

Five

The Tarot of the Greeks

It is my contention that the 78-card deck used to play *tarocchi* and related games and known to the English speaking world as the Tarot is the direct lineal descendant of an oracle or divinatory device that, though its roots lie in the Indo-European hinterlands of the third millennium and also, as we shall see shortly, in the Semitic and pre-Semitic kingdoms of Mesopotamia, reached its present form during the period of Greek history which began with the semimythical philosopher-god Pythagoras and ended with the formalization of the Greek alphabet.

The historical Pythagoras was born at Samos off the coast of Asia Minor during the first half of the sixth century B.C. About 532 he moved to Croton where he founded his famous school. Little is known of the extent to which the teachings of the man himself may be distinguished from those of his followers. Whether the tradition of a "pledge of secrecy" surrounding the teachings of the school is true or not, the fact is that the first written record of the doctrines of the "Pythagoreans" of which fragments have survived was not committed to paper until Philolaus did so about a century after the death of the Master.¹

Censorinus attributes to Philolaus the statements that a "Great Year" consists of 59 years, and that the solar year has $364\frac{1}{2}$ days. This gives a Great Year consisting of $21,505\frac{1}{2}$ days, which period contains approximately 2 revolutions of Saturn, 5 of Jupiter, 31 of Mars, 59 of the sun, Mercury, and Venus, and 729 of the moon. . . . Philolaus said, as Plato said after him, that the cube of 9 represents the number of months in a Great Year, and so it does *less* 1; the arbitrary variation is characteristic of the Pythagorean fanciful speculations with regard to numbers.²

In other words 59 years of 729 half-day units apiece are divided into 729 synodic lunar months of 29.5 days each. Not only does all this

sound rather familiar but the mention of nine cubed presents what the authors of *Hamlet's Mill* would call the "unequivocal geometric counter-sign." We have clearly not yet plumbed the full depth of the western diviner's board. What until now has appeared to relate simply to the solar year and the lunar month may now be seen to extend to the periods of the planets and beyond. Of greater importance, the presence of this system in classical Greece provides us with the opportunity to finally examine the Tarot in the light of a relatively well known and understood ancient civilization.

Before embarking on a journey into the third dimension, where we will trace the meanings of the sequence beginning with Death, it is only fitting that we pause for a moment to look at the 12 trumps that have been identified with the signs of the zodiac. It should by now be obvious to anyone who has read the standard books on cartomancy how far they have strayed from historical validity. Though my primary intention is not to regenerate the proper mantic interpretations of the cards, I have arranged the following in such a way as to make it accessible to anyone wishing to use them in such a manner. By so doing it is my intention neither to condone nor to condemn the practice of astrology (or fortunetelling in general). As Carl Jung and others have shown, the complex nature of the mind is such that any absolute statement upon its ultimate limitations must be taken as an admission of conceit rather than a serious attempt at understanding. The equation of myth with astrology is a two-edged razor; Chapter Seven will take us into systems and structures of belief that even the staunchest foes of judicial astrology have feared to criticize.

THE JUGGLER OR MAGICIAN

Having just committed myself to a theory of the Greek origin of the Tarot, it is particularly odd that the first trump should represent an aspect of the goddess Maia which not only approaches the far eastern boundary of the Indo-European realm but is so far removed from the western attributes of the goddess that the connection is not even recognized by the philologists. There is also the question of the male nature of the juggler, though even if the latter is not simply a transmission error there is the Etruscan Maius to blunt the objection. The former problem is not so easily written off.

It has been my experience throughout this exegesis that the Tarot often intersects the surviving fragments of ancient cosmology at a rather

oblique angle. There are two possible ways to explain this divergence. One is that the Tarot represents a syncretistic system that, though it attempts to align the world-views of a multitude of far-flung sources, never reached sufficient currency to affect more than a relative handful of people. The other is that the system actually encompasses the remains of a cosmology that is so old that it can no longer be easily recognized by its resemblance to its descendants. The widespread use of related game and divination boards would seem to belie the former of these, though one of the primary advantages of syncretism is the conservation of what we may call historical authority. That is, the authority of the constituent parts is tapped by the new dispensation which may as a consequence claim to itself more significance than it really deserves. If the syncretistic explanation is the correct one, then the determination of the geographical and historical origin of the Tarot depends upon the identification and examination of the seams, no matter how well they are concealed. The two explanations are of course not necessarily mutually exclusive. It is just as easy (or difficult) to make a quilt out of old cloth as new and the antiquity of the pieces, as long as they are not sewn together with nylon thread, lends an air of authenticity to the final product. Antique parts of a syncretistic cosmology would also lead to the same sort of obscurity one would find in a unified system of the same age. The Magician presents our first opportunity to examine the Tarot board for signs of late assembly.

The primary question is whether there is any connection outside the confines of the divination board between the Hindu concept of *maya* and the month of May. Modern dictionaries derive "May" from the Roman goddess of spring, Maia, akin to the Sanscrit *maha* meaning great, though their degree of certainty varies. As we have already seen, the etymologists have strictly segregated the Roman Maia from the Greek goddess of the same name who is numbered among the Seven Sisters or Pleiades, long associated with springtime. Yet Richard Allen links the entire range of names: Maia, Mea, Maja, Majja, "Ma, or Maia Maiestas, the Bona Dea, or Great and Fruitful Mother, who gave name to the Roman month" with the daughter of the Greek Atlas. Higgins does the same thing, though his opinion is rendered suspect by the extremes to which he often takes his search for an archetypal universal world religion. He only brings up the matter of the various Maias as further evidence of the identity of a group of gods whose mothers they turn out to be.³ Higgins takes a step beyond Allen into the netherworld of philology, capitalizing "maya," which he spells both "Maya" and "Maia," equating Illusion with the mother of the Trimurti itself.⁴ Has

he tapped into a connection long forgotten or has he simply committed the same error as the assemblers of the Tarot? There is no way to answer this question at present. There are, however, a few remaining bits of evidence which strengthen the identification of *maya* with The Magician.

Strange as it may seem, though magic is certainly a manifestation of illusion, some dictionaries still profess ignorance of the source of the Sanscrit "maya." As early as 1897 Charles Heckethorn derived "magus," "magic," "imagination," etc. from what he calls the mirror *Maja*, which he equates with the Virgin Sophia of the Gnostics, the Eternal Liberty of the Indians and the Eternal Mirror of Wonders of the theosophists. He fails to elaborate upon the origin of this mirror though it would seem to be related to the magic mirror that appears in children's stories.⁵ C.G. Jung sees *Maya*, which he capitalizes, as the primal material from which the real world is created.⁶

Mircea Eliade takes the identification of *maya* with magic as a given and derives the former from "may" meaning change. Purucker takes a slightly different tack, deriving it from "ma" meaning to measure, which he connects via "a figure of speech" to such concepts as effecting, forming and limiting.⁷ Eliade distinguishes two types of *maya*. It is evil *maya* which is wielded by the *mayin* or magician who uses it to make such cosmological alterations as stopping the sun and binding the waters. The good *mayas* are divided into two types.

The first of these are the "*mayas* of combat," which are used to fight demons. The second, the creative *maya*, resembles the Taoist concept of change found in the *I Ching* and is related to *rita* which he defines as cosmic order. *Rita* resides in the fire altar⁸ which is constructed from 10,800 bricks in five levels and is sometimes built in the shape of a bird which symbolizes the mystical ascent of the sacrificer to heaven.⁹ We once again find ourselves on a circular path when we realize that the Pleiades were constantly associated "with a flock of birds." "Some of the poets, among them Athenaeus, Hesiod, Pindar, and Simonides, likening the stars to Rock-pigeons flying from the Hunter Orion, wrote the word *Peleiades* . . . Other versions made them the Seven Doves that carried ambrosia to the infant Zeus . . ."¹⁰ When we have circumnavigated the board we will return to The Magician in preparation for our own ascent of the stairway to heaven whose first rung is Death.

