



THE HEKA DECK

Magic in Ancient Egypt &
How It Has Influenced
Modern Mysticism Today
(Specifically Tarot Cards)

So We're on the Same Page
Modern Mysticism



Crystal Healing



Cartomancy



**Homeopathic
Medicine**



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Modern Mysticism



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Cartomancy

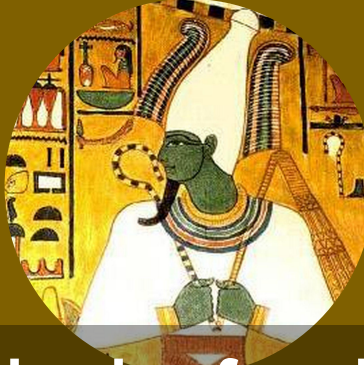
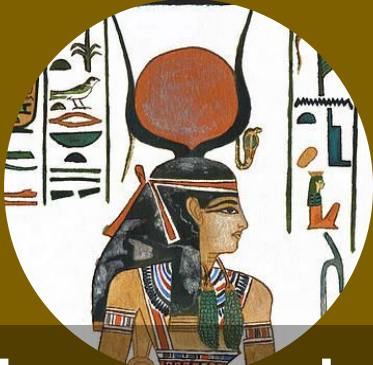


**Homeopathic
Medicine**



What was the important
in Egypt?





There were hundreds of gods between different time periods and regions.









Maintaining **Maat** or
the cosmic order.

What is Heka?
How is it/he relevant?

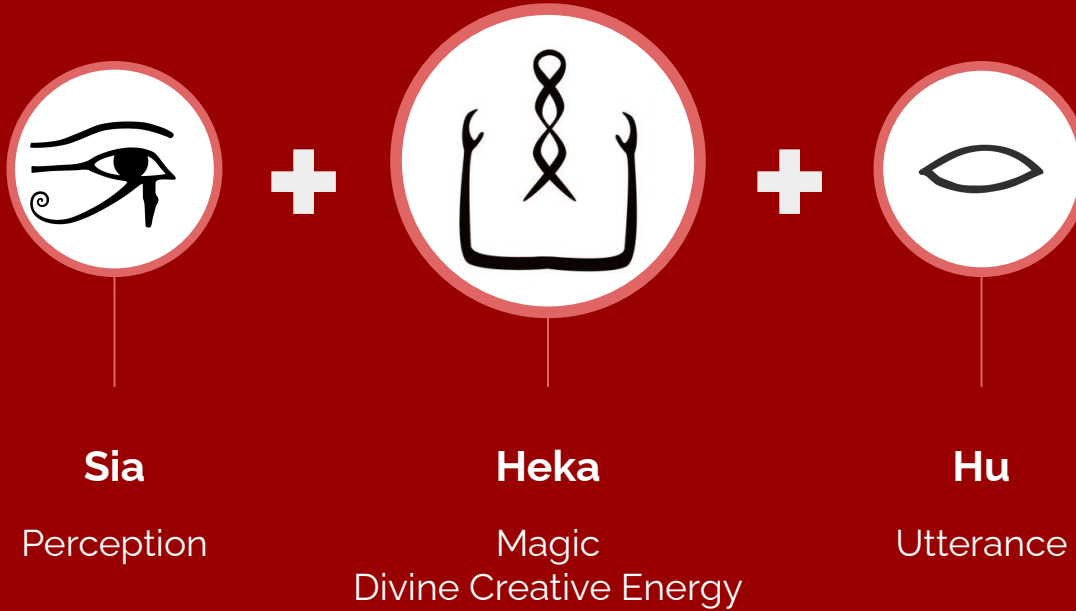


Heka

The word itself can be translated to mean either 'magic' or 'divine energy'.



Heka Was Seen as Crucial to Maintaining Maat



Heka

By definition, ancient Egyptians saw heka as a symbiotic exchange with beings of greater power that were responsible for maintaining the order of the universe². Their magical practices were often a dialog with or invocation of these beings.







← HEKA →



HEKA IN PRACTICE
FORMS OF HEKA



Amulets



Rituals



Spells



HEKA IN PRACTICE
FORMS OF HEKA



Amulets



Rituals



Spells



HEKA IN PRACTICE
FORMS OF HEKA



Amulets



Rituals



Spells





The belief in and use of magic or 'heka' was so prevalent in ancient Egyptian society that historians have had difficulty separating their magical practices from both their state religion and their cultural worldview.





