

**STUDIES ON
MYSTICAL TAROT:
The Court Cards**

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A STUDY GUIDE TO THE COURT CARDS IN THE ROSICRUCIAN TRADITION

Introduction

Tarot is a mystery to me. It will always be. What started as an intellectual curiosity in my mid-twenties slowly became a method of self-inquiry, and an often intrusive friend. Once we step outside the box of gathered expectations stemming from superstitious gypsy tales, exploitation movies, and carnie psychic fairs, we realize that Tarot is more than just another fortunetelling device. There is something alluring, mysterious about this pack of seventy-eight cards. We need to access their wisdom carefully, allow the cards to speak to us and connect to soul. Every single card in Tarot can act as a Gate for us to discover a hidden part of our own self. But this is a process that requires time, patience, and humility.

I started this study guide as a workbook for students at the University of Philosophical Research in Los Angeles, California, but soon realized that I needed to expand the work beyond the scope of a particular course and directly address the cards from a mystical and esoteric perspective. I make no excuses; this is the way that Tarot works for me. Older traditions find their way into our everyday life in order to help us understand that the many challenges we face are usually archetypal. Archetypes are neutral forces; they might change names and garments, but in essence they are defined by the behavioral patterns that they bring forth in all of us. And we are the ones who give archetypes their form as they constellate in our psyche and personality.

We live in an ever-increasing complex world. Yet, our ability to understand the world around us depends on how we understand ourselves. Self awareness leads to self knowledge. Self knowledge helps us understand others better. We are all in this together. And, you might be asking by now, how

would sixteen court cards—out of seventy eight cards in a deck—make a difference in my life? You might be amazed.

Welcome to the kingdom of the Courts. These sixteen cards are one of the three basic structures of a regular deck of Tarot cards: twenty-two Major Arcana and fifty-six Minor Arcana divided into four elements with ten numbered cards and four court cards each. The Courts, however, escape the mere designation of “minor” or “lesser” arcana because they represent an independent structure: a quaternary structure that links Majors and Minors while displaying for us a hierarchy of energies that can become useful tools for self-inquiry. The Courts in the system we are here studying are displayed as individuals, yet they can assume any other form because these are independent energies, principles and qualities that relate to each other in some kind of hierarchy or special order, depending on the message that their creator/artist wishes to convey.

The more we work with a good, solid deck, the more that each section of the deck speaks to us directly, revealing their individual as well as group structure. Observe carefully, because each part is conveying its own interpretation of Law, its own way of expressing how cosmic forces and universal principles help us connect with our Higher Self. Hermetic work is all about personal transformation, about alignment with cosmic forces and about connecting with our own divinity.

What I like to call traditional tarot stems from the Renaissance and evolved through the centuries to become a mystical, esoteric and Hermetic tool adopted by secret guilds and mystery schools of the western tradition. By “hermetic” I mean all the various influences that have shaped the western mind, including pre-Socratic traditions, Gnosticism, magic, Cabala, alchemy, astrology, Neoplatonism, Romanticism, and other important social and cultural trends.

Tarot is an offspring of playing cards introduced to the Hispanic Peninsula and southern Italy by the Moors. Returning Crusaders and traders also contributed to the incredible explosion of cultural exchanges between East and West that characterized the Middle Ages and gave form to the Renaissance. It is essential to keep an historical perspective when delving

into Tarot, because the product that we have today, the thousands of decks available to us now, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Tarot as an esoteric tool might be a product of the XVIII and XIX centuries, but as we trace their pedigree from the late Middle Ages through the Neoplatonic schools in Florence (in particular), and in Bologna, to the royal courts in Milan and other parts of northern Italy, as well as to the Hispanic Peninsula, we cannot lose sight of the strong pedagogical and mystical overtones present in the decks from their inception.

We also need to keep in mind the vast domain covered by the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, and the cultural impact that both Jewish and Muslim traditions had for several centuries in these areas and other parts of Europe. Serious academic study of Tarot is just beginning and it is revealing to us the influence exerted by hieroglyphic, emblematic and miniature art; the role played by Cabala, the Art of Memory, the Picaresque novel, Troubadors and Chansons de Geste, to name just a few. Literature begets literature, art begets art and human consciousness expands and adapts and adopts accordingly. Nothing is ever forgotten; it is all in the reservoir of the collective unconscious.

Why a Workbook on Court Cards?

This book is meant for students who are interested in understanding Tarot within the Rosicrucian tradition, as defined by the Golden Dawn and Builders of the Adytum.

The workbook does not cover the Marseilles-style decks *per se*, although many of the observations and interpretive techniques found here could easily be applied to Marseilles decks as well as many of the decks available today.

