

Eight

Names and Dates

The problem with localizing the time of the invention of the Tarot lies in its evolution through various stages of development. When something can be used for different purposes; when its very structure has changed through the ages; when, worst of all, it has been constructed from various parts each of which has its own history, prior to, subsequent to and even parallel with its invention; then the determination of the date of its origin must depend upon its precise definition.

A case in point is Stuart Kaplan's¹ yeoman effort to locate the first mention of playing cards in a written document, followed by an equally diligent survey of early sources that fail to mention them in the company of other games. In this way Kaplan may very well have placed his finger upon the century when the Tarot cards became known to the European authorities as the implements of a game called *tarok*. It would be difficult if not impossible to dispute the claim that *tarok* was first played, at the very least by a much wider range of participants, sometime during the early 14th or late 13th century. The problem lies in Kaplan's implicit assumption that "playing cards" were invented in order to play card games. This unspoken major premise is not just fallacious; it flies in the face of the entire history of games.

We have already seen how *chaturanga* was played upon a borrowed *ashtapada* board and how chess developed from its four-handed ancestor. The first chapter of the present work explores the family relationships among Indian, Chinese and Japanese chess, diviner's boards and the *I Ching*. The very reconstruction of the Tarot board is based upon the wedding of playing cards with the *pachisi* board, using clues from the Egyptian game of *senat*, Indian proto-chess, the lunar zodiac and the geomantic monument at Stonehenge. Kaplan, Dummett and others have attempted to exclude the cards from any time period prior to the invention of *tarok* by the absence of the Tarot from the company

of various board and table games. These games' evolutionary, malleable, even fluid nature is such that anyone who has studied their origins must immediately see that any attempt to date the creation of the Tarot by the appearance of a particular game or group of games played with its cards is misguided. This goes quite as well for the simple mention of cards.

Kaplan has pointed out that from the time of the first introduction of the earliest surviving cards there came into existence a profusion of different kinds of decks, not to mention multitudinous variations upon the images on the cards themselves. It is, in fact, astounding that an archetypal set of cards ever survived and not highly probable that anyone was able to reconstruct its original nature. The key to this exercise in Aristotelian logic is the unproven but logically necessary conclusion that the Tarot was not invented to play card games but survived, probably for centuries, in that same twilight zone where such long dead languages as Latin, Old Church Slavonic and biblical Hebrew outlasted their engendering civilizations, from which, one fine long forgotten day, it emigrated. That the original character and order of the deck remains at all is a sign, not of its metaphysical authority, but of the further logically necessary conclusion that the prototype from which the early cards were derived only ceased to be accessible sometime after the introduction of the first series of decks. In its absence we must rely upon less well defined evidence in our attempt to date the Tarot.

Travelling backwards in time beyond the earliest written record of the Tarot and even beyond any mention of cards in general we come to that period when the two-handed chess was invented. Various authors have recognized a similarity between chess and playing cards and the theory has arisen that cards were invented as a kind of poor man's chess set, the assumption always being that cards developed from chess. Yet even if this and not its more defensible reverse were true, the similarities are much greater between the Tarot and the four-handed proto-chess than its two-handed successor. This is important because there would be no reason to invent a four-suited deck of cards after chess had ceased to be played by four people. It must, of course, be assumed that *chaturanga* survived for some time beyond the introduction of chess, though already by the tenth century it had fallen into decline. Though Falkener finds his words quite unfathomable and stops just short of calling the man a lunatic, the description of al-Beruni points to the rarity of four-handed chess even then, for he says in so many words: "The name *Shah* or *King* applies here to the *Queen*."²

The reference to queens that are really kings is perfectly intelligible

WHITE				BLACK			
B	N	R	Q			■	B
■	■	■	■			■	N
						■	R
						■	K
Q	■						
R	■						
N	■			■	■	■	■
B	■			K	R	N	B
BLACK				WHITE			

K=King, Q=Queen, R=Rook, N=Knight,
 B=Bishop, ■=Pawn

Figure 16: Chaturanga Played with a Modern Chess Set

if we imagine someone trying to play four kings with a modern chess set. The two kings and two queens would all be used as kings, the four bishops replacing the ships, which also move diagonally, and the rooks serving as elephants (see Figure 16). Thus prior to the year 1000 someone found it necessary to commandeer a standard chess set in order to play *chaturanga*. This does not bode well for the advocates of a Renaissance invention of the Tarot.