Heka was thought to be a part of the essential energy force that allowed the world to continue to exist and prosper.



Many of the chosen heroes of Egypt
were not warriors but rather powerful
magic users.



HEKA IN PRACTICE

How Can You Have More Heka



Higher Status



Deformities or
Red Hair



King or
Priest



HEKA IN PRACTICE

How Can You Have More Heka



Deformities or
Red Hair



HEKA IN PRACTICE

How Can You Have More Heka





ICE

More Heka



King or
Priest



As ancient Egyptians thought heka was essential for the prosperity of the dead in the underworld and the maintenance of balance in the realm of the living, magicians were in high demand.



TAROT



What is Tarot?
How is it relevant to
Ancient Egypt?





TAROT





THE FOOL .



THE MAGICIAN .



THE HIGH PRIESTESS



THE EMPRESS .



THE EMPEROR .



THE HIEROPHANT



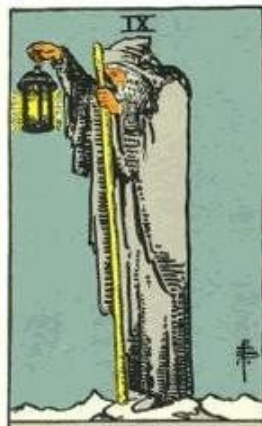
THE LOVERS .



THE CHARIOT .



STRENGTH .



THE HERMIT .



WHEEL OF FORTUNE .



JUSTICE .

TAROT



22 Major Arcana
(TRUMPS)



56 Minor Arcana
(Number Cards)



21 Major Arcana (TRUMPS)



56 Minor Arcana (Number Cards)



CUPS

WANDS

SWORDS

PENTACLES

TAROT





THE FOOL .



THE MAGICIAN .



THE HIGH PRIESTESS



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THE HIEROPHANT



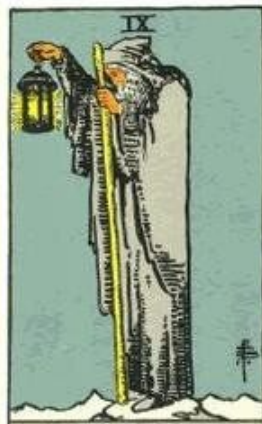
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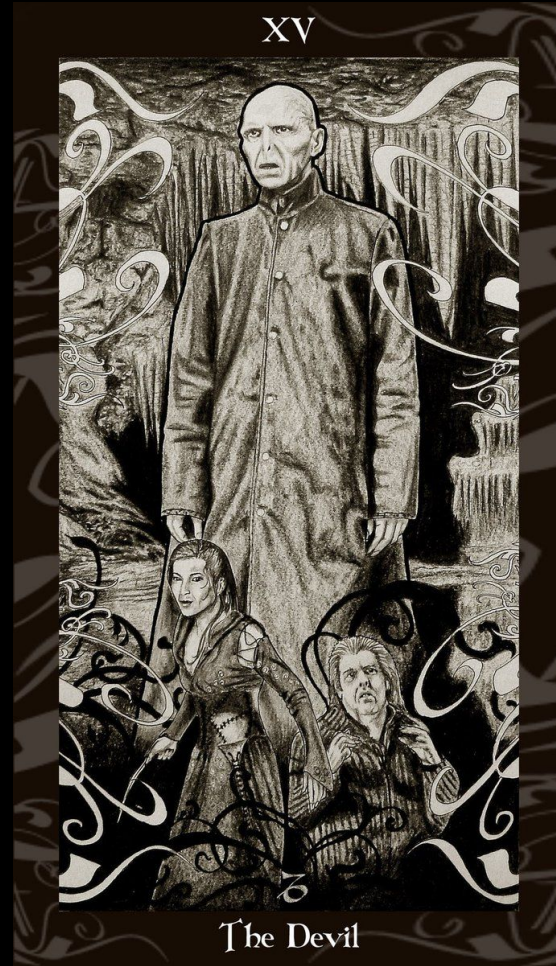


