

Trump IX

Allegorical themes

Elder — TB, TVB
Time — TMPV
Experience — TOM
Guide, Scout — TYR
Novitiate — TYRVN

Symbols

Prayer cloak — TRYGVN, TLYTh
Head cover — TRTYN
To lift up — TLA, TLY
To carry — TLTL
To shine — TVP
Searching — TRS
Rod — TLIL
Three-legged — TRSQL

Interpretive words

Discretion, discernment — TOM
Perceptiveness — TBOVN
Chastity — THRI
Goodness — TB, TVB
One who is pure — THR
Secret, Hidden — TYShA, TMYR
Hidden treasure — TVTOA
To hide oneself — TShA, TShY
Hiding place — TMVN, TMN, TVMYA
Refuge — TMVR
Traveler — TYL
Wanderer, Exile — TOA, TLTL, TLTVLA
Waystation for travelers — TRGYS, TRSYAVTh
Keep watch, To Guard — TR
To screen, to obscure — TLL
To go astray — TOH
Talisman — TLYSMA
Knotted cord — TRGVL
Phylacteries — TVIPTThA, TVYPN
Flint — TNR, TYNR

Trump IX shows the image of a sage *raising* (TLA) his lantern, suggesting one who serves as a beacon for others. He may thus be seen as an *elder* or *town representative* (ThVB), or as the keeper of a *waystation for travelers* (TRGYS).

In the Marseilles version of the card, the light from the hermit's *upraised* (TLA) lantern is partially *obscured* (TLL) by the folds of his *cloak* (TRYGVN). In this sense, he could be seen as *concealing* (TMN) the fullness of his light, symbolizing that the wise carry their lamps with *discretion* (TOM). This idea is also reflected in the word *telal* (TLL), which means 'to have shade'. The lantern could then be interpreted as the *goodness* (TMYR) *hidden* (TMYR) within our *inward parts* (TChVTh).

Trump IX can also be seen as the *wanderer* (TOA), signifying the soul as *traveler* (TYL) through life and the lantern her *discernment* (TOM) of obscure paths. He may be seeking *hidden treasure* (TVIOA), or may be *searching* (IRS) for *hidden traps* (TMN) or for those who have *concealed* (TMN) themselves in *hidden places* (TVMYYA). These ideas hint at early occult writings which interpreted this card as 'prudence, protection and guidance'.

The word *talal* (TLL), meaning 'to cover over' or 'to have shade', shares its root with the word *tallith* (TLYTh), meaning 'prayer cloak' or 'gown'. In earlier times the *tallith* was a cloak large enough to cover the entire body, including the head. There is also the *tratin* (TRTYN), meaning 'head cover', and the *trigun* (TRYGVN), meaning 'coarse cloak'.

Unlike other Hebrew letters, the name of the ninth letter *tet* (TYTh) has no literal meaning. The Bahir v.24 also describes it as expressing *concealment*, pointing out that the Hebrew text of the 10 commandments contains every letter in the Hebrew alphabet except for tet. It also does not appear in any of the names for the 10 *sephiroth*, the divine emanations of the kabbalistic tree.

The shape of the letter *tet* is inverted in upon itself, symbolic of introversion and modesty. The Zohar says of its form that "its *good* (TVB) is hidden within it," and kabbalists have referred to it as "the concealed good." Since it is shaped like a vessel with an inverted rim, the tet symbolizes the internalization of virtue. Its numeric value of 9 also corresponds to the nine months of pregnancy, which are a *refuge* (TMVR) for the new *life* (ChYM, ChLD) of the child hidden within. The shape of the tet includes the flamelike 'jud' held aloft at its upper left corner, corresponding to the sage's lantern.

Tet

The number 9, being the highest single digit, symbolizes the pinnacle of virtue. It is traditionally considered a number of holiness since it contains a trinity of triads. Such connotations are reflected in the novena of prayer, in the nine choirs of angels, and in the nine muses of mythology. Pythagorean traditions referred to the 9 as 'horizon' since it represents the boundary of the numerals. Corresponding to the image of a wayshower with lamp, this number was also called 'Prometheus', the bestower of heavenly fire, since it represents the heights to which the digits ascend.

It is also found that on the ninth day of the month of Ab, Jews do not wear their *talith* (TLYTh) and *phylacteries* (TVYPN) until the evening.

This allegory suggests *taher* (THR) or 'purity', a word used throughout the Old Testament in reference to holiness and purification. In Zechariah's vision, Joshua the high priest was given a *clean* (THR) turban and garment as a symbol of his sanctification (Zech 3:5). This same word refers to the priests and Levites who had *purified* (THR) themselves for the Passover (Ezra 6:20).

Lamps are also used as a symbol of this *purity* (THR); the root THR denotes the 'purity' of gold used for the incense altar (Ex 30:3) and the lampstand (Ex 25:31). Exodus 32:8 refers specifically to the *tahor* (THR) or 'pure' lampstand which burns continually (Lev 24:4). *Taher* is also used to denote *the guarding against contact with unclean things* (Rosh hash-Shanah Talmud, 16b).

Some kabbalists note that the shape of the letter tet resembles a coiled snake. This alludes to the *rod* (TLTL) of Moses which became a snake upon the mount of Horeb, and to the staff of Aaron which became a serpent before the court of Pharaoh. Moses used the staff to invoke the parting of the Red Sea (Ex 14:16), to summon water from the rock (Ex 17:6), and to overwhelm the army of Amalek (Ex 17:9). It is said that Aaron's staff was later *concealed* (TMN) within the Ark of the Covenant.