Can the chess pieces be shown to derive from playing cards? Though the evidence for this possibility is at present circumstantial, one thing seems certain. The two games must either have common ancestors

or they must, at least in part, be based upon the same view of reality. Of all the disparate elements of the Tarot the parts that most closely resemble chess appear to have had their origin in India. The similarity of the court cards to chess pieces, the quaternary nature of both games, the identification of the four kings with the gods of the four directions, and the resemblance between the four suits and the four *varnas* or classes of Hindu society, which appear at least as early as the *Rigveda*, all point toward an Indian origin for part of the Tarot. The recognition of this has led to the theory that the Tarot originated there and was transported to the West either by the Arabs or the Gypsies. The obvious connection with *pachisi* lends credence to the theory.

Yet there are also undeniably Babylonian influences to be found. Theories based upon these elements have not appeared; their hidden nature has prevented them from coming to light until the present time. They are significant in that they cast doubt upon the exclusively Indian origin of the Tarot. The resemblance of the tower, surmounted by the sun, moon and star, to a boundary stone; the appearance of the numbers 72, connected with the Tower of Babel, and 432; the general astrological nature of the system and its planetary bent; all point toward the astronomical priesthood of the Tigris-Euphrates river valley. It seems that we must resign ourselves to a more and more clearly diffusionist explanation of the development of the Tarot.

Emblazoned upon the front of the tower, beyond even the hidden elements of Babylonian astrology, lies a level of symbolism that not only points to that culture known as classical Greek but does so within such a narrow span of time that it may be used to catch a glimpse of the person or persons behind its invention. It is our good fortune that the astronomical cryptogram whose solution we have so painstakingly identified as IAHUEH could only have worked for the smallest slice of historical time. The two events that serve to delimit the cryptogram, and thus the Tarot as a whole, are the invention of omega and the close of the period when eta could still be used to express an aspirate or "h" sound as well as long "e." The former was required to activate the seven vowel planetary substitution scheme; the latter marks the end of any possible borrowing between the Greek IAHUEH and the Hebrew "Yahweh." A short digression will clarify this situation.

It must be noted that the second and fourth letters of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton are *hes* and not *heths*. The fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *he* is the letter from which the Greek epsilon and later the Latin "E" were derived, whereas *heth*, the eighth Hebrew letter, is equivalent to Greek eta and Roman "H." Yet both *he* and *heth* represent

<u>GREEK</u>	<u>VALUE</u>	<u>HEBREW</u>	<u>VALUE</u>	<u>SHORTENED TO</u>	<u>GREEK</u>	<u>LATIN</u>
I (iota)	10	Y (yod)	10	Y	I (iota)	I
A (alpha)	1	A *		A		
H (heta="h")	8	H (he)	5	H	H (eta=long "e")	E
U (upsilon)	400	W (waw)	6			
E (epsilon)	5	E *			+	
H (heta="h")	<u>8</u>	H (he)	5			
	432				S	S
					O	
					U	U
					<u>S</u>	S
					888	

* True vowels are not represented in Hebrew.

Table VIII: Probable Evolution of IAUEH

"h" sounds. This would indicate that either Yahweh was a transliteration of the *word* IAUEH or vice versa by someone trying to reproduce the *sound* of the original rather than its numerical and planetary significance. That "Yahweh" appears to make no sense either numerologically or astrologically militates toward the conclusion that IAUEH was the prototype; but in either case the transliteration must have occurred prior to cessation of eta as an aspirate. The first two letters of the Tetragrammaton (the semivowels of "Yah") were then retransliterated into Greek, this time according to their positional value in the Hebrew alphabet and, with the addition of a numerically suitable ending, were made to equal the value 888 in the form of Iesus ("E" being eta and not epsilon), apparently a reference to the original eight-year sun, moon, star cycle. Table VIII shows the probable evolutionary pathway.

The Tarot must therefore have entered its final phase during the period that begins with a series of inscriptions, more in the nature of graffiti, found at Abu Simbel on the Nile.³ Among these, six are Phoenician and 19 Greek, one of which is a record of the visit of a party of Greeks in the employ of Pharaoh Psammetichus, either I or II, of the 26th dynasty. This places the inscription either between 654 and 617 B.C. or 594 and 589 B.C.⁴ Omega has not yet appeared at Abu Simbel while eta may still be used as either a vowel or an aspirate.⁵ By about the 60th olympiad (540 B.C.), omega had appeared at Miletus,⁶ and eta,

which at one time was called heta, was strictly a long "e."⁷ The Ionian alphabet of Miletus, which had nearly reached its final form by about the 80th olympiad (460 B.C.) as evidenced by an inscription from Halicarnassus,⁸ was adopted at Athens in 403 B.C. and was shortly thereafter adopted throughout Greece. The Tarot must therefore have been created between 654 and 403 B.C. and the probability is high that it first appeared sometime very near the year 540 B.C.