The Courts exude a life of their own. They offer us a hierarchy with special energies contained among themselves, like a family or community or tribe. As much as we try to define them within certain given parameters (like we will attempt to do in this study), you will find them eluding our scrutiny, demanding more amplitude. The “courts” were part of playing cards before the Trumps or Major Arcana existed—before a fifth suit was added to the *trionfi* cards that later became known as *tarocchi*. At first, there were usually three royalty figures. The so-called Mamluck deck included three court cards alluding to ranks of *roy* (*rey, king*) and two vice-roys (*naib; naibi*). Eventually, human figures replaced the abstract royalty, a “queen” was added, and at one point a few more court figures and categories were included in some early decks. These royal figures walked in and out of the decks’ courtyard until the ubiquitous number four finally prevailed, and we now have four royalties or “courts” per suit.

The sixteen Court Cards here presented correspond to a special mystical cosmology. The cards can be used for divination, but at the same time we must be aware of their mystical roots. The intention of the authors was to present a point of view, a system of knowledge and a school of thought. We need to honor that. I have found that careful study of these cards does open for us new levels of awareness, new ways of looking at ourselves and others. There is something uncanny and magical about the intuitive connections that we make when using cards that follow a specific esoteric tradition. The Golden Dawn and Builders of the Adytum emphasize the ritual use of Tarot images. The cards represent specific vibrations and relationships to colors and to the Tree of Life, which is the map used to gain access to our

own divinity, and also a means to tap into the School of Ancient Wisdom, into the energies that in-form us from above as we ourselves in-form those below us. Mystical Tarot is all about relationships, connections, personal and cosmic imprints and their application in our daily life, for the Higher Good.

Some of the information and intimations in this work stem from my years of study with Builders of the Adytum. However, this book reflects my own personal interpretations, which at times might differ from BOTA's basic approach to the study of Qabalistic Tarot. My intention is to place Tarot and the Court cards here studied as energies of transformation, as alchemical tools that reflect some of the mystical ways to approach divination and self inquiry by using Qabalah and the Tree of Life.

I am including a basic bibliography for those students interested in a deeper understanding of "Cabala" (which is the way that the Hebrew Encyclopedia spells our word Kabbalah). Esoteric studies require patience and an open mind. I invite you to expand on this work; keep a journal and write down your own impressions about the Court system here presented; see how some of the correspondences and ideas offered in this text could be transferred to the interpretations of other decks. The use of emblematic art and alchemy by Hermetic schools like Rosicrucianism was meant to evoke specific qualities and behavioral patterns in the psychic field of the practitioner using the Tarot cards as agents of change.

Allow intuition to guide you and approach the Courts with a beginner's mind, like the Fool who opens the Tarot deck with open arms and with no expectations.

The Tree of Life

The Rosicrucian and Golden Dawn traditions are rooted in the Cabala (*Qabalah*). The Tree of Life and the Hebrew letters become a blue print or map to guide us on our personal spiritual unfoldment. The Tree consists of ten visible *ciphers* or *Sephiroth*.

Cabala means giving and receiving. The ten divine emanations on the Tree of Life provide a master pattern for our ascent and descent through each numerical emanation or *Sephirah* in order to gain access to various levels of awareness. This awareness connects us to ancient wisdom delivered by those ahead of us on the Path of Return. As we tune into these higher levels of wisdom, we also give to those who are able to receive the radiations from us. The Breath of God as **Ruach** becomes the living breath that connects and transmits the Knowledge of the Ancients to all of us. Through alchemy of the soul, this is the process that helps us connect to our Higher Self.

The word *Sephiroth* means “ciphers, numerations, emanations;” each emanation or *Sephirah* becomes a vessel with its own energies (an alchemical vessel of transformation), with its own world, with its own qualities, giving and receiving the Divine Ruach, and opening in each of us archetypal dimensions that define our human nature, as well as our personal journey of transformation. The Limitless Light called *Ain Suph Aur* initiates the process of self-manifestation as it concentrates in the Central Point called Kether and brings forth the sequential emanations.

1. Kether, *Crown*: This is the Source, the First Whirling of Creation, the Sphere of the Limitless Light; seat of the Indivisible Self *Yekhidah*; the I AM.
2. Chokmah, *Wisdom*: As the Light recognizes itself in the two, AB the Father emanates as the *masculine* energy that seeds Creation. Chokmah is the seat of *Chaiah*, the universal Life-Force, and also of the Sphere of the Zodiac. The Hebrew letter Yod and the Atziluth World of Archetypes and Emanations are connected to Chokmah.