Synopsis / The Juggler

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| I. Direct (Eastern)—maya | II. Indirect (Western)—Maia |
| A. Early—change, transformation | A. Greek (Astronomical)—The Pleiad |
| 1. Magic, destruction | 1. Daughter of Atlas and mother of Hermes |
| 2. Creation | |
| B. Late—illusion | B. Roman (Calendrical)—May |
| | 1. The Great Mother |

THE HIGH PRIESTESS OR JUNO

The next trump in the series presents a much simpler exercise in interpretation. We can thank an early card maker from the south of France for the deck that calls it Juno rather than Priestess. The wife and sister of Jupiter, Juno was the Roman equivalent of the Greek Hera, the wife and sister of Zeus who in turn was the equivalent of Jupiter. "In classic folk-lore the Milky Way was marked out by the corn ears dropped by Isis in her flight from Typhon; or was the result of some of Juno's nursery troubles with the infant Hercules. . . From this doubtless came the Roman Circulus Junonius."¹¹ I should point out here that Isis was the wife and sister of Osiris. At Akkad north of Sumer it was "*Hid In-ni-na*, River-of-the-Divine-Lady; and, to quote again: 'This Snake-river of sparkling dust, the stream of the abyss on high through which it runs, the golden cord of the heaven-god. . . is the Milky Way; and it is the River of Nana, wife of the heaven-god, as, in Greek mythology, it is connected with Here.'¹²

The Galaxy is a big place, even as a two-dimensional projection on the illusory dome of the sky. From past experience we might expect to find our High Priestess represented by a single star somewhere on this vast milky river. There is scant evidence of either Juno or Hera as a star in any source I have so far examined. The one exception is a quotation from the *Iliad* in *Hamlet's Mill* where Hephaistos calls his mother *kunopis* which the authors translate as dog-eared. From this they place Hera near the star Sirius in Canis Major.¹³ The situation changes drastically when we look for the Egyptian Isis, who bears roughly the same relationship to the Milky Way as Hera, for she has long been associated with the very same Sirius or, less often, other stars in the Great Dog.

It is the only star known to us with absolute certitude in the Egyptian records—its hieroglyph, a dog, often appearing on the monuments and temple walls throughout the Nile country. . . . Sirius had replaced Gamma Draconis as an orientation point, especially at Thebes, and notably in the great temple of Queen Hatshepsu, known to-day as Al Der al Bahari, the Arabs' translation of the modern Copts' Convent of the North. Here it was symbolized, under the title of Isis Hathor, by the form of a cow with disc and horns appearing from behind the western hills. With the same title, and styled Her Majesty of Denderah, it is seen in the small temple of Isis, erected 700 B.C.¹⁴

We can begin to understand the temptation to place the origin of the Tarot in Egypt. It is a fact that Hathor was the third month of the Egyptian year. Thoth, already identified with The Hanged Man, gave his name to the first.¹⁵

Synopsis / The High Priestess

I. Northern

A. Greek—Hera

1. Wife and sister of Zeus,
Daughter of Cronus and Rhea

B. Roman—Juno

1. Calendrical—Juno
2. Mythological—Wife and sister
of Jupiter

II. Southern

A. Egyptian—Isis

1. Astronomical—Sirius
2. Calendrical—Hathor
3. Mythological—Wife and sister
of Osiris

The fate of The Empress is irrevocably tied to that of The Emperor. Since it would be fruitless to try to examine the former without reference to the latter, I will postpone the discussion of the wife until I have dealt with the husband. This is in no way a manifestation of crypto-sexism but a simple consequence of the direction of the precession of the equinoxes. Interestingly enough, it turns out that as the summer solstice gradually worked its way from Leo into Cancer some of the mythological power of The Emperor was transferred to The Empress.

THE EMPEROR

In an earlier chapter The Emperor was identified with the star Regulus, formerly Rex, in the eighth mansion of the moon at the heart

of the Lion. But who exactly is this unnamed ruler? Returning briefly to Stonehenge, we note a paper by Jack Robinson in *Archaeoastronomy*. According to Robinson, 11 days before the winter solstice, from about 2300 to 2100 B.C., Regulus would appear just after sunset a mere one degree above the Heel Stone when viewed from the center of the monument.¹⁶ He calls this a heliacal rising of the second kind, the more commonly known heliacal rising of the first kind being the appearance of a star on the eastern horizon just before sunrise. Robinson suggests that the days around the winter solstice may have been celebrated at Stonehenge as a major holiday similar to Christmas,¹⁷ which is the modern equivalent of the Greek Kronia and Latin Saturnalia,¹⁸ named after Kronos and Saturn. This is our first indication that The Emperor may represent the god Saturn. He further notes that during the period in question Regulus occupied a position of 90° right ascension and $+24^\circ$ declination, placing it directly opposite the solstice sun,¹⁹ which would explain the designation of Saturn as “night sun,” “second sun,” “best sun” and “Sun-Star.”²⁰ This is not a hollow supposition. Saturn is the Roman equivalent of Cronus, who came to power by castrating his father Ouranos with a flint sickle.²¹ We can only chuckle at the futile attempts of various writers to connect the *planet* Saturn with an implement for cutting grain, for once the critical identification of Cronus with Regulus has been made, the source of this curved blade becomes obvious.

[Leo's] drawing has generally been in a standing position, but, in the *Leyden Manuscript*, in a springing attitude, with the characteristic Sickle fairly represented. Young astronomers know the constellation by this last feature in the fore parts of the figure, the bright Regulus marking the handle; its other stars successively being Eta, Gamma, Zeta, Mu, and Epsilon. Nor is this a recent idea, for Pliny is thought to have given it separately from Leo in his list of the constellations; but not much could have been left of the Lion after this subtraction except his tail. These same Sickle stars were a lunar asterism with the Akkadians as Gis-mes, the Curved Weapon; with the Khorasmians and Sogdians as Khamshish, the Scimeter. . . .²²

Figure 10 shows the relevant stars.

A thorough analysis of the plethora of theories that have developed at the far fringes of science as a result of the confusion of the eighth asterism of the lunar zodiac with the sixth planet from the sun will not be attempted. Such a study would fill the better part of a volume. We will find it useful, however, in our search for the true meaning of The

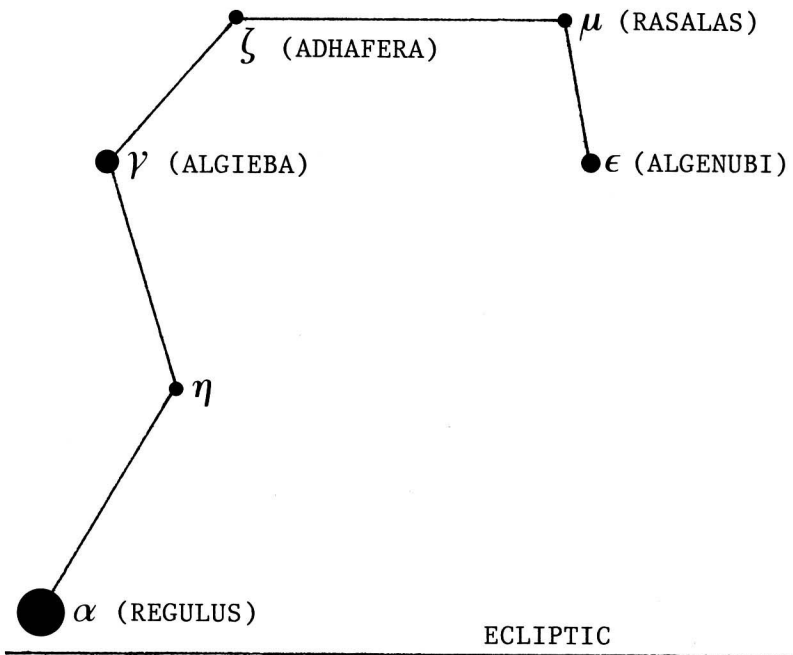


Figure 10: The Sickles in Leo with Which Cronus Castrates Ouranos

Emperor, to investigate some of the more interesting aspects of these theories.