The Greeks themselves ascribed the "invention" of eta (i.e. as a symbol exclusively for long "e") and omega either to the poet Simonides of Ceos (c.556-c.470 B.C.) alone or together with Epicharmus (c.530-c.440 B.C.), another poet, born either at Syracuse, Megara or Cos.⁹ Graves goes so far as to suggest that Simonides, whom he identifies as a devotee of Dionysus, was responsible for the entire realignment of the Greek alphabet.¹⁰ Though the epigraphic evidence is against this, it is nonetheless interesting that Simonides was associated in the Greek mind with the newly revised alphabet and especially with the introduction of the exclusively vocal eta, for it is this very modification that lowers the final curtain on the development of the Tarot. The implication seems to be that Simonides, though not the originator of the new system, was one of its early exponents or propagandists and thus became associated in the popular mind with its invention. The same could be said for Epicharmus, about whom we know one important bit of information that not only points toward the ultimate author of the Tarot but goes a long way toward explaining the presence of Indian and Babylonian astrological elements in a system whose final form is clearly of Greek origin. This datum is of such importance that we will be able to say with some certainty how the Tarot came to be in Italy. All the former theories of late importation or invention will be shown to be of no consequence for, as we shall see immediately, it was either brought here by its creator or invented right on the spot sometime shortly after 532 B.C.

Tradition has it that Epicharmus was a pupil of Pythagoras who, at about the age of forty, established a school at Croton (modern Cotrone) on the eastern coast of southern Italy in what was then called Magna Graecia. Since there are certainly Pythagorean elements in the Tarot, most of which have already been noted including the all important Tower of Zeus, it would only be reasonable to ask whether there is some direct connection between the Pythagoreans and the Tarot.

In the ideas assigned by the Greeks to the Master himself scholarly opinion has in recent years seen the work of that rather diffuse group of followers known as "Pythagoreans." Yet the chronological evidence

of the IAHUEH cryptogram is compelling. If we are to see in the Tarot a Pythagorean amalgamation of the most important elements of the major religions of the sixth century B.C. we must ask not whether the "Pythagoreans" had anything to do with the Tarot but whether the Master himself was its author. The power to solve the most important enigmas of the Tarot that proof of such an identification would give us is enormous.

It is especially tempting to see in the establishment of his school the means by which the Tarot entered Italy. Also, since the Greeks attributed his vast knowledge to his travels among the Egyptians, Arabs, Jews, Chaldeans and Indians, as well as the Magi and the Druids of Gaul,¹¹ a connection with Pythagoras would explain the presence in the deck of elements of both Babylonian astrology and Indian religion. Yet it seems almost inconceivable that such a proof could be found after two and a half millennia. There is simply not enough surviving evidence to even make the attempt; that is, if it were not for the deck itself.

The critical question upon which the present work rests is whether the Tarot explains in a lucid and comprehensible way the realignment of the Greek alphabet. The reader may wish to consider the implications of this question. If the answer is yes then it can reasonably be assumed that the cards are not simply a commentary upon, but were meant to be an integral part of, the new alphabetical system. The origins of both the Tarot and the revised alphabet are so obscure, and obviously intentionally so, that their mutual congruence indicates nothing less than a commonality of origin; secrecy would have prevented either from developing independently of the other. Therefore, if either one can be tied directly to Pythagoras, or even the "Pythagoreans," which amounts to the same thing when taken in conjunction with the epigraphic evidence, then the other must also be so linked.