3. Binah, *Understanding*: Sephirah assigned to Aima the fertile Mother, the feminine energy that brings forth Creation, and hence the emanations of the next seven Sephiroth across the Abyss. Saturn, with its darkness, heaviness and strictures, is assigned to this Sephirah, perhaps to remind us that Creation is the result of Consciousness contracting and collapsing unto Itself. Chokmah and Binah, like the Yin/Yang principle, are the two eternalists that bring forth life. The Hebrew letter Heh and Briah, the World of Creation, are connected to this Sphere. The first three Sephiroth are called the *Supernal or Divine Triad*.
4. Chesed, *Mercy*, is assigned to Jupiter and represents the “limitless substance” as Majesty and Magnificence. It is an expansive and generous emanation, as it receives from the Mother and pours out her blessings. This is also the seat of cosmic memory. Regulation and Adjustment are required for this emanation to self-regulate its power. This is one of the responsibilities of the next Sephirah.
5. Geburah, *Severity*, assigned to Mars and Volition (will). This Sephirah also connects to names that relate to Justice, Law, Fear and Strength. Chesed, Geburah and Tiphareth, the next Sephirah, are a reflection of the Supernal Triad above, and are called the Egoic Triad, Triad of Individuality and of the Higher Mind. The powers of this Triad are concentrated in Tiphareth.
6. Tiphareth, *Beauty*, is the center of the Tree and reflects the Christ consciousness, the “Christos” or “Anointed Consciousness” of Jesus or the Buddha. This is the Sphere of the Sun and where Primal transformative energy is made available to Generic Humanity for self-realization and transformation. The six-pointed star is often associated with Tiphareth; it consists of two triangles, one going up and the other down, as male and female energies forming a hexagram symbolic of spiritual harmony. This is the seat of the third letter of the Holy Tetragrammaton, VAU, and where the Yetziratic world of Formation radiates its influence to the Sephiroth of the Egoic Triad and of the Personality Triad below.

7. Netzach, *Victory*, assigned to Venus. This is the Sphere of Desire, where all expressions of our creativity are given stimulus and full potentiality, as it reflects and mirrors the fourth Sephirah above. Netzach also reflects the “beauty” of Tiphareth as applied to our Path of Victory. It sits diagonally across Geburah, sphere of Adjustment, Severity and of the fiery Mars. The energies of Venus and Mars balance each other through the sphere of Tiphareth.

8. Hod, *Splendor*, assigned to Mercury (Hermes). This is the seat of the intellect and, as such, can teach us about the mind and its volatility, as well as its source of creativity. The sphere sits below Geburah, across Netzach, and diagonally from Chesed, crossing first Tiphareth. Notice how all the Sephiroth mirror, reflect and influence each other. The dynamics of these emanations helps us understand some of the meanings of the Minor Arcana and the ways that memory, volition, imagination and desire determine and give form to the world of manifestation.

9. Yesod, *Foundation*, assigned to the Sphere of the Moon. This is also the astral world of dreams, intuition, psychic energies, and automatic consciousness, as well as the “seat” of the Vital Soul permeating all of creation. Yesod provides the foundation or basis for all our actions and reactions. It is the basis of Malkuth the Kingdom and reflects our relationship to the Triads above. This Sephirah is our Gate to Higher Consciousness and the Portal through which we embark on our Journey of self-knowledge and self-realization.

10. Malkuth, *Kingdom*, Sphere of Mother Earth, the dwelling of the Shekhinah as God’s emanating presence in all creation. Sphere of Kallah the Bride. It represents Assiah, the physical world of manifestation. Malkuth is placed on the middle pillar of the Tree of Life, aligned with Yesod, Tiphareth, and Kether. This is the pillar that balances the Tree. The invisible Path of Daath, Knowledge, is also placed on the Middle Pillar, in the Abyss through which we connect with the Supernals. Mystically, this is where all the Sephiroth of the Tree meet and help us reach higher consciousness. Through the work we perform in Malkuth we gain access to the various levels of transformations

that lift our consciousness into union with the One. Tiphareth as sphere of the Sun will render the Light that will guide us along the way. We will eventually arrive at the Abyss, cross the Path of Daath and fold into the Crown, into the One. Thus we fulfill the promise that, "Kether is in Malkuth and Malkuth is in Kether."