Psychoanalysts in Collision

The most extreme theory of the lot is the one developed by some of Immanuel Velikovsky's more literal minded followers. Velikovsky's original hypothesis, presented in his best-selling *Worlds in Collision*, sees in the gods of the ancient world the sun, moon and planets of the solar system in which our Earth resides. The various floods and cataclysms spoken of in the writings of the religions and mythologies of the world are ascribed to near collisions among these bodies. Stories about the various battles and carryings on of the gods are seen as repressed memories of such events. Velikovsky was a psychoanalyst by profession and his theories are an attempt to explain certain universal religious ideas. In a sense he is trying to psychoanalyze mankind by substituting

myths for dreams. In a narrower sense his work stems from a difference of opinion with Sigmund Freud over whether Moses had invented monotheism or taken it with him when he led the Exodus from Egypt. In *Moses and Monotheism* Freud argues that Yahweh was at least partially derived from the Egyptian Aton whose cult was raised to a position of preeminence by Amenhotep IV (Akhenaton) during the 14th century B.C.

In order to eliminate the looming figure of Akhenaton from Moses' environment Velikovsky realigns Egyptian and Hebrew chronologies across a wide front,²³ a device he may have gotten from our very own Godfrey Higgins, though he never mentions the man by name. It was Higgins' contention that an extra 576 years had crept into Indian chronology and that this had resulted from the same error that led to the celebration of the Saturnalia on December 17th instead of the 25th. He ascribes the mistake to a failure to incorporate the proper one and a fraction day intercalation into the 600 year *neros* cycle upon which he bases many of his historical speculations.²⁴ Velikovsky pulls basically the same maneuver when he claims that 600 years have erroneously crept into Egyptian history. This of course places Akhenaton *after* Moses, the entire *raison d'être* of his massive restructuring of human knowledge which led to his vilification at the hands of orthodox scholars.

The critical flaw in Higgins' theorizing is his penchant for mixing apples and oranges. The Saturnalia was celebrated on the 17th day of December prior to the introduction of the Julian calendar. With the exception of the one attributed to Romulus, the calendars in use at Rome during this period were all more or less lunar, though few of them aligned with the actual phases of the moon. Various attempts were made to synchronize these nominal lunar calendars with the solar year, either by adding an intercalary month at intervals or by tacking a number of days onto the end of the year. In neither case did 12 bare months approach the true length of a solar year. It cannot, therefore, be argued that these months represented the signs of the zodiac. To relate the 17th of December to the 17th degree of Sagittarius, as Higgins has done, would necessitate the derivation of the date of the Saturnalia from a true solar calendar such as the Romulan; the sort of argument that has been used to relate the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, which falls on the 25th of the lunar month, to the celebration of the Saturnalia on the 25th of the Roman solar month.

The circumstances surrounding the introduction of the Julian calendar are almost as murky. It is not clear why the new calendar was

not begun at the winter solstice rather than about a week later, though it has been suggested that the positioning of January 1 in 45 B.C. had something to do with the new moon that fell on that day; some sort of concession to the lunar calendar which had just been replaced. One can almost imagine the hand of the lunar priesthood behind the events that led to the assassination of the solar heretic Julius Caesar. In any event there is no reason to assume that Julian December represented Sagittarius any more than very approximately. To draw conclusions about the position of the winter sun among the signs of the zodiac from the date of the Saturnalia is farfetched at best.

Velikovsky's version is more resistant to debunking. There is indeed evidence of a cosmology whose ages were named after gods whom a cursory observer could identify with planets. A good example of this is the system whose two most recent epochs were defined by the presence of the vernal sun in the constellations equivalent to April and March or Venus and Mars.²⁵ In fact Velikovsky calls his ages Saturn, Jupiter, Venus and Mars. Alfred de Grazia expands the list to Uranus, Luna, Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury, Venus and Mars, which is not surprising.²⁶ We have already noted the connection between Venus and Mercury, and the driver of The Chariot has already turned out to be the alter ego of Varuna whom the Indo-Europeans confused with Ouranos. With our discovery in later chapters of the connections between Hercules and Mars, and Maia and Jupiter, the source of this sequence will be apparent. A preliminary alignment may be found in Table VII. We can see immediately that De Grazia has the moon in the wrong place. He also has Mercury preceding Venus, which may be in error. Our general impression is that a number of gaps have been left by the Velikovskian reconstructors, the most alarming of which is Rhea, the wife of Cronus. Which brings us back to The Emperor.

At the Center of the Sky

Worlds in Collision dealt with the two ages that appear in Table VII as "Venus" and "Mars." Velikovsky places these "events" at about 1500 and 700 B.C. which tends to obscure their precessional nature. Though the sequel that was to have covered "Saturn" and "Jupiter" has not appeared, it is possible, through the works of his followers, to catch a glimpse of the cosmic model that supposedly accompanied Saturn's rule.

It is enlightening to watch David Talbott²⁷ carefully craft his

<u>TAROT TRUMP</u>	<u>INDIAN</u>	<u>GREEK</u>	<u>ROMAN CALENDAR</u>	<u>De GRAZIA</u>	<u>VELIKOVSKY</u>
X--The Wheel of Fortune					
IX--The Hermit					
VIII--Justice					
VII--The Chariot	Varuna	Ouranos			Uranus
VI--The Lovers					Luna
V--The Hierophant					
IV--The Emperor		Cronus	August	Saturn	Saturn
III--The Empress		Rhea			
II--The High Priestess		Hera	June		
I--The Magician		Maia	May		
	Indra	Zeus			Jupiter
XII--The Hanged Man		Hermes			Mercury
		Aphrodite	April	Venus	Venus
		Ares	March	Mars	Mars
XI--Strength		Herakles			

Table VII: A Preliminary Alignment of the Tarot Trumps with the Velikovskian Ages

argument: first sketching in details of the “Golden Age” that obtained during Saturn’s rule; then accumulating all his equivalents from around the world; next deriving the institution of divine kingship from the monarch in the sky; further on connecting him with the mythological motifs of the first man, the first king and the creator of the world; later bringing up the matter of the Saturnalia or Kronia and finally falling into the same morass in which we so recently lost the authors of *Hamlet’s Mill*. Talbott, like those before him, thinks the ruler of the golden age was the planet Saturn. There are in fact some who continue to maintain that the earliest Roman gods have something to do with the planets.

There is strong evidence contradictory to Talbott, including the Sickles that we have already identified, the Lion’s head that appears on statues of the Mithraic Zurvan²⁸ and the incredible number of wheels that have been identified with Saturn and can only be representations of the ecliptic. Beyond all else, Talbott’s theory²⁹ is based on a series of images and symbols the most important of which is the cross and circle that we encountered earlier as a Korean board game and, in its compressed form, as the Tarot board itself. He sees this symbol as a picture

of the planet Saturn positioned above the Earth at a place that he calls the "navel of heaven." Now this is an interesting image which contains within itself a vast amount of hidden information, which Talbott has missed. He places this navel at the celestial pole above the North Pole of the Earth, which he reminds us is the home of jolly old St. Nick. Talbott's model is incredible enough; Alfred de Grazia describes how the mechanism works.³⁰ The planets are strung out in a chain between the sun and "proto-Saturn" like chunks of meat and potato on a shish kebab. They revolve around the central axis of this binary system on orbits which cannot be described by the equations of celestial mechanics. No problem—throw in a pinch of electromagnetic interaction and voila! the world's largest light bulb.

