

WITH 78 PLATES ILLUSTRATING THE GREATER  
AND LESSER ARCANUM FROM DESIGNS BY  
PAMELA COLMAN SMITH  
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND A NOTE ON  
THE TAROT AS A GAME BY GERTRUDE MOAKLEY



THE  
PICTORIAL  
KEY  
TO THE  
TAROT



New material copyright © 1959 by University Books Inc.  
All rights reserved

Published by Citadel Press

A division of Lyle Stuart Inc.

120 Enterprise Ave., Secaucus, N.J. 07094

In Canada: Musson Book Company,

A division of General Publishing Co. Limited

Don Mills, Ontario

ISBN 0-8065-0715-2

Manufactured in the United States of America

9 8 7

## Note on The Tarot as a Game

by Gertrude Moakley

One of the oldest pictures of a card game is on a wall in the Borromeo Palace in Milan. It shows three ladies and two gentlemen in fifteenth-century costume, grouped around a square table. They are all holding Tarot cards, but only three seem to be playing. The other two ladies seem to be shuffling an extra pack for the next hand.

This agrees with what we know, for the games played with Tarot cards are traditionally for three players. If four play, the dealer does not take a hand; if two play, they deal three hands and leave one unused.

Tarot games have varied as much as the games of the whist-bridge type but they all follow a basic pattern which is very like pinochle. They are still played in France, Italy, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, under the names of tarot, tarocco, tarock, or taroky. In Eastern Europe the trumps and suit signs are different, but the pack still has twenty-one trumps, a Fool, and four ordinary suits of fourteen cards each.

To those concerned with the essential meaning of the Tarot, the oldest way of playing the game is naturally the most interesting. We will therefore

ignore the elements of bidding which have entered into the modern forms of the game, and the endless ceremonial which attends the Italian forms. In the older forms the melds are more elaborate, and throw light on the meaning of the cards.

Let us play a sample game, and explain as we go along. Deal twenty-four cards to each of the three players, beginning with "second hand" (player at dealer's right), and continuing counter-clockwise. The six cards left over are the widow. The dealer has the option of picking them up and discarding six cards of his own. In our sample hand he does so, and then the hands are:

	SECOND HAND:
	TRUMPS: XXI, XX, XIX, XVIII
	SWORDS: 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
	CUPS: Q, Kt, Page, 1, 6, 9
	COINS: Kt, Page, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9
	DEALER:
	TRUMPS: XV, XIV, XIII, XII, XI, X, IX, VIII, VII, VI
	STAVES: K, Q, Kt, Page, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 3, 1
	COINS: 1, 5
	FOOL
THIRD HAND:	
TRUMPS: XVII, XVI, V, IV, III, II, I	
SWORDS: K, Q, Kt, Page, 10, 9, 8	
STAVES: 5, 4, 2	
CUPS: K, 2, 3, 4, 5	
COINS: K, Q	

*(The pip cards of the feminine suits—Cups and Coins—rank from ace high down to ten low.)*

Have you a pack of Tarot cards? Then I suggest you deal them out and play this hand with the actual cards. It will be much clearer that way. Before beginning the play, each player declares his melds, according to the table at the end of this Note. In our game the melds declared for this hand are:

SECOND HAND:	4 Greater	All 5 Lesser	THIRD HAND:	DEALER:
	10	15	Seven-card	
	Trump	Trump	sequence	
	Four-card	3 "Tarot	in Staves	10
	sequence	"Trumps" (2	Ten-card	
	(same cards)	Kings and	sequence	
	5	Trump 1)	in Trumps	15
	Four-card	15		
	sequence			
	in Cups	sequence in		
	5	Four-card		
	Seven-card	Lesser Trumps		
	in Swords	5		
	10	Four-card		
	sequence	sequence		
	in Swords	in Cups		
	30	5		
TOTAL:	50	10		25

Now comes the play for tricks. Second hand leads, and the play continues counter-clockwise. You must follow suit if you can, and if you cannot, you must play a trump. However, if you have the Fool you may play it instead of following suit or

trumping. Otherwise the Fool is of no value in the play, although it counts as one of the seven "Tarot Trumps" in the melding. The highest card of the suit led takes the trick, unless it is trumped. In that case the highest trump takes it. The trumps rank from XXI high down to I low. The masculine suits of Swords and Staves rank from king high down to ace low. The feminine suits of Cups and Coins rank the same as the masculine from king down to page, but from there on the order is reversed: ace is highest, then two, and so on down to ten.

In our game, second hand begins by leading the nine of Coins.

The tricks and their scoring are:

LED:	SCORE FOR:		
	SECOND HAND	THIRD HAND	DEALER
COINS: 9, K, 5		5	
COINS: Q, 1, 7		4	
CUPS: K, trump VI, 9			5
STAVES: K, trump XVIII, 2	5		
CUPS: 6, 5, trump VII			1
TRUMPS: VIII, XXI, II (third hand is saving his I, which is a "Tarot Trump")	5*		
SWORDS: 1, K, trump IX			5

THE TAROT AS A GAME 321

TRUMPS: X, XX, III	1		
SWORDS: 2, 8, trump XI	1		
TRUMPS: XII, XIX, IV	1		
COINS: Kt, trumps V, XIII	3		
STAVES: Q, Sword 3, 4	4		
STAVES: Kt, Sword 4, 5	3		
TRUMPS: XIV, Sword 5, XVI	1		
SWORDS: Q, trump XV, 6	4		
STAVES: 10, Coin 4, trump I	5*		
(third hand cashes his "Tarot Trump")			
SWORDS: Kt, Stave 1, 7	3		
SWORDS: Page, Fool, Cup I	2		
SWORDS: 10, Stave 3, Coin 3	1		
TRUMPS: XVII, Stave 6,			
Coin 2	1		
SWORDS: 9, Stave 7, Cup Page	2		
CUPS: 4, Stave 8, Q	4		
CUPS: Kt, 3, Stave 9	3		
COINS: Page, Cup 2, Stave			
Page	2		
ADD MELTS:	30	50	25
TOTAL SCORE FOR HAND:	51	74	51

\*Trick counts five because it contains a "Tarot Trump."

Third hand has the highest score: 74. Subtract from this the next highest, 51, and the actual score

toward game is twenty-three points for third hand. The game continues in this way until a player wins the game with a score of 100 points.

TABLE FOR SCORING MELDS AND TRICKS:

Melds:

The five Greater Trumps (XVII-XXI, the cards which represent the triumph of Eternity): count 5 points for three of these, 10 points for four, 15 points if player has all five.

The five Lesser Trumps (I-V, the cards which represent the captives of Cupid): count the same as the Greater Trumps.

The seven "Tarot Trumps" (I, XXI, Fool, and the Kings of the four suits): count 15 points for every three of these.

Sequences in the same suit, including the Trump suit:

Count 5 for any four-card sequence  
10 for any seven-card sequence  
15 for any ten-card sequence

Tricks containing:

any "Tarot Trump" except the Fool 5  
one or more Queens 4  
one or more Knights 3  
one or more Pages 2  
any other cards, including Trumps 1