▲ WILD UNKNOWN



MORGAN GREER





▲ HELLO KITTY & HARRY POTTER

Scroll or Resize Window to View More Cards



ART NOUVEAU & IMPRESSIONIST

ORIGINS OF TAROT



Franciscan Friar in Umbria, Italy

(late 15th century BCE)

He gave a sermon on the practicality of gaming or *utilis de ludo* in which he discussed what he believed to be the three primary kinds of games:

“ the dice, the cards, and the trumps”



Franciscan Friar in Umbria, Italy

(late 15th century BCE)

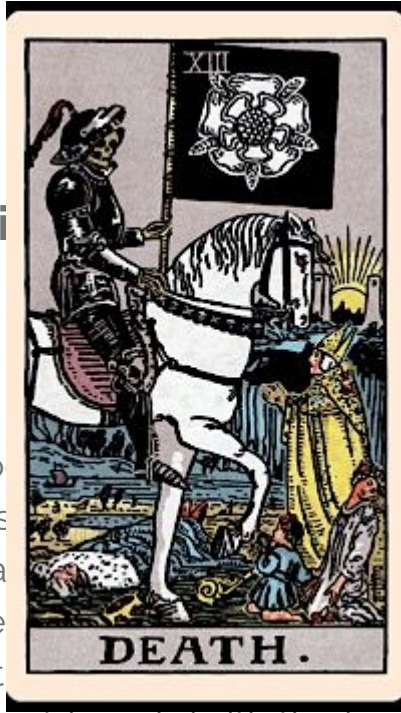
"There is nothing so hateful to God as the game of Trumps. For everything that is base in the eyes of the Christian faith is seen in trumps, as will be evident when I run through them. For trumps are said, so it is believed to have been given their names by the Devil, their inventor, because in no other game does he triumph (with the loss of souls to boot) as much as in this one." (Giles 7)



Franciscan Friar in Umbria

(late 15th century BCE)

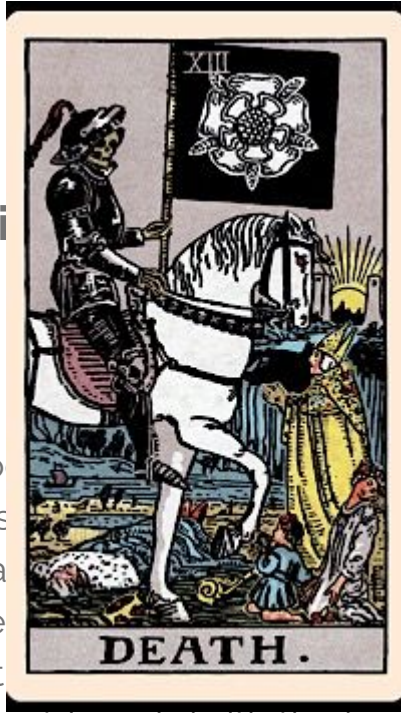
"There is nothing so hateful to Go Trumps. For everything that is bas Christian faith is seen in trumps, a run through them. For trumps are have been given their names by t because in no other game does he triumph (with the loss of souls to boot) as much as in this one." (Giles 7)



Franciscan Friar in Umbria

(late 13th century)

"There is a Franciscan friar in Umbria who runs through the streets and says, 'I have sold my soul for a piece of gold.'" (Giles 7)



to God's baseless triumphs, and as by the loss of his soul he triumphs (with the loss of his soul) in this one." (Giles 7)





- I. The Mountebank
- II. Empress
- III. Emperor
- IV. The Papess
- V. The Pope
- VI. Temperance
- VII. Love
- VIII. The Triumphal Car
- IX. Strength
- X. The Wheel of Fortune
- XI. The Hunchback

- XII. The Hanged Man
- XIII. Death
- XIV. The Devil
- XV. The Arrow
- XVI. The Star
- XVII. The Moon
- XVIII. The Sun
- XIX. The Angel
- XX. Justice
- XXI. The World
- o. The Fool





I. The **MAGICIAN**

II. Empress

III. Emperor

IV. The **HIGH PRIESTESS**

V. The Pope

VI. Temperance

VII. Love

VIII. The **CHARIOT**

IX. Strength

X. The Wheel of Fortune

XI. The **HERMIT**

XII. The Hanged Man

XIII. Death

XIV. The Devil

XV. The **TOWER**

XVI. The Star

XVII. The Moon

XVIII. The Sun

XIX. **TEMPERANCE**

XX. Justice

XXI. The World

o. The Fool



It is believed that the oldest surviving deck of Tarot Cards dates back to Italy in the 14th century.