The latter of these two questions has already been partially answered; we know that Epicharmus was a student of the Master. A link between Simonides and Epicharmus is also averred by the Greeks. The link between Simonides and Pythagoras himself is less substantial, though Graves offhandedly calls him Simonides' "predecessor."¹² As for the connection between the Master and the revised alphabet, Graves claims that "Pythagoras was initiated into this alphabetic mystery by the Dactyls. . . ."¹³ He further asserts that the Pythagoreans derived the "new sacred name of God" from a "sixth-century B.C. Jewish source."¹⁴ In this regard it is also interesting to note that at least one version of his life has him studying under Pherecydes of Syros, who was credited

with having “acquired secret books of the Phoenicians,”¹⁵ the inventors of the original 19-letter alphabet. There was even a tradition that Pythagoras was a Jew and had been a disciple of Ezekiel¹⁶; wheels within wheels indeed. We must now ask the Tarot what it has to say about the revision of the alphabet.

That Robert Graves manages to go as far wrong as he does in his attempt to decipher the meaning of the revision is testimony enough to the importance of determining the original form of the alphabet. Liking the process of transformation to a chemical reaction, it is clear that it is just as important to identify the original reagents as it is the final products. Without both, any conclusion about the nature of the reaction must remain purely speculative. Fortunately, by building upon the work of Hugh Anderson Moran and using further evidence from the lunar zodiacs of the Old World it has been possible to extract the original 19-letter Phoenician alphabet. As the reader will see in the Appendix, the original holy name was IAO, made up of the letters that marked the summer solstice and the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. That the new arrangement destroyed this alignment implies that it was meant to ratify the new holy name IAHUEH. We have already seen that the central cryptographic theme of the tower is the number 432, expressed not only as the faces of its 72 constituent cubes but as the numerical value of the name IAHUEH itself. The implication is that the letter-number correspondence was the ultimate reason for the realignment. Whether “Yahweh” already existed or whether it later developed from IAHUEH, and whether the Phoenician alphabet had numerical values or not, is immaterial. The logic in all cases is basically the same. The only question is whether the alphabet was altered to fit an existing name or whether the name itself was also modified in the process of bringing the two into line. For the moment, we will assume the former. With this in mind let us see if we can reconstruct the process by which the changes mandated by the new name were incorporated into the alphabet.

The Phoenician alphabet, even after it had been adapted to the Greek language, contained only four of the five letters required to spell the new name. These were iota, alpha, upsilon, and epsilon (called “eta”); IA-UE-, with the value $7 + 1 + 6 + 5 = 19$. The difference between 432 and 19 is 413. Hence, as a first step, it was necessary to place a vowel in the 400 position. Upsilon was chosen and its value and position changed to 400 (see Table IX). The six position was then filled by digamma, which had already disappeared as a “v” sound from parts of Greece.¹⁷ The value of the word was now $19 + 400 - 6 = 413$. All that

VALUE	PHOENICIAN* ALPHABET			GREEK ALPHABET	FINAL FORM
1	A	A	A	A	A
2	B	B	B	B	B
3	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ
4	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
5	E	E	E	E	E
6	Υ	F	F	F	F
7	I	I	H	Z	Z
8	K	K	H	H	H
9	Λ	Λ	I	Θ	Θ
10	M	M	I	I	I
20	N	N	K	K	K
30	Ξ	Ξ	Λ	Λ	Λ
40	O	O	M	M	M
50	Π	Π	N	N	N
60	Z	Z	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ
70	Q	Q	O	O	O
80	P	P	Π	Π	Π
90	Σ	Σ	Z	Q	
100	T	T	Q	P	P
200			P	Σ	Σ
300			Σ	T	T
400		Υ	T	Υ	Υ
500		Ϛ	Υ	Φ	Φ
600				X	X
700				Ψ	Ψ
800				Ω	Ω

*Standard Greek letters are used throughout the table. Original forms may be found in the Appendix.

Table IX: Revision of the Phoenician Alphabet

remained was to add another 19 to the total, with the one restriction that part of this figure must be divided evenly between the two etas. Eta was further subject to the requirement that it be placed between epsilon and iota in order to maintain the original connection between iota and the sun (see Appendix).

The simplest and only practical solution was to set eta equal to eight and to move iota, along with the entire sequence from kappa through tau, three notches down in the series. This, however, left up-silon equal to 500. In order to return it to its proper position, sanpi,

which had never been widely used in Greece, was transferred to the seven position, filling the gap that still existed between digamma and eta, and its value and form changed to that of zeta. The remaining gaps were then filled with those letters that had been slowly making their way into the Greek language during the centuries between the first introduction of the Phoenician alphabet and the revision. The number of letters in the revised alphabet, though not the numbering system behind it, was then reduced to 24, probably by Pythagoras' followers, and the shortened version, together with certain pronounciational changes, was adopted officially at Athens in 403 B.C.

