bolt as the path by which he received his poetic inspiration. Graf (24) shows an image of the tree with Lightning Bolt that was pasted in the back of Yeats's 1893 notebook.

3. In *The Works of Thomas Vaughan* (p 262), Waite relates a vision that seems to relate to the Tower. Vaughan presents the vision in the form of a letter from the Brothers of the Rosy Cross:

"There is a mountain situated in the midst of the earth....When you have discovered the Mountain the first miracle that will appear is this: a vehement and very great wind that will shake the Mountain and shatter the rocks to pieces....After this wind will come an earthquake that will overthrow those things which the wind hath left and make all flat. But be sure that you fall not off... there shall follow a fire that will consume the earthly rubbish....After all these things and near the daybreak there shall be a great calm; and you shall see the Day-Star arise."

Based on original research by Robert V. O'Neill. To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](#).

The Fool	The Magician	The High Priestess	The Empress	The Emperor
The Hierophant	The Lovers	The Chariot	Strength	The Hermit
Wheel of Fortune	Justice	The Hanged Man	Death	Temperance
The Devil	The Tower	The Star	The Moon	The Sun
	Judgement	The World		

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The Star

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Central Star	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rosenwald
8-pointed	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Gold Star	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
7 stars	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Hills in back	Westcott	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Tree on hill	Wirth	T de Marseille	Met Sheet
Ibis in Tree	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Flowers	Goulinat	Conver	Visconti-Sforza
Pond	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Naked figure	Wirth	T de Marseille	Met Sheet
Blonde	Wirth		Visconti-Sforza
Mature	Goulinat	Conver	Visconti-Sforza
Right Foot on water	Westcott	Conver	
Left Knee on land	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Gold pitchers	Westcott	Mayer	Cary Sheet
Identical	Westcott	T de Marseille	
Right into water	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
L onto Land	Wirth	Conver	
Looks in water	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet

Notes

1. Water breaks into 5 Rivulets; in the Golden Dawn Philosophus Initiation Ritual it is said: "...pouring upon the earth the Waters of Creation which unite and form a River at her feet, the River going forth from the Supernal Eden which floweth and faileth not" (Regardie, p 188). However, according to Genesis, there are 4 rivers flowing from Eden, not five (???). There is another possibility given in Waite's *Manual of Cartomancy* (p 135): "...the gifts of the Spirit poured upon the earth of the individual."
2. This card is assigned to Aquarius, the Waterbearer, in the Golden Dawn System. The correspondence seems to fit the figure in the Star image.
3. Waite probably viewed the cards following the Tower as the final stages of the mystical journey. In *The Secret Tradition in Alchemy* (p 285), he says "The revelation comes in a stillness which is as if after a tempest: it is then that the darkness dissolves, the sun rises and the treasure is found. That treasure is, according to Thomas Vaughan, a Mystery of Christ, and according to the Rosicrucians it is the deep secret of a Meeting in the Spirit."

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<u>The Fool</u>	<u>The Magician</u>	<u>The High Priestess</u>	<u>The Empress</u>	<u>The Emperor</u>
<u>The Hierophant</u>	<u>The Lovers</u>	<u>The Chariot</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>The Hermit</u>
<u>Wheel of Fortune</u>	<u>Justice</u>	<u>The Hanged Man</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Temperance</u>
<u>The Devil</u>	<u>The Tower</u>	<u>The Star</u>	<u>The Moon</u>	<u>The Sun</u>
	<u>Judgement</u>	<u>The World</u>		

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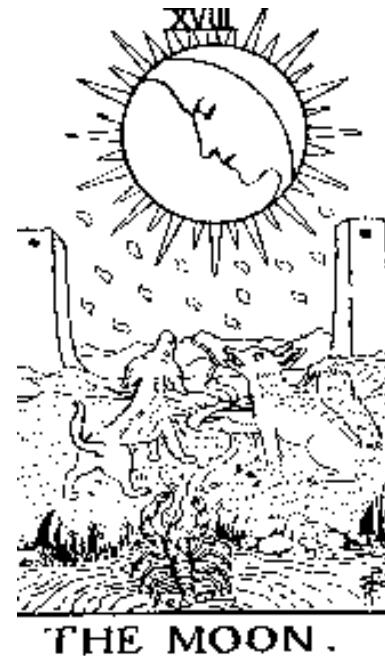
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The Moon