This deck was thought to have been painted by Jacquemin Gringonneur for Charles VI in 1392 (Farley 19). Though some historians now believe it is more likely that the cards actually date almost a hundred years after the original estimate. (Giles 11)

Fun Fact: An early surviving Tarot deck that dates back to to 1400s, the *Visconti di Modrone pack*, is housed at Yale University in the Beinecke Library as a part of the Cary Collection. Because of this it is also known as the *Cary-Yale Deck*.

The *Visconti di Modrone pack* is unique amongst early decks for including Faith, Hope and Charity amongst its trumps (considered three prominent theological virtues at the time) and for including a male and female position for each rank amongst the court cards of the minor arcana (meaning there were equally gendered court cards numbering 6 rather than 3 or 4 male/female-specified court cards). (Giles 13)

Tarot is not a niche interest.
Tarot is everywhere.

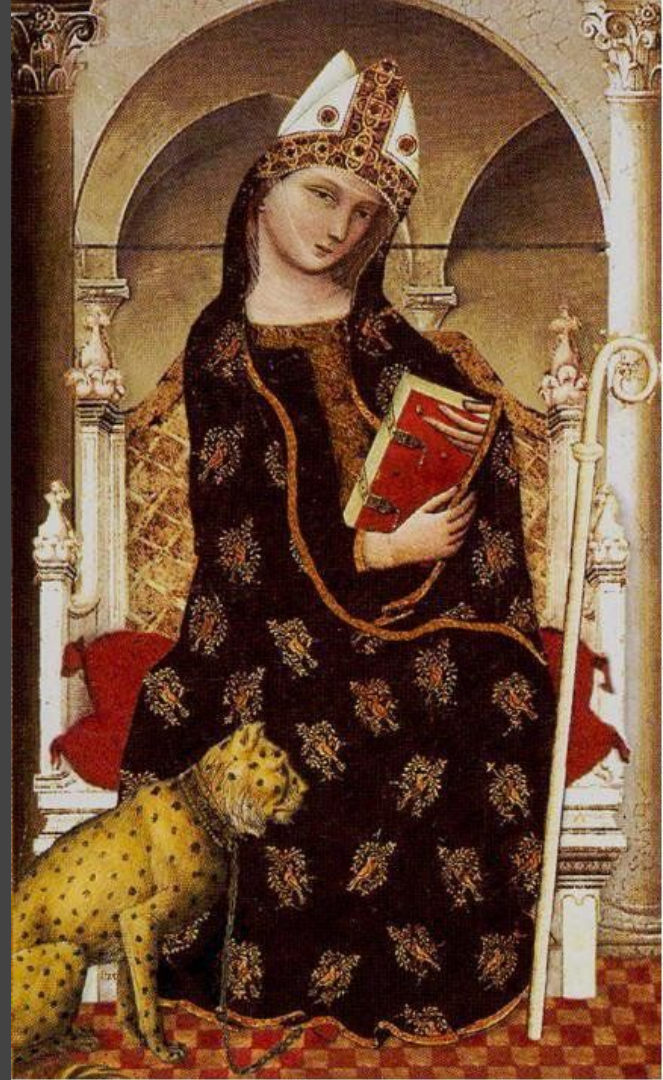
Today, tarot is common enough that most everyday people have at least a simple idea of what it is, but between the Renaissance and the 18th century, Tarot was wildly popular. There's a record from a Jesuit claiming that **in France tarot was even more popular than chess.** (Giles 21)

Tarot does not garner an esoteric interpretation until the late 18th century. Historical records do not show tarot being used for anything but gaming earlier than then. (Giles 20)

Though there is evidence of some variance amongst the Trumps of early tarot packs, it is believed that Tarot was essentially standardised everywhere by 1500. Most suits, imagery, ranks and symbols were the same across packs. The basic pattern of the standardised decks was attributed to tarot practices that originated in Marseilles. (Giles 14-15)

As time went on there was limited variation based on who had illustrated different packs and what the political climate was in different countries.