If the reader will obtain one of the currently available reproductions of the earliest Tarot decks and arrange it as shown in Figure 8 (ignoring for the present the problem of which suit goes where), he will see laid out before him a multicolored picture of the ancient cosmological system of which the cross and circle symbol is an inadequate representation. He will notice immediately that The Emperor, which we have already identified with the god Saturn, is nowhere near the center of the board. This position is taken by what seems to be the title card, The World. The four images that appear here, the Bull, the Lion, the Eagle and the Man, only serve to confirm our earlier conclusion that the board represents the zodiac and not the equator. The Emperor clearly has nothing to do with its center, the pole of the ecliptic. He does, however, occupy another "center," the identity of which will become apparent in a moment.

Synopsis / The Emperor

I. Greek

A. Cronus

1. Calendrical

a. Month—Cronion

b. Holiday—Kronia

2. Mythological—Son of

Ouranos, Father of Zeus

B. Chronos—Father Time

C. Coronus—Crow God

II. Roman

A. Saturn

1. Astronomical—Regulus

2. Calendrical—Saturnalia

3. Mythological—Son of Uranus, Father of Jupiter

THE EMPRESS

There is little or no evidence of Rhea, the wife of Cronus, near Cancer the Crab. The symmetry of Cronus and Rhea, as well as Zeus and Hera, about the summer solstice looks like a remnant of a system which may have placed six gods over the months from summer to winter and six goddesses over the months from winter to summer. This would be analogous to the 12 Olympians who are usually given as follows:

Zeus	Ares	Hera	Aphrodite
Poseidon	Hermes	Demeter	Athena
Apollo	Hephaestus	Artemis	Hestia

Robert Graves informs us that the Greeks celebrated the marriage of Cronus and Rhea at midsummer.³¹ It is no wonder then that Cronion, or Hecatombaeon, was the first month of the Attic year.

The Kronia, on the 12th of Hecatombaeon,³² is a virtual mirror image of the feast of Epiphany or Twelfth Day which falls 12 days after Christmas. We see here a kind of reflection, which recurs in various places, that is a result of the two basic ways in which a star may be used to date an event. Both involve the position of the sun relative to the stars. In one case it is necessary to determine the actual position of the sun among the fixed stars, which cannot be done directly because it blots them out when it rises. This is the type of orientation used in modern judicial astrology. The other involves a determination of the star that is opposite the sun. Various techniques were used by the proponents of both systems.

The most direct way to determine the location of the sun, short of a telescope which can see the stars in the daytime, is to watch the eastern horizon in the morning. Whichever star is seen to rise last before sunrise is said to rise heliacally. This is fairly inaccurate because the sun begins to lighten the sky before it actually rises, though the method may be improved upon by measuring the time between dawn and actual sunrise. A more indirect way is to wait until full moon, which only occurs when the two bodies are opposite each other in the sky. With the aid of a zodiac it is then possible to determine where the sun must be. This technique merges off, as Charles Fort might say, into the second type of orientation.³³

At midnight, local time, the star which is directly opposite the sun will cross the meridian of the observer. The date may then be keyed

directly to the star in question without any direct reference to the position of the sun. The accuracy of this method is of course tied to the sophistication of available clocks. It is also possible to use the full moon method in the same way without reference to the sun. A variation of this technique, which would be more accessible to a primitive culture, is to note the star which rises in the east just after sunset. We have already seen this technique, also known as heliacal rising though of the second kind, used at Stonehenge, where Regulus rose heliacally eleven days before the winter solstice. The Greek Kronia and Roman Saturnalia are good examples of the two ways of telling time by the stars, which we may therefore reasonably refer to as the Greek method and the Roman method.

There is another scrap of evidence regarding the identification of Rhea with the month prior to the Saturn festival. It appears in Graves' *White Goddess*, which is first and foremost a decipherment of a group of related bardic "riddling" poems which he claims contain coded references to various early northern European alphabets including the Beth-luis-nion or B.L.N. tree alphabet. In the process of extracting the Boibel-loth or B.L.F. alphabet from the *Hanes Taliesin* of the *Red Book of Hergest*, he presents a list of names which begin with the proper letters and which he claims are the answers to Gwion's riddles. He then turns to the *Cad Goddeu* or *Battle of the Trees* whose participants he identifies with the letters of the Beth-luis-nion. Interestingly enough, not only does Graves identify the 13 consonants of Roderick O'Flaherty's version of the B.L.N. with the thirteen 28-day months of his own 364-day, even-week year, but the solution to the riddle in the *Hans Taliesin* from which he extracts the letter "R" turns out to be Rhea.

Taking account both of the fact that the tree calendar is based on the actual appearance of certain yearly phenomena directly related to its constituents, whereas the Saturn festival was celebrated in this part of the world according to the Roman system which placed it at the winter solstice, and of the 12 consonant version of the B.L.N. presented by Godfrey Higgins, we may reconstruct the table of months shown on page 59.

The rotation of the alphabet through 180° in response to the Greek method used in the Tarot not only brings the "R" for Rhea into line with The Empress but also explains why The Hanged Man hung from an ash tree.

As the vernal sun inexorably worked its way from Taurus into Aries, the summer sun was ever so slowly abandoning the palace of the Golden Emperor and entering the domain of that unknown star which

REVERSED

B.L.N. (Higgins)	TREES (Higgins)	TREES (Graves)	TRUMPS
B	Furze	Holly	Emperor
L	Hazel	Hazel	Hierophant
N	Vine	Vine	Lovers
F	Ivy	Ivy	Chariot
S	Dwarf Elder	Dwarf Elder	Justice
D	Elder	Elder	Hermit
T	Birch	Birch	Wheel of Fortune
C	Quicken	Rowan	Strength
M	Ash	Ash	Hanged Man
G	Alder	Alder	Magician
P	Willow	Willow	High Priestess
R	Oak	Oak	Empress

later rose heliacally at the winter solstice heralding the birth of the first avatar of the age of Pisces. Whatever the final outcome of the search for the Star in the East the mythological ramifications of its newly won supremacy during the second millennium B.C. may be followed in *Hamlet's Mill*. The mill that had ground out "gold, peace and happiness" under the ownership of Frodhi now falls into the hands of the workers, the giantesses Fenja and Menja, and begins to grind out salt. Two millennia later in the *T'ai Hsuan Ching*, whose alignment with the solar year may be calibrated by the presence of the "team of four horses" in *Shou* 28, the first *shou*, which corresponds with the winter solstice in this manifestation of what we have designated the Roman method, is *Chung*, The Center, the Chinese character for which is a rectangle divided in half by an oversized vertical line. Suddenly all becomes clear. The designation "center," which has been transferred from Leo to Cancer, referred not to the center of a two-dimensional space but the one-dimensional ecliptic. It was originally nothing more nor less than that point which marked half of the sun's journey from Aquarius to Aquarius, winter to winter or summer to summer, depending upon the method used. Worlds in collision? Indeed not!

Synopsis / The Empress

I.Greek – Rhea

A.Wife of Cronus

THE HIEROPHANT OR POPE

The Hierophant is even more obscure than The Empress. If it were not for the same southern French deck which names The High Priestess Juno, we would not even be aware that he was once called Jupiter. If it were not for the importance of the former identification we might even doubt the latter. As it is, he would seem to be a product of that same solstitial symmetry which placed Rhea opposite Cronus.

