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















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## ELEMENTAL & ASTROLOGICAL SYMBOLS

			
Water	Earth	Fire	Air
SAMPLE			
			
Sun	Moon		
			
Mercury	Venus	Mars	Jupiter
			
Saturn	Pluto	Neptune	Uranus
			
Aries	Taurus	Gemini	Cancer
			
Leo	Virgo	Libra	Scorpio
			
Sagittarius	Capricorn	Aquarius	Pisces

## INTRODUCTION

THE UNIQUE TALENT OF GODFREY DOWSON is revealed in The Hermetic Tarot deck. U.S. Games Systems, Inc. is proud to reissue this deck in recognition of its historical and artistic importance. The details and symbols in each card reveal many of the esoteric workings of the Secret Order of the Golden Dawn that flourished around the turn of the century.

Founded in 1888 as a secret magical fraternity, the Order counted among its members some of the foremost occultists and writers of the period including MacGregor Mathers, Arthur Edward Waite, Dion Fortune, Paul Foster Case, Aleister Crowley, and W.B. Yeats.

After cessation of the Order's activities some fifteen years after its inception, Waite, Case, and Crowley went on to issue their own decks—The Rider-Waite, B.O.T.A., and Thoth tarot decks, respectively. Crowley first published a description of the Order's card designs in *The Equinox* in 1912. Prior to World War II, Israel Regardie included a description of the cards in his four-volume set, *The Golden Dawn*.

Crowley's deck was not published during his lifetime. He worked with Lady Freida Harris, the artist, for five years from 1938 to 1943 before the deck was completed, but it was not actually pub-

lished until 1969, 22 years after Crowley's death.

The early members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn were encouraged to prepare personal tarot packs for their own use based upon Mathers' deck and his work. The Society set down certain instructions for its members to follow, but these instructions were abbreviated at best. Not surprisingly, as time went on and new members copied decks based upon previously drawn cards, the variances and modifications grew more and more pronounced.

Since Mathers' original tarot deck has not been handed down, today's researchers of the Order of the Golden Dawn—whose numbers grow and flourish in Europe and the USA—often assign personal interpretations and modifications to their own version of the tarot as it might have existed in the Order more than 80 years ago.

In 1978, Robert Wang, in collaboration with Dr. Isreal Regardie, prepared The Golden Dawn Tarot Deck which has taken its place among important esoteric tarot packs of the 20th century.

The Hermetic Tarot deck by Godfrey Dowson draws heavily upon the work of Mathers, Crowley, Case, G.H. Soror, Q.L. [Greatly Honored Sister Q.L.] and Elias Levi. A slightly different description of the cards is found in *The Book "T": The Tarot* by S.R.M.D. [Mathers] and

others. Crowley included *The Book "T"* in 1912 in his *Equinox*, Vol. I, No. 8. The public disclosure caused considerable friction between Crowley and Mathers and eventually led to an unsuccessful lawsuit by Mathers to prevent further publication.

In 1967, a limited edition of 200 copies of *The Book "T"* appeared in Great Britain and it was reproduced again in 1978 by Robert Wang in *An Introduction to The Golden Dawn Tarot*.

Godfrey Dowson's cards in The Hermetic Tarot reveal a combination of detail and symbolism that capture the mood and sense of each pictorial image. Subtle variations exist in almost every card. For example, fingertips touch the stem of a rose bush in the 8 of Pentacles (Lord of Prudence) in contrast to the firm grasp of a hand in the 4 of Pentacles (Lord of Earthly Power). The mangled swords in the 9 of Swords (Lord of Despair and Cruelty) and the roses in full bloom in the 6 of Pentacles (Lord of Material Success) illustrate how skillfully the artist has created the cards. Repeated study of each card often reveals for the first time a new dimension and scope not seen in a previous reading. One of the most important features of Dowson's Hermetic Tarot is his emphasis on the Golden Dawn astrological attributions of the cards.