#1 Kether - the Crown
Limitless Spark
Primal Spark
Aces

#3 Binah - Understanding
Aima the fertile Mother
Sphere of Saturn
Threes and Queens

#2 Chokma - Wisdom
AB the Father
Sphere of the Zodiac
Twos and Kings

#5 Geburah - Severity
Justice, Law and Volition
Sphere of Mars
Fives

#4 Chesed - Beneficence
Mercy - Cosmic Memory
Sphere of Jupiter
Fours

#6 Tiphareth - Beauty
Christ Consciousness
Sphere of the Sun
Sixes and Knights

#8 Hod - Splendor
Intellect
Sphere of Mercury
Eights

#7 Netzach - Victory
Desire
Sphere of Venus
Sevens

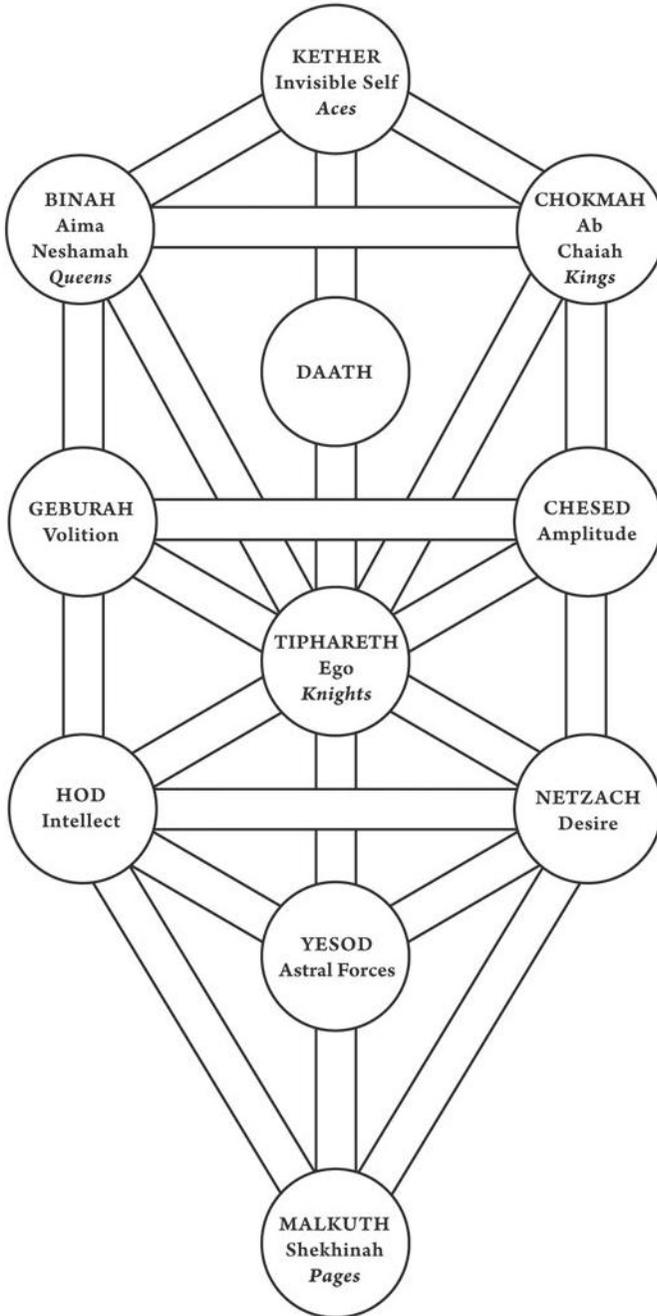
#9 Yesod - Foundation
Vital Soul
Astral Body
Sphere of the Moon
Nines

#10 Malkuth - Kingdom
Earth and physical world
Tens and Pages

**Pillar of
Severity**

**Pillar of
Mildness**

**Pillar of
Mercy**



Tree of Life with Courts

The Symbolic Power of Number Four

Squares and rectangles and cubes: forms that contain and that provide solidity and structure. The number four offers us the quaternary of the Courts filled with many possibilities and potentialities of interpretation. The Minor Arcana in the esoteric decks that we are here exploring consist of four suits with ten numbered cards, or pips, and four court cards. The quaternities (4 x 4) assigned to the Courts in the Rosicrucian Qabalistic tradition were intended to form a bridge between the Majors and the Minors. This bridge offers us a hierarchical system of image-concepts that reflect our relationship to power and to social structures, as well as emblematic symbols that project specific qualities and personas we either assume ourselves or encounter in others throughout daily life.

The sixteen Courts, just like the forty pips (the Minors numbered from one to ten) and the twenty-two Majors, weave a structure of mystical interconnections that relate to the four elements (Fire, Water, Air, Earth); to the four Qabalistic Worlds (Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah and Assiah), to their assigned Zodiac decanates and planets, as well as to the energy of their assigned Hebrew letter in the Holy Tetragrammaton—YOD HEH VAU HEH, the revered name of God as Yahweh (or Jehovah). When we read this holy name, *from right to left*, it should be so written:

יהוה

י	ה	ו	ה
Fire	Water	Air	Earth
Yod	Heh	Vau	Heh

Yod: “hand”; “to thrust”; “coition”

Yod is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet (also called the “Flame” alphabet from the Chaldean tradition); this small letter is also part of all Hebrew letters, as they spring forth from the first letter that spells “Yahweh.” Yod is drawn suspended in mid-air, full of potentialities, discreet and ubiquitous. In Jewish mysticism, Yod is perceived as a flame, a sudden movement, a cosmic messenger. Yod also intimates “coitus” and the bliss of the union with the One. Yod is the spiritual energy we find in Life and signifies the cosmic Light when allowed full expression and potentiality.