(Fun Fact: the Empress and the Emperor became the Grandmother and Grandfather in France during the French Revolution). (Giles 14)



Court de Gebelin (1719-1784)

- French occultist Antoine Court de Gebelin was the first to propose that Tarot Cards originated in Egypt and were encoded with secret knowledge (Farley 19-21)
- Gebelin was a major player in France's Occult scene during the height of French Egyptomania, he was a freemason and protestant clergyman. He was well versed in Hermeticism, kabbalism, esotericism, and Rosicrucianism.
- Basil Rakoczi also claimed that Gebelin was a Martinist who studied the *Book of Thoth* under Louis Claude de Saint-Martin himself. (Farley 19)



Eliphas Levi (1810-1875)

- Levi is credited with proposing that tarot is connected to the Bembine Tablet of Isis.
- The Bembine Tablet of Isis was believed by many Hermetic philosophers of the time to hold untold wisdom and secrets of the ancient world. It is a large silver and bronze palette that is covered in hieroglyphics. (Giles 28)
- Generally speaking, however, Levi is more credited with the suggestion that tarot is connected to the Kabbala than to Egypt.



Egyptian = Gypsy

- As the Egyptian theory for the origin of Tarot was spreading, people began to speculate that the cards migrated from Egypt via the 'gypsies'.
- Comte de Mellet propagated this theory, claiming that Egyptian priests encoded the cards with secret ancient knowledge and then handed them over to the gypsies for safe keeping.
(Farley 22)
- While the gypsies had settled in Europe before the arrival of Tarot and the modern playing card deck, no evidence actually links them to either.
(Farley 24)

Romani People

- 'Gypsy' is short for Egypt, but not accurate in describing the group of people the moniker belongs to.
- Seeing individuals with medium copper complexion in the Balkans, many erroneously judged them to have come from Egypt when in fact they were the Romani people from Northern India (Farley 24-25)
- Popular culture has consistently linked the Romani with fortune-telling practices because of the speculation that Tarot originated with them, but no historical evidence actually supports this link. (Farley 23)



Tarocchino

- Count Leopoldo Cicognara claimed that the game was created by Francesco Antelminelli Castracani Fibbia (Prince of Pisa) in 1419 when he was exiled in Bologna. (Farley 28)
- The structure of the decks are similar, Tarocchino being comprised of 62 cards, 22 of which are specialized trump cards. (Tarot is comprised of 78 cards, 22 of which are specialized trumps)

Downfall of this Theory

- The oldest surviving deck of Tarot cards predates the oldest surviving deck of Tarocchino cards by approximately 200 years, which makes the theory of the decks providence with Tarocchino very doubtful. (Farley 29)



- Teachings by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and Aleister Crowley largely influence all modern tarot materials.

Members of the order are the originators of almost all well known early 20th century decks.

- Most famous of all is the Rider-Waite Deck:

The vast majority of all modern decks are templated after Arthur Edward Waite's 1909 deck.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was formed in 1888 based on an old occult document found in a second-hand bookstore that connected western European occultists with a group out of Germany. (Giles 39-40)

MacGregor Mathers was a consequential player in the order that contributed greatly to the group's interest in tarot. Yeats claimed him as his inspiration for getting interested in consciousness as an area of study. (Giles 41)

Tarot was studied through an entirely esoteric lense in the order. As a part of initiation into the order, initiates had to create their own deck of cards from a master copy, but were not expected to copy the deck exactly. (Giles 42)

Occultism as practiced by the Order was considered more counter-culture than crazy at this time. It could be considered more akin to the birth of cubism, than to bat-shit crazy ravings. (Giles 43)



Aleister Crowley

- Aleister Crowley began as an outer-level member of the Order of the Golden Dawn, but eventually became arguably their most famous member. (Giles 43)
- He is also considered to have been the catalyst to the Groups schism around 1900. He allegedly dressed up in a mask and highlander dress, broke into a group meeting and tried to steal objects and papers from the Order's members under the direction of Mathers. (Giles 43)
- His contributions to the field of mystical study are not really centered around theory and practice, but more around "sex-magick" and drugs. (Giles 47)





I. The Magician

Rider Waite Tarot



XI. Strength

Rider Waite Tarot

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