There is no way to be sure whether the above was *precisely* the procedure followed by Pythagoras; it must be very close. For anyone who has read *The White Goddess* it will seem a rather disappointing anticlimax. Not only is it a simple numerical transformation of a group of letters based ultimately on the signs of the lunar zodiac, it bears little or no resemblance to any of Graves' speculations about the letter value of trees. This is not to say that such connections may not have developed later on and further north; it does remove them from the position of dominance in which he places them. Actually, about the only part of the *Goddess* that remains relevant is a series of speculations upon the original meaning of "Iahu," which may ultimately have something to do with why the Greeks chose IAHUEH as the new name.

According to Graves¹⁸ the name "Iahu" had been bouncing around the Middle East since the Egyptian Sixth Dynasty, midway through the third millennium B.C., when it was one of the titles of Set. It later appears in Sumeria where the components *ia* and *hu* mean "exalted" and "dove" respectively. Graves goes on to identify Ia with the moon-goddess as a cow and Hu with the same goddess as a dove. By the 16th century B.C. it appears as part of Elath-Iahu whom he identifies as the Kenite smith-god and god of Wednesday, that is Mercury. Later on, at a time only identified as that of the "theophanies at Moreh, Hebron and Ophrah," Iahu has become the god of Thursday, or Jupiter. In Egypt he becomes Iahu-Bel. This change from Mercury to Jupiter is interesting because it mirrors the transformation of the tower or rook from a symbol for Mercury in chess to a symbol for Jupiter in the Tarot.

The presence of Iahu in Egypt finally brings us back to the theory that the Tarot originated there. That the later Greeks, and Romans, could not conceive of anyone actually having an original idea is well-known, and it was a common practice among them to attribute the

knowledge of the early philosophers to their studies in the valley of the Nile.¹⁹ Pythagoras was no exception. As the ideas of Plato were attributed to him, his in turn were traced to the Egyptian Thrice-greatest Hermes, the god Thoth, who is, again, Mercury. Yet we have already noticed certain Egyptian elements in the Tarot, including The High Priestess as Isis, The Hanged Man as Hermes, and the three-season year hinted at by Justice. Most importantly we have noted the presence of the derivative but recognizable Tarot-related *senat* board in the Tomb of Queen Hatshepsut. It is difficult to determine how this game entered Egypt, though what appear to be earlier, related forms have been found in the ruins of Mesopotamia. In light of both the current lack of direct evidence of an Egyptian hand in the finalization of the Tarot board, and the presence of the much more completely preserved *pachisi* board in India, it must be assumed that the role of the Egyptians was similar to that of the Babylonians and the Indians: a source, so to speak, of “raw materials” rather than of the actual “craftsmen.” Still, the possibility cannot be ruled out that Pythagoras obtained the astrological and divinatory system behind the Tarot more or less fully assembled from the Egyptians and simply altered the Greek alphabet to fit its requirements. We may never know for sure.

Origin of the Word “Tarot”

Previous theories about the origin of the word *tarot* range from the fanciful to the just barely plausible. Part of the problem is that the word, in its various forms, followed the largely unknown pathways along which the game itself originally spread across the political and linguistic boundaries of Europe. Add to this the lack of any firm understanding of the origin of the deck itself, along with a much more serious disregard for the astrological and geomantic context in which games in general developed, and it is no wonder that study of the word’s etymology has degenerated into a hotch-potch of conflicting suppositions and wild guesses. As usual, the solution lies buried just below the surface.

Modern French *tarot*, as well as the 16th century variant *tarau*, is universally derived from Italian *tarocco*, one of the cards used to play *tarocchi* (literally “tarots”), which is often shortened to *tarok*. This is as far as most dictionaries take the matter, with no suggestion as to where *tarocco* came from.