Heh: “wind-door”

Heh is used like the definite article “the.” The letter often serves to add special emphasis to a word, like an exclamation mark. Heh is found twice in the Holy Tetragrammaton and connotes divine revelation. It is assigned to the two “feminine” energies in Qabalistic Tarot (Water and Earth). Heh is connected to breath as a means for spiritual development and mystically represents the way that God created the entire cosmos through his breath (*Ruach*).

Vau/Vav: “nail; hook”; indefinite article and connector

Vau implies “*that which holds things together.*” The letter is drawn very, very straight, like a vigilant soldier standing up in attention or like a pillar suggesting inner strength. Vau intimates righteousness, correct behavior; but also uniqueness, and the need to express who and what we really are. Vau suggests wholeness, as something contained in and of itself. It also implies the “ray of light” that God brought down into creation; therefore, it represents the conjunction which unites us to God and to our own divinity. Vau also refers here to the six Sephiroth from Chesed to Yesod, influenced by the Ego in Tiphareth, where Vau sits along with the Knights.

Final Heh: This letter as Final Heh represents Kallah the Bride, the dwelling of Shekhinah, and the world of physical manifestation. As Breath of God, it connects to Kether and to the active and cyclic principles of Creation.

The Hebrew letters, the “letters of Abraham,” are meant to be meditated and gazed upon. The moment that we “gaze” at these letters and connect them to Tarot, we are placing the cards into a mystical dimension all of their own. That means you can use the impressions you receive from this Qabalistic connection for personal growth, for self-analysis, for divination. We cannot forget that traditional Cabala became an essential part of the Hermetic movement inspired by the Renaissance schools, and whatever version of this tradition transformed through the years into the Qabalah embraced by such esoteric orders like the Martinists and the Rosicrucians in the 18TH and 19TH centuries, the moment that Tarot was placed within their system and linked to schools of ancient wisdom, the cards acquired more mystical dimensions. *Tarocchi* was a child of the Renaissance, already infused

with mystic qualities; the Golden Dawn transformed Tarot into a magical alchemical tool that would serve as a Gate to initiate aspirants into higher mysteries.

One important observation about the Four Qabalistic Worlds: The World of Emanations, Atziluth, generates the other three Worlds. Each new World carries more density as well as a descending scale of brightness. In the physical plane of Assiah, the World of Manifestation, we find the accumulation of the grosser elements and qualities of the previous three worlds. In addition, each world emanates ten Sephiroth of its own; and each Sephirah likewise. We thus end up with the concept of worlds within worlds, a holographic universe in constant expansion. Our role in this immensity is to realize that our thoughts and actions do affect the indomitable forces of creation in ways that we cannot even begin to fathom.

Relationships and Correspondences

If we look at the Holy Tetragrammaton as the mystical structure within the Minor Arcana, and if we assign to every arcanum a dimension based on the Hebrew letter that corresponds to its suit, its Element, and its Qabalistic world, we enrich the interpretation of any reading, especially if we are reading with a Marseilles deck. The court cards are placed on the Tree of Life as follows: Kings are placed in Chokmah, *Wisdom*, Sphere of the Zodiac; Queens in Binah, *Understanding*, Sphere of Saturn; Knights are placed in Tiphareth, *Beauty*, Sphere of the Sun and seat of the Ego or Higher Self; and Pages are placed in Malkuth, the *Kingdom*. This placement on the Tree adds an important level of interpretation to the Courts, because they all establish a special energetic connection to their Sephirah, as well as to the Sephiroth above and below. It is all interconnected through visible and invisible Paths.

Kings and Queens are part of the *Supernal Triad* formed by Kether / Chokmah / Binah. This is the Divine Triangle that gives creation impulse in all its dimensions, as Kether, the Indivisible Self, begins the primal swirling into the Sephiroth below. The manifest universe where we dwell is the *mental* creation of the Father and the Mother. Kether activates both Chokmah and Binah, just like these two Sephiroth constantly reflect and influence each other. The rest of the Sephiroth come forth out of their Union, as the contracting force of Saturn (assigned to Binah) assists the impulse through the Abyss into the fourth Sephirah, Chesed. Inside this Qabalistic world, the rest of the Sephiroth -from four to ten- represent aspects of human consciousness that need development or purification as we learn to ascend and descend the Tree through the various alchemical vessels that each Sephirah represents.