With the exception of a few fragments of doubtful value, there is little more indication of Zeus in Virgo than of Rhea in Cancer. It may be significant, in this regard, that whenever the order of the trumps varies from the standard sequence used here, that change occurs in the series from The High Priestess to The Hierophant, though The Emperor invariably occupies the "center." We are presented with a chapter in the history of the Tarot that, if we could but read its true meaning, might shed some light on the circumstances surrounding its first introduction to public awareness during the Renaissance. Closely allied to the rearrangement of trumps II through V is the evolution of The High Priestess and The Hierophant, the extent of which has not been paralleled anywhere else in the deck. Beginning with their primary Greek interpretations, we have the following two historical sequences:

Zeus	Hera
Jupiter	Juno
Hierophant	High Priestess
Pope	Popess or Pope Joan

We immediately see in the introduction of the female pope a tension between, on the one hand, an obvious attempt to make the deck acceptable to the religious authorities by replacing the primary pagan God with the head of the established Church, and on the other, the age old symmetry, rarely openly expressed but powerful nonetheless, of the great God with the great Goddess. The tenacity with which Zeus maintains his foothold opposite Hera, despite his possession, in the guise of Indra and later Yahweh, of the east, is another sign of the archetypal nature of this symmetry. That the very presence of The Pope in the deck should be taken, in spite of the clearly artificial nature of The Popess, as evidence of the late introduction of the deck is further evidence of the unconscious need to deny the presence of Graves' White Goddess herself in the deck. In 1725, under papal pressure, The Pope himself,

along with the rest of the four card sequence, was replaced by one of four Moors or Satraps.³⁴ Alfred Douglas further claims that Juno and Jupiter replaced the Pope and Popess around 1800, though in the light of what we have seen so far this would appear to be more of a reversion than a replacement. Whatever the ultimate meanings of The Hierophant and Priestess, the dispute over their true identities may be seen as a record of a real life struggle for control of the human mind. The recent reemergence of the Tarot into popular American culture marks another episode in the age old battle between exoteric religion and esoteric symbolism.

Synopsis / The Hierophant

- I. Early — The great God, husband of the great Goddess
 - A. Greek — Zeus
 - 1. Husband of Hera
 - B. Roman — Jupiter
 - 1. Husband of Juno
- II. Late — Various attempts to obscure the original meaning

The next section brings us to the first reference to the Jewish Scriptures and serves as a preliminary introduction to the question of dating the system contained in the Tarot. The second and final reference will not appear until we have crossed the boundary of Death and gaze into the face of the Tetragrammaton Itself where we will find the final clue to the dating of the cards.

THE LOVERS

The Lovers presents a complex but not insoluble problem in astronomical identification. In the oldest surviving decks it is represented by a man and woman, hand in hand, over whom hovers Cupid, Roman equivalent of the Greek Eros. It is the only trump in which most "authorities" recognize a member of the classical pantheon. No sooner have they made the identification than they reject it out of hand. The image of Cupid is too obvious for the savants. They are looking for secret meanings, hidden away by some unknown Egyptian priest; or it smacks too much of the Greek golden age for a product of the Italian Renaissance — surely it is only an artistic motif which illustrates the concept of love. And so The Fool continues to rule.

Herakles, with the aid of Zeus and some of the other gods, has just put down the revolt of the 24 Giants. Their mother Gaea (Earth), in conjunction with their father Tartarus (the Underworld), conceives the monster Typhon whose primary purpose is to avenge the slaying of her offspring. When Typhon charges Olympus, the gods flee in panic. Zeus turns himself into a ram, Apollo flies off as a crow, Artemis changes into a cat, and so on.³⁵ Aphrodite "precipitates herself, with her son Eros (Cupid), into the Euphrates. . . ; these become two fishes that afterwards were placed in the zodiac. Latin classical authors, with the same groundwork of the story, made Pisces the fishes that carried Venus and her boy out of danger. . . ." ³⁶ The Fish remain in the sky, but where is the serpent Typhon?

Godfrey Higgins reproduces several pages from William Whiston's *Theory of the Earth*. Translator of Josephus and successor to Isaac Newton in the chair of mathematics at Cambridge, Whiston was one of the early advocates of the theory of cometary collisions. In his 18th century literal minded style he tells us that Typhon "reigned immediately before the deluge, and perished therein" and that "many circumstances of the deluge are mentioned in the history of Osiris and Typhon, in Plutarch and others. . . . The Egyptian priests (as Plutarch says) called the sea Typhon. . . Typhon lies submerged in water."³⁷

The greater part of Velikovsky's Venus scenario, which he places at the time of the Exodus from Egypt (c. 1495 B.C. according to his own chronology), is built upon the identification of Typhon with the tail and Zeus with the head of his hypothetical Venus comet. This confounding of the Flood with the Exodus is rather peculiar for someone who, despite his protestations of nonfundamentalism, insists on reading the Hebrew *Scriptures* literally. The root of the problem is his identification of Typhon the dragon with the so-called comet of Typhon which, according to Pliny and others,³⁸ was named after an Egyptian king.³⁹ It is this comet that Velikovsky, supported by one Abraham Rockenbach and one Samuel Bochart, equates with the cause of the plagues of *Exodus*. Now it is just barely conceivable that there was actually a comet that passed close enough to the Earth during the second millennium B.C. to lead to the account of the Exodus. One might even be tempted to synchronize this hypothetical event with the eruption of Thera (modern Santorini) and the fall of Minoan Crete. It is ironic that at the very point Velikovsky's theory comes reasonably close to intersecting reality his realignment of world history stands in the way; and all in the service of maintaining the pristine virginity of Moses' invention of monotheism against the assault of Freud's Akhenaton theory. Lewis Greenberg's

proposal of just such a synchronization was roundly ostracized by his fellow Velikovskians and had to be withdrawn. Such is the curse of Ockham.

Our brief stroll with his cometary namesake brings us no closer to finding the Typhon which scared Aphrodite and her son into a premature dunk in the river of Babylon. One of the two keys that unlock the door to that mystery lies in Whiston's connection of the serpent with the Flood. The other may be found in *Hamlet's Mill*.

As we have already seen, according to Giorgio de Santillana, the square earth was actually the plane of the ecliptic which passes through the four kings. The "dry earth" was the plane which passes through the celestial equator. In this context the "drowning" that results from the Flood is simply an allegory for the precession which results in the transposition of a constellation from a point prior to the autumnal equinox, where it rests upon the dry land of the Northern hemisphere of the sky, to a point after the equinox, where it is submerged beneath the waters of the Southern hemisphere.⁴⁰ In a more specific sense it may also refer to the transfer of the constellation from the quarter of the zodiac ruled by the element earth to the one dominated by the element water. Whether or not these two interpretations are related we are now in a position to identify the submerged Typhon.

Since it is Zeus who finally defeats Typhon and casts him into the sea, the serpent monster must be located opposite the father of the gods. We have already learned that the Indians made Indra, the thunder god, overlord of the east.⁴¹ Robert Graves further informs us that Marduk, the Babylonian equivalent of Zeus, was both thunder god and "god of the Spring sun."⁴² In a later chapter we will find the name of another of Zeus' alter egos encrypted in the trumps stacked above The Magician, whom we have already identified with Maia in the Pleiades. When Maia and her sisters were rising out of "the sea" near the junction of the third and second millennia, the head of Scorpio was slowly "drowning" in the sea below the equator. Could it be that the Scorpion was once a Serpent?

We turn again to that magic mirror of a book, Allen's *Star Names*.

Aben Ezra identified Scorpio, or Antares, with the Kesil of the Hebrews; although that people generally considered these stars as a Scorpion, their 'Akrabh, and, it is claimed, inscribed it on the banners of Dan as the emblem of the tribe whose founder was a "serpent by the way." When thus shown it was as a crowned Snake or Basilisk. A similar figure appeared for it at one period of Egyptian astronomy; indeed it is thus met with in modern times. . . .⁴³

Aphrodite and Eros were not the only gods frightened away by Typhon, yet The Lovers occupies a crucial position next to The Chariot, which we have identified with Beta Scorpii. The reason for this juxtaposition may be found in Charles Heckethorn's *Secret Societies of All Ages and Countries*, a most informative two-volume history of underground organizations from the mystery religions to the end of the 19th century. In his astronomical explanation of the mysteries he contends that Typhon is the serpent of the Garden of Eden and Adam, whom he calls "the universal man," is none other than Boötes north of Libra and Virgo.⁴⁴ This at least is the right part of the sky. Heckethorn explains the story of the Fall in Genesis as an allegory of the yearly coming of winter, symbolized by the apple of autumn, a theme which fits well with our calendrical interpretation of the cards. If The Lovers is indeed an expression of the same motif which appears in the story of Adam and Eve, we may see in the presence of Eros another, deeper, explanation of their loss of innocence.