Eric Partridge takes a more daring approach in his *Origins*,²⁰ where he derives *tarocco* from either Egyptian *Tar*, one of the gods of the

netherworld, or *taru*, all the gods of that region. The man has fallen prey to the theory that the Tarot came from Egypt; though, despite the fact that we have identified the time and place of its assembly, as well as the name of the man responsible for its final form, there is no way to know whether he also gave it its name or whether it came along for the ride with some part of the original source material, some of whose elements go back to the third millennium. Partridge then derives the Latin *Tartarus* from the same *tar*, which he thinks may be a Mediterranean root related to Hittite *tarrh-*, “powerful.” At Olba in Cilicia, Tark, Tarku, Trok or Troko (Greek Teukros) was, by some accounts, the lightning god and lord of the sky, whom the Greeks assimilated to Zeus,²¹ which ties in nicely with the Tower of Zeus, especially when we recall that Pythagoras came from Samos, an island off the coast of Anatolia. By others, *Tark* has been held to be the native name of the Cataonian Apollo who dwelled in Cappadocia²²: Pythagoras was thought to be an incarnation of Apollo. Still others would call Tarku or Tarchu the chief deity of all the Hittites of southern Asia Minor.²³ At the very least *Targh* or *Tarkh* was the Hittite name for “god” in general.²⁴ I will stress that the latter part of this derivation is highly speculative, though it is certainly interesting how our path has again led to Jupiter, though in Asia Minor he is still the thunder god and not yet the planet of the same name. One would think that this would be as close as we might reasonably expect to come to the origin of the word *tarot*. There is, however, another word that appears to be related to the development of the idea of a board used for divination.

At the top of a hill in the center of the Plain of Fal is a castle known as Tara. Nigel Pennick²⁵ calls this the “political geomantic central point of ancient Ireland.” Tara was identified with the central square of the *brandubh* board; surrounded by Cashel, Croghan, Naas and Oileach; themselves identified with the four provinces. The mind rebels at the possibility that the Castle of Tara is not a physical analogue of the very Tower of Zeus whose faces made up the Tarot board. Yet the etymologies would see *Tara* as a derivative of *Temair*²⁶; the product of “the stem changes and vowel alteration which occurred in Old Irish.”²⁷ *Tara*, they would argue, comes directly from the genitive singular *Temro*, which later becomes *Temrach*.²⁸ Yet if the “stem changes and vowel alteration” were applied directly to the “k-stem” *Temrach*, rather than the “i-stem” *Temro*, we would have something like **Tarach*, which looks suspiciously like *tarocco* and even some of the permutations of Hittite *Tarku*. The suspicion grows even stronger when we notice Macalister’s²⁹ alternate derivation of *Tara* from *Temuir* (Teamhair),

which he derives, in turn, from the dative *Temraig*, modern *Teamhrach*. There is something interesting here.

Temraig-Tara and *tarocco-tarot* look like parallel branches whose common origin would be some Indo-European root akin to Hittite *tarrh-*. If this is indeed true, it is strong evidence for the continuous existence of a Tarot tradition between the time of Pythagoras and the appearance of *tarocchi* in Italy. The fact is that the Irish, Italian, Greek and Hittite languages are all members of independent subfamilies of the Indo-European family. Short of direct word borrowing, the *Tara* and *tarot* branches would have separated at the same time that the Celtic subfamily came into existence, possibly as early as the fifth millennium. Hence, the Tarot deck would have had to survive, not only as a physical object or representation thereof, but as an object bearing a *name*, known to its owner, whose origin goes back before Stonehenge. There is no way around this conclusion. If *Tara* and *tarot* are related, the Tarot cannot be a product of the Renaissance. Even if it could be shown by some as yet inaccessible evidence that *tarocco* comes directly from *Temraig*, Old Irish hasn't even been spoken since the middle of the tenth century, well before the first reference to the game of *tarocchi*; and there is no reason to believe that the ancestors of *Temraig* are any younger than those of *tarocco*. The only problem is that, despite a good deal of circumstantial evidence, the two branches cannot be proved to be related. It should not be surprising if we never learn exactly how old the word *tarocco* really is, or whether this or some earlier form was used by Pythagoras. It is amazing enough that the word survived, in a recognizable form, for two millennia, apparently without ever seeing the light of day.

Pythagoras died at the age of about 75 or 80, probably in Metapontum north of Croton,³⁰ near the end of the sixth or the beginning of the fifth century B.C. Around 450 his followers were violently suppressed.³¹ By most accounts both events resulted from a popular dislike, on the part of the inhabitants of Croton, of a Pythagorean government that had degenerated into a tyrannical oligarchy. With the destruction of their organization in Croton the center of Pythagoreanism moved to Taras east of Metapontum.³² The choosing of Taras, or Tarentum, is not particularly surprising. It is known that the Master himself practiced *clendonism*, a type of divination based upon the euphony of words and the chance utterings of people around him.³³ We are, at present, not in a position to determine whether there is any deeper connection between the city of Taras and the word *tarot*.