Shekhinah, for example, dwells in the third Sephirah as the feminine aspect of God. She also dwells in Malkuth—the tenth Sephirah—as *Kallah the Bride*. Malkuth is the Sephirah assigned to the Pages or Knaves, who happen to be the “*Thrones*” of the Aces. The “*Bridegroom*” dwells in the sixth Sephirah, Tiphareth, seat of the four Knights.

Queens and Pages carry the energy of the Hebrew letter Heh into different interpretive dimensions, since they reflect two different elements (Water and Earth) and two different planes (Briah and Assiah). Nevertheless, both are “feminine” elements, just like Fire and Air are considered “masculine” elements (assigned to the worlds of Atziluth and Yetzirah).

All these allusions might not be needed in a divination, but sometimes these are the subtleties that penetrate our soul and take us into higher awareness of ourselves and of the forces that surround us. If you seriously begin to study Qabalah and Tarot and connect to any of these correspondences while using the Courts in divination or meditation, you might need to explore the intuitive hits or resonances at a deeper level. Use your intuition because these cards are meant to work through influences exerted on our astral body, below our normal level of consciousness. Our level of attunement to the influences stemming from the astral plane often determines the way that we access the wisdom made available to us.

As noted above, the Pages and the Aces have a special relationship; this relationship could be quite useful in readings. Aces signify the “Root of the Powers” of the element assigned to them; their seat is in Kether the Crown, the first Sephirah and the beginning of the Whirlings of creation. The Pages sit in Malkuth, the tenth and final Sephirah, and they symbolize the *full potentiality* of manifestation of their element. Aces and Pages occupy the *same Quadrant* on the Zodiac Wheel. In addition, the Pages are considered the “*Thrones*” of the Aces. Making these connections could be very helpful in a divination where both Aces and Pages appear, even if they do not correspond to the same suit.

Majors, Pips and Courts can be seen as three holographic systems within a cosmology. These systems or constellations add and subtract qualities to and from each other, expanding and constantly changing *ad infinitum* the potentialities of creation, just like a magical mandala. And, as we work with all of them in divination, these three systems will complement and contradict each other, weaving associations and eliciting impressions that require we drop our logical mind and enter the world of nonsense, alchemy, magic and intuition.

Placing the Quaternities in a Given Context

How is the Primordial Fire activated in each King and how is it reflected? How does the Primordial Fire affect the rulership and domain of a King in relation to the other cards in a spread? What qualities of the element of Water would characterize each of the Queens in their rulership? What mystical aspect of the Hebrew letter Heh would you apply to a Page of Cups, or a Page of Pentacles? How would the Knight of Swords (Air of Air) reflect the archetypal wisdom of the Hebrew letter Vau?

We might find ourselves actually asking these kinds of questions depending on the depth of a given reading, or when we use the cards for meditation. But most of the time these Qabalistic and mystical relationships are kept on the back of our mind, ready to come forth if needed and when we are ready to use them effectively. Do not force these correspondences; they are not meant to impress the querent or client; on the contrary, esoteric information might turn your clients off, and away. Sometimes too much information tends to block the free flow of intuition in a reading. If you are meant to make a Qabalistic connection it will happen, whether you are looking for it or not. Do not use mystical wisdom to show off.

Are these correspondences needed when we read the cards? Not really. Like the Art of Memory, these associations are supposed to work as mystical and mnemonic connections. You will draw upon them if needed, and if you are connected to the energies of Ancient Wisdom made available to us when our psychic field is prepared accordingly. Allow the cards to impress you directly. Simplify your interpretation of the Courts at the beginning of your studies and slowly amplify their meaning. Keep a journal and trust your intuition.

The court cards are often compared to the sixteen categories of the Myers-Briggs personality test. Even though the cards adapt themselves to the various and different qualities of human behavior reflected on the Myers-Briggs, I find this classification a bit simplistic, for both the Courts and us: we are all much more complicated than that. We all carry the twelve Zodiac signs within, and each of us relates to these energies and planets not

just according to our birth date but also to all the propensities imprinted in us by our socio-cultural environment.

A court card might indicate a specific person in a reading; yet, next time the same card appears it might point to a given quality in a situation, or suggest a manner or attitude to resolve a quandary. The cards do not necessarily have to connect with specific people in our life, and the archetypal energy that they exude in divination could be just as powerful as any Major Arcanum. Often, a specific behavioral pattern can be brought to full understanding when we associate the cards with energy patterns according to the Element, the Suit, the Zodiac placement and the Qabalistic world.