Merlin Stone's *When God Was a Woman* is an in depth study of the origin and sociopolitical implications of the Adam and Eve story. She sees the serpent and the tree, which she identifies as the *asherah* that so annoyed Ezekiel, possibly the sycamore fig or black mulberry, as emblems of a prepatriarchal religion based on worship of the Goddess, a hypothetical female monotheistic deity whose fall she associates with the suppression of women in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic worlds.⁴⁵ Whatever intentional or unintentional social ramifications may have arisen from the peculiar Biblical account of Eve's prior tasting of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, Stone's interpretation of the Fall not only describes the historical transfer of power from female to male deities, an event we have already recognized in the substitution of Hermes for Aphrodite, but also explains the connection between Adam and Eve and Eros.

Superficially, the forbidden fruit refers to the actual flesh and juice of the fig which, according to Stone, may have been used in a manner similar to the bread and wine (or water) of later patriarchal religion. On a deeper level it stands for sexual pleasure, the knowledge gained from which is nothing more nor less than the consciousness of one's sexual nature, which is then hidden by fig leaves.⁴⁶ In a less Freudian vein, the knowledge contained in the fruit is the secret of the creation of life. In a world where the sexual nature of reproduction is an "obvious" fact it often escapes even the most thoughtful of people that there was a time when pregnancy was ascribed to such unrelated occurrences as eating beans and swallowing insects. One might even suspect that the

sacramental fig performed a role beyond that of a mere symbol of procreation. It is just possible that its consumption by the female was actually thought to result in conception. Whether or not and to what extent the followers of the Goddess understood the true function of sexual love, the presence of the fig tree and the serpent in the Garden of Eden would seem to refer to the goddess of Love, one of whose names was Aphrodite, mother of Eros.

Whether or not Cupid, as he appears in *The Lovers*, is acting on his own or as agent of his mother remains to be determined, though the question is mooted if we accept Higgins' contention that both originally referred to the same deity.⁴⁷ In fact, Graves reproduces a peculiar account of the darkening of the sky that was effected by the dimming of Helius, Selene and Eros.⁴⁸ These are most certainly the sun, the moon and Venus, the three brightest objects in the sky. It is interesting that Aphrodite should appear in this regard directly opposite the position assigned to her by the Roman calendar, though to follow this trail much farther would be to consign myself to the same swamp which has claimed my predecessors. I can only suggest that we are dealing here in some long forgotten way with the stellar equivalent of the planetary morning star-evening star duality Lucifer-Vespertine.⁴⁹ In any event we may avoid further confusion by remembering that the image on *The Lovers* is indeed Cupid and not his mother.

Synopsis / The Lovers

- I. Explicit — The god of Love
 - A. Greek — Eros
 - 1. Son of Aphrodite
 - B. Roman — Cupid
- II. Implicit — The Fall from innocence
 - A. Hebrew — Adam and Eve

THE CHARIOT

We have already dealt at length with *The Chariot*, first in its capacity as a member of the lunar zodiac, then as a quite convincing disguise for that ultimate villain of Greek and Hebrew mythology, Typhon the serpent. There remains another as yet unrecognized datum that ties *The Chariot* linguistically to *The Magician* and hints at the temporal origin of the Tarot as we now know it.

The use of a symbol for the Indian *maya*, illusion, as an image for the month of May, in direct contradiction to the laws of linguistics, implies the presence of non-European forces in the development of a system whose major symbolic elements are Greco-Roman. Graves finds further evidence of this kind of linguistic imperialism in the rise to prominence of the god Uranus (Ouranos), derived from the female Urana but identified by the invading Indo-Europeans with Varuna, whom we have already seen was god of the west.⁵⁰ The presence of Ouranos as a major element in the Tarot places a limit on the earliness of its construction. Though this is a general and not very well defined limitation it nevertheless begins a process that leads to better and better approximations of the date of the actual invention of the cards. Beyond this, it sheds some light on the matter of the suits, whose elucidation was delayed until a better understanding of the trumps could be established. When we have finished with the 12 months of the year we will return to Indra, Kuvera, Varuna and Yama and their attributes in an attempt to finally determine the meaning of these symbols.

Those who are familiar with the trumps may wonder why the chariot is drawn by two horses rather than four, as indicated by the appellations "Four-horse Chariot of Heaven" and "quadriga." I was disturbed by this very question until the day I was wandering through the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore looking for clues among the relics of ancient Greece. Dummett has suggested that the trumps were taken from symbols current in Europe during the 15th century, which of course is absurd, but this does not exclude the possibility of finding relevant data among the artistic productions of pre- and post-Christian Europe. I came upon a display of Attic vases of no mean quality. Among the images of gods and heroes was one whose central design consisted of a frontal view of a chariot that could have been used unchanged in a Tarot deck based on original Greek art. I was convinced that I was looking at a representative of the actual mythological and artistic tradition that also led to the seventh trump. Yet what really amazed me was how this relic of the classical age silently explained the missing two horses. The creator of the Tarot, pressed for space in an enterprise that required the condensation of a vast amount of information into a relatively small area, removed the outer two horses that, on the vase, stood far to the sides of their teammates. The importance of the charioteer would have been greatly reduced had the artist failed to make use of this technique, which continues even today and may be seen in the development of the Morgan-Greer deck from the Rider-Waite.

Synopsis / The Chariot

I. Explicit

A. Astronomical

1. Chinese — The Four-horse Chariot of Heaven

B. Theological

1. Indian — Varuna
2. Iranian — The quadriga of Mithra

C. Mythological

1. Greek — Ouranos
 - a. Son of Gaia and father of Cronus

II. Implicit

A. Theological

1. Hebrew — The serpent who guards the tree of knowledge

B. Mythological

1. Greek — Typhon who battles Zeus
 - a. Son of Gaia

JUSTICE

Next to The Chariot is Justice, which lies opposite The High Priestess at the other intersection of the Galaxy with the ecliptic. This is only fitting for it is Typhon from whom Isis is fleeing when she drops the ears of corn that form the Milky Way. It is possible by sheer force of logic to find the actual stars that made up the sign of Justice in the lunar zodiac, though the complexity of this particular labyrinth is such that the process has been transferred to an appendix which the reader may consult at his leisure. A simpler localization may be carried out in the realm of time rather than place.

The sisters Eunomia (Order), Dike (Justice) and Eirene (Peace) were known as the three Horae (Hours) or Seasons — spring, summer and winter — though no one seems to know which was which; the Darkness lies ever so close to the outer boundary of this study. This kind of three season arrangement was used by the Egyptians, who began the year with Thoth, our Hanged Man. Budge⁵¹ calls the first four months winter, which does not make much sense until we remember that the dwellers on the Nile had little use for a leap year; they used a strict 365 day year which resulted in the rotation of the seasons through the calendar year. This so called Sothic cycle, based on the heliacal rising of Sirius, our High Priestess, is usually given as 1460 (365 × 4) years, though in actual practice it must have been slightly shorter, the sidereal year being nine minutes longer than 365 ¼ days. We are now in a position to align the two calendars. From the following it is evident that

<i>Season</i>	<i>Egyptian Month</i>	<i>Trumps</i>	<i>T'ai Hsuan Ching</i>	<i>Shou</i>	<i>Season</i>
Spring	Thoth	12. Hanged Man			
	Paopi	1. Magician			
	Hathor	2. High Priestess			
	Khoiak	3. Empress	T'ien	1	Winter
Summer	Tobi	4. Emperor			
	Mekhir	5. Hierophant			
	Phamenothe	6. Lovers			
	Pharmuthi	7. Chariot	Jen	28	Spring
Winter	Pakhon	8. Justice			
	Paoni	9. Hermit			
	Epep	10. Wheel of Fortune			
	Mesore	11. Strength	Ti	55	Summer

either the Egyptians or the framers of the Tarot exerted at least some influence on the other.