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Distant Mountains	Westcott	Piedmontese	Visconti-Sforza
Path to mountains	Wirth	Dellarocca	
Moon Central	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Moon Full & Crescent	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Face in Profile	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Face looks down	Wirth	Conver	
Thirty-two Rays	Westcott		Cary Sheet
Two Towers	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Towers square	Westcott	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Single Window	Wirth		
Square Windows	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Dog to one Side	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Dog Brown	Westcott	Gumppenberg	
Wolf to Other Side	Wirth		
Pond in foreground	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet
Crayfish emerging	Wirth	T de Marseille	Cary Sheet

Notes

- Remember that the towers appeared in the background of the Death card, separated from the foreground by a river. To cross the river and emerge at the towers, the mystic has been transformed into an aquatic creature. Jung might suggest that this imagery referenced the Archetypes of Transformation, with the underwater passage as an aquatic creature representing the "submersion" into the unconscious.

2. The Golden Dawn assigned Moon to the Hebrew letter *Qoph* = English Q = Enochian *Ger*. *Ger* looks like a square cup with lips and may be suggested by the tops, inner surfaces of the towers, together with the valley between. The Enochian alphabet can be found on p 652 of Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*. However, see [The Fool](#), footnote 6 for a caveat about assuming that the Hebrew letters can be found in the Waite-Smith designs.
3. Waite probably saw the dog and wolf as dual aspects which must be united in the mystical experience. The alchemical *Book of Lampspring* ("Hermetic Museum" p 285) shows a dog and wolf fighting. "They are full of jealousy, fury, rage, and madness: one kills the other...but when they are restored to life, they are clearly shewn to be the Great and Precious Medicine."

Based on original research by Robert V. O'Neill. To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](#).

The Fool	The Magician	The High Priestess	The Empress	The Emperor
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The Sun

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Sun Central	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Face on Sun	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
S/C rays	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rothschild
Wall	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rothschild
Stone Blocks	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rothschild
WhiteHorse		Vieville	T d Mantegna
Child		Vieville	
Child Naked	Felkin	Vieville	Visconti-Sforza
Child Blonde		Vieville	
Feet/Hands Flying		Vieville	
Red Banner		Vieville	
Facing Viewer		T de Marseille	Charles VI

Notes

1. Sunflowers and Daisy Chain on Forehead - In the Golden Dawn system, this card is assigned to the Sun. The flowers seem a simple and straightforward reference.
2. Red Feather - this is the same feather that appears on the Fool and Death cards. Waite may be hinting that the Fool has been transformed through the mystical Death and now appears as an innocent small child.
3. Single Child - Waite seems to suggest that, at this late stage in the journey, the mystic must be transformed into a small child. The source may be the New Testament: "Suffer the little children to come unto me". See Mark 10:15 (and Luke 18:17): "...anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

The representation as a single child is a deviation from the usual Tarot de Marseilles which shows two children in the garden. In the system of the French occultist Papus this card is assigned to Gemini. Perhaps Waite wished to avoid confusion by eliminating the two children that might refer to Gemini. Interestingly, although Levi usually follows the Tarot de Marseilles in his descriptions of the Tarot, he mentions this version (child on white horse) as one of the known variations.

4. The card is assigned to Hebrew letter *Resh* which means *face*, seen on the Sun. Also, the Hebrew *Resh* = English *R* = Enochian *Don*. *Don* looks like a reverse number 3 and may explain the extra unpaired curved Sun ray right next to the number XIX. The Enochian alphabet can be found on page 652 of Regardie: *The Golden Dawn*. However, see [The Fool](#), footnote 6 for a caveat about assuming that the Hebrew letters can be found in the Waite-Smith designs.
5. [Mary Greer](#) pointed out that the shading lines beneath Smith's signature spell LOVE in some editions of the deck. [Holly Voley](#) clarified that LOVE appears on Pamela A and D but not on Pamela B and C. [Note: For more on Pamela A, B, C, and D, see [Holly's Rider-Waite Site](#).] The designations Pamela A-D come from [Frank Jensen](#)'s categorization of the various editions published in his newsletter, *Manteia*. [Note: *Manteia* was primarily a hard copy Tarot magazine. This link is one issue of it in an Adobe Acrobat version.]
6. [Ariane](#) pointed out that *Pictorial Key to the Tarot* describes the scene on the older Tarot de Marseille image as occurring within a walled garden ("a walled garden--within are two children") in the chapter on "The Veil and its Symbols") whereas the Waite-Smith deck shows a child "coming out from the walled garden" in the chapter on "The Doctrine behind the Veil."