Still, we tend to look at the Courts and relate them to people. What role would a Page, for example, play in today's social structure? Pages or Knaves used to be servants, slaves or foot soldiers, the *infantes*, messengers or immature energies with the least important influence in the old royal hierarchy ("connected to court but not in court"). That was before esoteric schools began to assign to the page/knave/valet new meanings and eventually transformed them into the "thrones" of the Aces and they became either androgynous or female characters. In some Egyptian style decks, for example, the knave is a slave. Compare this designation with the Golden Dawn or Aleister Crowley's Princesses, or with other newer, modern versions of the Courts. The knave card has endured many transformations through the centuries; it never ceases to intrigue us and to bring forth more and more interpretations.

Let us look at the Knights. Considered a masculine energy, the Knight carries out the mandate of the kingdom. He must exude virility and will. Let us pause here for a moment and remind ourselves that "virtue" and "virility" come from the same etymological root. How energy is depicted in the Knights will help you analyze their ability to move between the six Sephiroth assigned to the World of Yetzirah. In most decks the Knights are usually depicted riding a horse that either mirrors the character of the rider, or suggests additional dimensions for the card. The Golden Dawn Tarot places the Kings on a horse instead of a throne, and the knights are now Princes riding a chariot drawn by the emblem of the *fixed* Zodiac sign that they represent:

Wands: Prince of the Chariot of Fire: Chariot drawn by a lion (the fixed sign Leo).

Cups: Prince of the Chariot of the Waters: Chariot drawn by an eagle (the fixed sign Scorpio).

Swords: Prince of the Chariot of the Winds: Chariot drawn by fairies with butterfly wings (the fixed sign Aquarius).

Pentacles: Prince of the Chariot of Earth: Chariot drawn by a bull (the fixed sign Taurus).

You might encounter Golden Dawn decks with designations that follow the *Book T*, which can be confusing because the knights are also called kings. Aleister Crowley's Thoth deck simplifies the classification and dispenses with the double names for knights and kings. The Knight is now the consort of the Queen and ruler of the kingdom. Crowley's classification is Knight/Queen/Prince/Princess.

Interpreting the Energy of the Courts Today in Divination Spreads

How would the Air element reflected through the image-concept of a king be used today to implement a mandate, or to supervise an industry, a government office, or to help us resolve a challenge? Would a “fiery” king with rule-ship of the subconscious waters of emotion and creativity be more effective in dealing with a home-related problem than an airy, brainy king with a sword? What kind of action or resolution could be suggested in a reading by the Knight of Pentacles versus the Page of Cups? Which of the four Queens represents to you the ideal mother? Of the sixteen Courts, which one carries the best archetypal energy to urgently deploy in your life right now? Would you ever trust the advice of the Page of Cups? Do you tend to organize your life’s decisions according to expected patterns of behavior determined by social or any other kind of hierarchy? Which court card energy could you use better at work if you needed to confront your boss or supervisor with a serious or delicate matter?