I have added a column for the thirds of Yang Hsiung's *T'ai Hsuan Ching*. It must be remembered that in Chinese astronomy the star opposite the sun determined the date, so that T'ien began at the winter solstice. By the time Yang wrote, the solstice had precessed an entire constellation; Chung, *Shou* 1, The Center, aligns with The Empress. *Shou* 28 contains a distinct reference to the four-horse chariot.

Beyond its strictly seasonal meaning, Justice played a major role in Greek cosmological thought. It is in the surviving fragments of Parmenides, born within thirty years or so of the death of Anaximander, that we must look for our first clue to the function of Justice in the cosmic mechanism. Sir Thomas Heath's translations of the surviving passages from Aetius and Parmenides himself provide a fairly straightforward description of the Pythagorean's world-picture.⁵²

Parmenides' world is constructed of a series of "wreaths," analogous to Anaximander's wheels, made of two elements variously described as the rarefied and the condensed, the light and the dark, the fire and the air

and between these are others consisting of light and darkness in combination. That which encloses them all is solid like a wall, below which is a wreath of fire. . . . Moreover, the air is thrown off the earth in the form of vapour owing to the violent pressure of its condensation. . . .

And of the mixed wreaths the midmost is to all of them the beginning and cause of motion and becoming, and this he calls the Deity which directs their course and holds sway (holds the keys), namely Justice and Necessity.

The identification of Justice with Necessity opens up a whole new vista, for it is she who possesses the well-known Spindle of Necessity in Plato's Myth of Er.

Now according to Plato⁵³ there is

extended from above through the whole heaven and earth a straight light, like a pillar, most like to the rainbow, but brighter and purer. . . and there, at the middle of the light, they saw, extended from heaven, the extremities of the chains thereof; for this light it is which binds the heaven together, holding together the whole revolving firmament as the undergirths hold together triremes; and from the extremities they saw extended the Spindle of Necessity by which all the revolutions are kept up. . . . The Spindle turns round as a whole with

whole as it revolves the seven inner circles revolve slowly in the opposite sense to the whole. . . . And the whole Spindle turns in the lap of Necessity.

There is some dispute as to what exactly the “straight light, like a pillar” represents, though one of the theories is that it stands for the Milky Way, which is the only band of light in the night sky that can be likened to a rainbow. Since we have already placed Justice at the crossroads of Galaxy and zodiac it is not surprising to find her Spindle attached to the extremes of this “pillar” of light. What does seem rather strange is that the entire Spindle, which includes the “first and outermost whorl” that can only be the sphere of the fixed stars that rotates once a day, should turn “in the lap of Necessity,” whom we have already identified not only with the season that began four months after the summer solstice, but also with five stars in the constellation of Sagittarius. The problem is insoluble as long as Justice remains attached to the outermost circle. As soon as we remember that the alignment of stars with seasons, as opposed to months, is only temporary, the light begins to dawn. Assuming that Plato has not fallen victim to a logical error, an occurrence that is certainly within the range of possibilities, we find ourselves once again in the realm of *Hamlet's Mill*. The only way in which Justice can both rotate with the fixed stars and at the same time have them rotate in her lap, is if the two motions occur within two different time frames. In other words the Spindle only rotates in the lap of Necessity over a period required to notice the precession of the equinoxes.

Whether or not this is the correct explanation of the contradiction in the Myth of Er, we have come to the end of our analysis of Trump number 8. The following synopsis is the most detailed of all we have seen so far. Justice is truly one of the keys to unlocking the knowledge of the ancient world.

Synopsis / Justice

- | | |
|---|---|
| I. Greek | a. Possessor of the Spindle of Necessity |
| A. Justice (Dike) | 2. Mythological |
| 1. Calendrical | a. Mother of the three Fates who turn the Spindle |
| a. One of the three Horae or Seasons (Winter) | II. Hebrew (Phoenician?) |
| B. Necessity | A. Justice |
| 1. Cosmological | |

1. Alphabetical
 - a. Tsade (justice)
2. Astronomical
 - a. Zeta, Lambda, Sigma, Tau,
Phi + Chi or Psi Sagitarii

From the relative clarity and brightness of Justice we now turn to a card that stands at the very edge of Eternal Night. No wonder The Hermit carries a lantern.

AN ANONYMOUS HERMIT

The Hermit is the most enigmatic and arcane of the trumps. It falls outside all the functional clusters that have so far or will shortly be discussed. These are (1) the trumps that relate to the first four Roman months—11, 12, 1 and 2, (2) the trumps that mark the four corners of the lunar zodiac—1, 4, 7 and 10, (3) the ones that cluster symmetrically about the summer solstice—2, 3, 4 and 5, (4) the two that mark the Milky Way—2 and 8, (5) two others that designate events on the after-death plane—13, Death itself, and 20, Judgment, (6) the six that spell out the name of the great judge and thunder god himself—14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19, and (7) the title of the entire board or deck—21, The World.

More significantly, The Hermit is the only one of the first 12 trumps that does not plainly refer to one of the Greek gods. True, there is some resemblance to Diogenes, who supposedly carried a lantern during the day while searching for an honest man, but he was a member of the sect of Cynics, founded by Antisthenes of Athens or Diogenes himself, and not a god by any stretch of the imagination. Still, there is no way to rule out the possibility that the ninth trump is Diogenes. Born sometime around 412 B.C., he falls toward the end of the period during which the Tarot seems to have been constructed.

There is something downright obscure about The Hermit. Like the skeletons found in the Aubrey Holes, there is no obvious reason for it to be where it is. Still, there is one path down which we have not yet travelled. It has already been seen that the connections between the trumps and the lunar zodiac are not restricted to the four kings. If Justice can be located among the stellar alphabet, might we not look for The Hermit here as well? We turn to Kelley's addition to Moran's *Calendar Signs*.

Station number 21 of the Burmese lunar zodiac is a sign called the Hermit.⁵⁴ This is the position marked in the Hindu system by Sravana, whose name is echoed in the Burmese Tharawun. When we seek the meaning of this word in India we are told that it means "hearing" or "ear."⁵⁵ There is, however, another name for the asterism, which comes from the Taittiriya lists, Srona, meaning "lame." The Cambodian equivalent, according to Kelley, is Rich Man. This seems strange until it is noticed that the next sign in the Indian list, Sravistha, is sometimes given as Dhanishtha, the superlative of *dhanin*, "wealthy." The sign Sravana is comprised of three stars, the brightest of which is Altair, in Aquila.

It is only fitting that The Hermit should remain obscured. Far from the maddening frenzy of civilized man, he is free to spend his time contemplating the true nature of his world, perhaps even to organize his insights into a concise analogue of that world. Who can say?

ROUND AND ROUND SHE GOES . . .

The wheel of Fortuna has been likened by Robert Graves to the wheel of the year; or rather, he derives the name "Fortuna" from the Latin *vortumna*, which he translates as "she who turns the year about."⁵⁶ Graves identifies Fortuna with the Greek Nemesis, whom he sees as an early nymph goddess only later transformed into a moral constraint upon the random nature of Fortune, rather than Tyche, who he claims was an invention of the early philosophers. The wheel began to turn at the winter solstice, its position on the Tarot board, and when it had turned halfway the sacred king was ritually murdered. This was the holiday now celebrated, again according to Graves, as the Assumption on August 15,⁵⁷ six months to the day from the rather obscure Roman holiday of Februa, thought by some to be the sister of Fortuna.

By now we should not be surprised to find a symbol of the entire year marking one of the 12 divisions of the zodiac. The Spindle of Necessity, the quadriga or four-horse chariot of Mithra, Cronus at the center of the sky, all are localized images of various aspects of the belief that saw in the movements of the planets and stars the workings of a giant system of wheels or the grinding of the cosmic mill. At this late date it is difficult to tell whether the containment of the whole within the parts, the general within the local, is the result of an attempt to preserve as much as possible of a system that might reasonably be expected to survive merely as a number of fragments, or simply expresses

the basic nature of the system, which de Santillana likens to a fugue or hologram. Either way, The Wheel of Fortune represents another example of the theme that has presented itself time and time again in the present work since it first appeared in connection with Ezekiel's wheel.