Based on original research by (in alphabetical order) [Ariane](#), [M. Greer](#), [R. O'Neill](#), and [H. Voley](#). To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](#).

The Fool	The Magician	The High Priestess	The Empress	The Emperor
The Hierophant	The Lovers	The Chariot	Strength	The Hermit
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Judgement

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Angel	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Red Wings	Etteilla III		
White Tunic	Westcott	Delarocca	Visconti-Sforza
Flame Hair	Etteilla III		
Cloud	Wirth	T de Marseille	Charles VI
Trumpet	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Banner	Wirth	T de Marseille	Visconti-Sforza
Red Cross		Vandenborre	
Mountains	Westcott	Delarocca	
Ocean	Wirth	Vachetta	
Trees	Westcott	Vieville	
Coffins Float	Wirth	Vachetta	
Figures naked	Wirth	T de Marseille	Charles VI
Arms Raised	Etteilla	Parisian	
Man Left	Westcott		
Woman Right	Westcott		Visconti-Sforza
Child center	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Faces away	Wirth	T de Marseille	

Notes

1. Red Cross on White Banner - this feature appears in earlier decks, but Waite may also be hinting at a connection with

Knights Templar who wore a white mantle with a red cross on the chest.

2. Angel with red wings and flame hair is repeated from the Lovers card. According to the Practicus ritual of the Golden Dawn, it is "MICHAEL, the Great Archangel, the Ruler of Solar Fire..." (Regardie, 172).
3. In the Golden Dawn system, this card is assigned to the Hebrew letter *Shin*. This is drawn as a base with three verticals, represented by the three central figures. In the version of Judgment given in the Cipher Document, the card is roughly sketched with the letter *Shin* and the three figures on the three verticals. However, see [The Fool](#), footnote 6 for a caveat about assuming that the Hebrew letters can be found in the Waite-Smith designs.
4. Michael J. Hurst points out that the general configuration of the card suggests the description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, which in turn, is based on the description of the Temple in Ezekial, chapters 47 and 48. The three tombs in the foreground may represent the three gates on each side of the city (Rev 21:13, Ezk 48:32-33). Revelation 22:1-2 says "Then the angel showed me the river of life...flowing crystal-clear down the middle of the city street.

On either side of the river were the trees of life." Ezechial 47:1-12 says: "He brought me back to the entrance of the Temple, where a stream came out from under the Temple threshold and flowed eastward...he then made me wade...(the water gets deeper as he wades further in)...the stream had swollen and was now deep water, a river impossible to cross...Wherever the river flows, all living creatures teeming in it will live...along the river, on either bank, will grow evry kind of fruit tree."

Based on original research by (in alphabetical order) [M. J. Hurst](#) and R. V. O'Neill. To add to this collection of information, please email [Robert V. O'Neill](#).

The Fool	The Magician	The High Priestess	The Empress	The Emperor
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The World

DETAIL	OCCULT	TRADITIONAL	15th CENTURY
Four beasts	Westcott	T de Marseille	
Only Heads	Wirth	Minchiate	
No Wings	Falconnier		
Lower animals face viewer	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Upper animals face each other	Etteilla III	Vieville	
Clouds		T de Marseille	Charles VI
Wreathe	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rothschild
Oval	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Ribbons	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rothschild
Two Ribbons	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Red Ribbons		T de Marseille	
Lemniscus	Wirth	T de Marseille	Rothschild
Female	Wirth	T de Marseille	Charles VI
Mature	Wirth	T de Marseille	Charles VI
Purple Drape	Etteilla	Piedmontese	
Dancing	Wirth	T de Marseille	
On Right Foot	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Left Foot Behind	Wirth	T de Marseille	
Two Wands	Westcott		

Notes

1. The wreath forms the number "0," thus balancing the Fool "0" at the beginning of the trumps. The shape also may refer to the Tattwa for Spirit. On the other hand, the cross made with the legs and the triangle made with the arms inverts the image on the Hanged Man, symbolizing that the mystical journey is completed.
2. Purple drape - This card is assigned to Saturn in the Golden Dawn system, and the color of Saturn is indigo (Regardie, p 241).
3. The figure's arms form a triangle, and the legs form a cross. The triangle and cross combine to make an important symbol in the GD initiation rituals. The triangle and cross also form a septenary and the World card completes the third septenary of the Trumps.

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<u>The Devil</u>	<u>The Tower</u>	<u>The Star</u>	<u>The Moon</u>	<u>The Sun</u>
	<u>Judgement</u>	<u>The World</u>		

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