Working prior to the turn of the century, and drawing on a great deal of published information, library manuscripts, secret documents, and extensive personal research, Mathers assigned a complete set of correspondences between the tarot and the zodiac. Dowson has also provided clear symbols in his card designs which help the student correlate these astrological correspondences each time he or she reads the cards. Crowley, of course, does the same in his deck, but the symbols are frequently less clear than portrayed here. A knowledge of astrology can greatly aid in the interpretation of the tarot, and vice versa. It was the genius of the Golden Dawn to synthesize these systems.

Godfrey Dowson successfully creates in The Hermetic Tarot a compelling reconstructed version of the tarot that has taken its place as one of the most important esoteric tarot decks published during the twentieth century.

The Hermetic Tarot deck is collated in the following sequence: V. The Hierophant; 0. The Foolish Man; I. The Magician through IV. The Emperor; VI. The Lovers through XXI. Universe; knight, queen, king and princess in the suit of wands, followed by court cards in the suits of cups, swords and pentacles; ace through 10 in wands followed by cups, swords and pentacles.

Readers and students of tarot may prefer to maintain the Minor Arcana cards from The Hermetic Tarot deck in the sequence of cards as described in *Book "T"*. This sequence is based on an extremely complex astronomical and kabalistic correspondence system which forms the basis of the astrological attributions. Briefly, the aces rule the four quadrants of the North Pole of the Universe, and Kether on the Tree of Life. The Knights, Queens and Kings are broadly attributed to the zodiacal signs. Each of these court cards represents 3 decans (1 decan=10 degrees) of the zodiac, hence 30 degrees. The Princesses form the link between the elemental energies of the aces and the celestial zodiacal energies of the other court cards. Then the tarot follows the further astrological division into individual decans by assigning one numbered card (2–10) to one decan. As there are 36 decans and 36 numbered cards (excluding the aces) this fits rather neatly.

The true astrological year was begun by the Golden Dawn with the star Regulus at 0° Leo, rather than the more common 0° Aries. Thus the 5 of Wands, 0–10° Leo, is the first pip card described in *Book "T"*, and the 4 of Cups, 20–30° degrees Cancer, is the last. The trumps then follow the pip cards. Refer to Book IV of Israel Regardie's *Golden Dawn* for a more complete

explanation of his subject. The sequence thus given in *Book "T"* is as follows: ace of wands, cups, swords and pentacles; 5 to 7 of wands; 8 to 10 of pentacles; 2 to 4 of swords; 5 to 7 of cups; 8 to 10 of wands; 2 to 4 of pentacles; 5 to 7 of swords; 8 to 10 of cups; 2 to 4 of wands; 5 to 7 pentacles; 8 to 10 of swords; 2 to 4 of cups; 0. The Foolish Man; and I. The Magician through XXI. The Universe.

The back design of The Hermetic Tarot deck is a rose in full bloom. Each card contains the sigil—the mark of a master craftsman. All the work by Godfrey Dowson bears this mark. The original artwork for the Hermetic Tarot deck was executed between 1975 to 1977 by the artist and is now is included in the Stuart and Marilyn R. Kaplan Playing Card Collection.

—*Stuart R. Kaplan*



# THE HERMETIC TAROT DECK

*by Godfrey Dowson and Stuart R. Kaplan  
revisions by Uri Raz*

The tarot is a perfect symbolic picture of the cosmos as seen through the eyes of man. Tarot also reflects the many facets of man in his environment.

The catalytic nature of tarot enables it to portray all possible relationships that can develop within the human sphere and the environment of the cosmos. Thus, the concept of the microcosm within the macrocosm is fully expressed.

The tarot is a mirror of reality. Its construction, based on the four elements, the celestial phenomena, the Holy Qabalah, and a very evolved psychology, can lead its devotees to the inner recesses of psychic and intuitive awareness. The tarot itself can be used as the basis of occult study, as it may be said to possess all aspects of the inner wisdom tradition.

The standard tarot is composed of seventy-eight cards divided into three main groups. There are twenty-two Major Arcana or trump cards, and fifty-six Minor Arcana cards. The Minor Arcana is comprised of two groups, sixteen court cards and forty pip or point cards. The fifty-six cards of the Minor Arcana are also divided into

# The 10 Spheres and the 22 Hebrew Letters of the 22 Paths of the Tree of Life