The tenth trump is the fourth in a row whose stars can be identified with some precision. It is part of the letter that became the Greek *sigma* and Hebrew *sin* (see Appendix) and has already been identified as the last of the four kings or royal stars. As the Tarot equivalent of Aquarius it may be taken as a symbol of the coming two millennia. Whether we see in it the statistical basis of modern physics or the synchronistic substrate of Jung's analytical psychology or even the breakdown of Order itself, the symbol is a potent one. As the device that numbers the days of the sacrificial king it is the very antithesis of Imperial power. Between the present age of the Fishes, marked by various more or less cryptic observances at or near the vernal equinox, and that of the Water Bearer lies Strength, personified in Greece by Herakles whose "twelve labors" have long been recognized as the signs of the zodiac.

Synopsis / The Wheel of Fortune

I. Greek

A. Calendrical

1. The wheel of the year

B. Theological

1. The life of the sacred king

C. Mythological

1. Early — The wheel of Nemesis
2. Late — The wheel of Tyche

II. Roman

A. Astronomical

1. Fortuna Fortunarum (the Luckiest of the Lucky)

B. Mythological

1. The wheel of Fortuna

HERCULES AND MARS

The barely concealed reference of The Magician to the month of May, the crystal clear identity of The High Priestess with Juno and June, the obscure but understandable relation between The Hanged Man, Hermes and Aphrodite—all would lead us to expect the same connection between the eleventh trump and the first of the four original named months of the Roman year. Even the etymologists derive March from Mars, the god of war. Yet when we turn to the cards we find not War but Strength, attribute of Herakles, who is often pictured wrestling

with what can only be the Nemean lion, encountered during his First Labor.⁵⁸ Is this discontinuity in the development of our theory a warning of its impending collapse or can it, perhaps, be put to a more constructive use?

Strength is a road sign, hanging in the blue and black of the astrological sky, pointing to the time and place of divergence between the Roman calendar and the Tarot of the Greeks. Upon it we will erect a pillar in support of a short span that will stretch between the earliest and latest possible dates of construction of the Tarot deck as it is currently found.

It is a known fact, among those who have studied the nuances of Greek astrology, that Ares (Mars) was replaced by Herakles sometime prior to the reign of Alexander the Great of Macedon. By the time of Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), Alexander's tutor, he was already the presiding deity of the third day of the week,⁵⁹ though Tuesday still bears the name of Mars in the former provinces of the Roman Empire. By the first century B.C. in what is now Turkey, at the tomb of Antiochus I, the two gods had been merged into one.⁶⁰ Antiochus claimed to be a descendant of both Alexander and Darius (558?–486 B.C.), king of Persia. This is the strongest evidence so far of a Greek rather than Roman origin of the Tarot. The evidence will grow stronger in the following chapters. It must be born in mind, however, as suggested by the presence of Herakles in Turkey, that we are dealing here with historical cultural milieus and not modern political boundaries. In other words there is no way to rule out the construction of the Tarot in territory now ruled by the state of Italy. We will return to the matter of the boundaries of Greek culture when we deal with the cryptographic aspects of the trumps.

Why was Ares replaced by Herakles? The answer given by Graves involves the substitution of a god of good omen for one of bad. This gives us some insight into the psychology of the early practitioners of astrology. If the god of a star is a bad influence, simply rename it after one whose effect is more to one's liking. But why pick on Mars in particular? The answer is found in the date of the substitution, for it is precisely the sign of Mars into which the vernal sun was threatening to enter during the last centuries of the pre-Christian era. The rule of a malevolent deity over a single month of the year was nothing to be sneezed at; it may not, after all, have been a coincidence that Brutus and his cohorts chose the ides of March to assassinate Julius Caesar; but place an entire age of 2160 years under the influence of War and we can begin to understand why the Greeks acted as they did.

This is not simply a bald hypothesis. Across the Indo-European and Semitic worlds, from India to the Levant to Scandinavia, there are legends of a great final battle. Whether it is called Kurukshetra or Armageddon or Ragnarok or something else, and whether it is placed in the distant past or the near or far future, the astrological justification for its most recent version would seem to involve the identification of the present home of the first degree of the zodiac with the god of war. That the legend often takes a form that follows the great battle with a period of peace implies, to whatever extent this kind of astrological fancy can ever be analyzed logically, that it is referring to the end of the age of war and not its beginning. It would be interesting if we could identify the specific point at which the sun could be said to have escaped the influence of the malevolent god Mars, if only to put the idea of "the end of the world," whatever that means, to final rest.

My first instinct was to look for some indication of the presence of Mars among the stars of the two Fishes. I found none; neither did I find any indication of Herakles or even strength, a concept that is rarely if ever applied to fish! I returned to the lunar zodiacs which had served me so well in the past. In all three of the best known of these the asterisms that fall in Aquarius are followed by two that contain the front and back halves of the so-called Pegasus square. With Pegasus, which is of course the winged horse of Greek mythology, we begin to see the vaguest outline of Ares on the horizon, for the horse is the animal with which the god of war is most often associated. The Romans would, in fact, sacrifice a horse to Mars at his yearly festival in March. We catch a fleeting glimpse of Herakles when we inquire into the origin of the horse's name. It was "named either from *Pegai*, the Springs of the Ocean, the place of his birth, or from *Pegos*, Strong."⁶¹

De Santillana applies this attribute of strength directly to Mars, whom he identifies with the Hebrew strong man Samson and, through him, all the transformations of the owner of the cosmic mill, Hamlet himself.⁶² The authors of *Hamlet's Mill* insist on identifying Samson with Orion, as do some of the Velikovskians, which is too bad; this sort of transposition is natural. The primary effect of the misalignment is to drive the entire Heraklean complex of events too far into the past. Though it is reasonable to assume that the Warrior originally played an important mythological role, the key to sorting out Mars as Orion from Mars as Pegasus lies in his identification with the red planet. As I have repeatedly indicated during the preceding chapters, the idea of planetary gods, as opposed to the gods of the stars or signs of the zodiac, was a purely Persian invention. Cumont goes to some trouble to

describe the problems encountered by the Babylonians in their attempt to synchronize planet worship with their own brand of stellar religion. Greek contact with Persian religion was punctuated by the war which began under Antiochus' ancestor Darius and ended with the conquest of Persia by Alexander, one of his Greek forebears. Whatever the actual date of transmission, the presence of a planetary aspect to the stellar Ares must be taken as *prima facie* evidence that we are dealing with a later rather than an earlier incarnation of Mars—Herakles (Hercules) as Pegasus rather than Herakles as Orion.

Synopsis / Strength

I. Explicit

- A. Greek—Herakles
- B. Roman—Hercules
- C. Hebrew—Samson
- D. Northern European—Hamlet,
etc.

II. Implicit

- A. Calendrical—March
- B. Astronomical—The flying horse
of the Pegasus square
- C. Mythological
 - 1. Greek—Ares
 - 2. Roman—Mars

The solar wheel slowly spins its way into Aries on its way toward spring and the May Day festival. At Stonehenge a rope is hung from the southernmost lintel of the inner horseshoe in preparation for a ritual that will be performed for the last time two millennia later in the land of the Levites. We stand at the final approach to the mystery of the unspeakable Name. In pursuit of this mystery Godfrey Higgins tried to draw aside the veil of the Saitic Isis and was only partially successful. Madame Blavatsky lost herself in Eastern mysticism and failed completely. Robert Graves made a valiant attempt to unravel the alphabetic secret of the Battle of the Trees only to find himself hopelessly entangled in the English underbrush. De Santillana and von Dechend, not to mention Velikovsky, lost in the age-old confusion of planets with stars, eternally drive their cosmic cart across the mythological sky, not always fully aware that they are travelling in a circle.