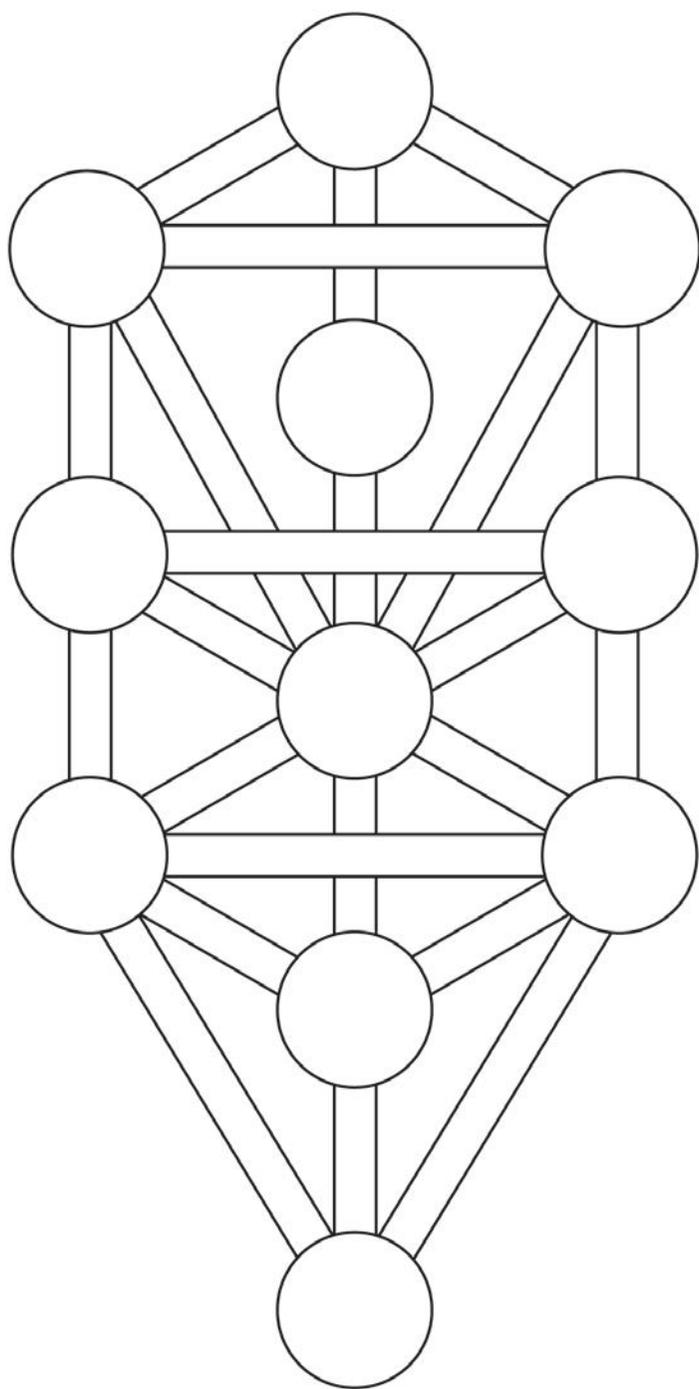
Interpretation of cards comes down to context, correspondences, impressions, intuition, and keeping personal projections and expectations at bay. The energies of the cards say it all: the images connect to each other in magical, uncanny ways, if we just get out of the way. The more you work with a deck, the more accessible the images become and the closer the relationship you establish with them. How much material you need to study and learn before daring to read cards is rather subjective and depends on each individual’s comfort zone. Some people might be more intuitive than others. But that does not translate into accuracy. Intuition is a Grace as well as a learned skill that needs to be honed, and never taken for granted because it is not ours to keep or flaunt. Ignorance is dangerous and sometimes a little knowledge when accessing the astral world of the Invisibles might serve to inflate the ego with falsity and deception.

Tarot works best when we use it as a mystical tool. The intention of both reader and querent must be clear and serving, always, the higher good. How we access the cards, how we pose the questions, how we invoke guidance along the way; everything should be practiced within a sacred field of Grace.

Yet, we must be realistic and keep in mind that consulting the cards is often prompted by immediate needs and challenges that require practical answers to help us gain a better understanding of a situation. Remain open to the innumerable interpretations that Courts might have in a spread. Do not just assume that they signify people, and open your mind to whatever speaks to you directly through all your senses.

It is useful to study Tarot using a deck that follows some kind of logic, hierarchy, or cosmology. Quite often, it might be difficult to find a “logical” connection between the Courts and the rest of the Minor Arcana. They could, indeed, be two completely separate worlds, but this might not be bad at all. Find a deck that appeals to you. Use the interpretation of more traditional decks to gain valuable intellectual discipline. The decks that provide the *seed* for the present day proliferation of Tarot decks are few, and I call them “classic” for this reason; and because most were created within specific guidelines, under social, cultural and religious circumstances that shaped their creation as well as the consciousness of those who used them and amplified their meanings through the centuries. We do gain access to a wisdom that is older than we can fathom. We must respect this source of Knowledge and be humbly grateful.

We cannot expect clients to be always receptive to spiritual or esoteric interpretations. It is essential, however, to deliver a balanced and congruent reading that will bring to the consciousness of the querent the needs of soul; otherwise we are failing, if not the querent, ourselves. Divination is not for everyone. Fortunetelling is something else. I believe that using Tarot as a divination and transformational tool requires that we help the clients integrate the messages received at a practical level of awareness that makes sense to them, and also at a level that touches something much deeper in themselves. We cannot ignore the spiritual dimension because we must honor message and messengers, and give thanks for the wisdom received at the end of each reading.



NOTES:

THESE PAGES ARE PRESENTED AS A SAMPLE OF THE
BOOK, AVAILABLE AT [AMAZON.COM](https://www.amazon.com) AND ALSO KINDLE
AND IBOOKS.



Welcome to the world of the court cards in the Rosicrucian tradition.

Sixteen powerful energies are hereby presented in a succinct manner for the student of Qabalah, Hermetism and Tarot.

This workbook interprets the sixteen Court cards within the Rosicrucian tradition while underlining their importance as mystical tools for personal transformation.



Yolanda M. Robinson, Ph.D., has been studying Tarot for over thirty years. She is presently a professor in transformational psychology at the University of Philosophical Research in Los Angeles, CA. Dr. Robinson conducts seminars and workshops on tarot and transformation and is also a counselor. She is a member of Builders of the Adytum, a western mystery school dedicated to the study of Qabalah and Tarot.

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