The lantern, cloak and staff all correspond to the hidden virtue of the soul. Derived from the French word *vertu* meaning 'quality' or 'power', the *virtue* of the soul is a neutral power and has the ability both *to defile* (TMA) and *to purify* (THR), as symbolized by the account of the plagues brought upon Egypt through the rod of Moses.

The staff of the hermit could also be seen as the *experience* (TOM) upon which he leans.

Tet

This card is reminiscent of the riddle of the sphinx, which described man in his last stage of life as a *three-legged* (TRSQL) creature *leaning upon* (TPL) his cane. The Hebrew word for *rod* (TLTL) is also translated as *to move* or *to carry* (TLTL), suggesting the sage's walking stick.

Early occultists almost universally viewed this trump as a symbol of 'Prudence', the classical Renaissance virtue. Levi described the Hermit's lantern as a symbol of learning, of reason, and as a "lamp whose beams will *chase away* (TRD) all the phantoms of darkness." Levi further described the Hermit's cloak as a symbol of *discretion* (TOM), and his staff as a symbol of strength and boldness. Linguistically, this card emphasizes the ideas of *discretion*, *guidance*, and *experience*.

Trump X

Allegorical themes

Destiny — YOD
Fate — YHB
lynx — YNQS

Symbols

Succession — YRVShH
To turn — YMN, YTzR
Creature — YTzYR
Rise to power — YRSh
Reign — YTzB
Descent — YRD
Shaft — YTzVL
Peg — YThD
Handle — YD, YDYTh, YTzVL
Axle — YD
Base — YSD
Sea — YM

Interpretive words

I prevail — YKL
To be stationed — YShB
Firmly planted — YTzYB
To be displaced — YQO
Destitution — YRSh, YShM
Good fortune — YMNH
Existence — YQVM
To do habitually — YSTh
To be bound — YSR
Caught in a trap — YQSh
Potter's workshop — YTzYRH
To cast lots — YDD, YRH
To exchange — YMR
Day — YVM
Month — YRCh
Year — YMYM
Ixion — YQSYVN

Yud

Jove — YVPYTR
Ezekiel — YHZQAL
Onyx — YHLM

Trump X illustrates the *waxing* (YSP) and *waning* (YRYDH) of Fortune, the *succession* (YRVShH) of fate as expressed by the passage: "The Lord makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts" (I Samuel 2:7).

The Wheel of Fortune was a common symbol in the Middle Ages, one which predates the Tarot. Such wheels can be found in the Gothic sculptures at Amiens, St. Étienne, and Basle cathedrals, as well as in numerous European manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These depictions show an *heir* (YRSh) *rising to power* (YRSh), a *conqueror* (YRThA) who *reigns* (YTzB) above, and the conquered who is *displaced* (YQO) and *descending* (YRDThY); often, a fourth figure was shown beneath the wheel to symbolize the state of *impoverishment* (YVRYSh). The moral of these depictions is that Fortune is a fickle and ever-turning state of affairs.

The name of the tenth letter *yud* (YD) is contained within the word for *destiny* (YOD, YOVD). This letter is also connected to Hebrew words for *fate* (YHB) and *good fortune* (YMNH). *Yud* literally means *hand*, *handle* and *axle* (YD), and medieval representations showed Destiny's Wheel as being mechanically turned by hand. Given all the connotations of this Renaissance allegory, its link to the yud or 'letter of the hand' seems to have been destined. We find, in fact, that The Wheel maintains its tenth position in virtually every early variation of card sequence.

The Marseilles version shows the base of the Wheel as resting upon a sea or lake. Water was commonly depicted in Medieval artwork by the use of long, wavy lines—a symbolic shorthand seen in the etchings, illuminated manuscripts and stained glass of the period. While this detail appears ambiguous on some decks, it can be determined by comparing the lines beneath the wheel's platform to the lines of water shown on the Moon card. A comparison of cards from the same deck will show how that particular artist conveyed the idea of water.

The *sea* (YM) or *lake* (YAVR) beneath the wheel may allude to the *sea of molten brass* (YM HNChShTh) cast by Hiram of Tyre for Solomon's Temple. This object was an enormous basin supported by twelve brass oxen (I Kings

7:23, 24), placed in front of the pillars *Jachin* (YKYN) and *Boaz*. In front of the pillars and the molten sea, Hiram *cast* (YTzQ) platforms having “bronze wheels with bronze *axles* (YD)” which supported smaller, movable lavers or water basins; on the sides of the basins were *creatures* or *figures* (YTzYR) of “lions, oxen, and cherubim, with a pedestal above.” (1 Kings 7:29, 30).

Trump X also refers to the *inyx* (YNQS), the oracular “wheels of fortune” which were mechanically rotated by rope or handle. These golden oracle wheels, said to have existed at the temple of Delphi, were associated in ancient times with the *inyx* or sacred wryneck bird, which may have inspired the winged figure at the top of the card. Functioning wheels were even built within early continental Churches. One twelfth century abbot at Fécamp, for example, had an *inyx* constructed so that “his monks might ever have before them the spectacle of human vicissitudes” (Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*).

This card’s depiction of the wheel may also be an allusion to *Ixion* (YQSYVN), since it was an eight-spoked wheel upon which Ixion was chained by Zeus for his failed seduction of Hera.

The Marseilles designers were particular about other details as well. At least one of the three *creatures* (YTzYR)—with its distinctive face, tail, claws and ears—appears to be a *long-tailed bat* (YZNVB), the lines at the corners of its mouth reminiscent of fangs. The creature at the right seems to be dressed as a *noble* (YChVSA), and the creature at the left as a *slave* (YLYD); the *conqueror* (YRThA) above is free to *spread* (YShT) his wings. The knobbed spokes of the wheel may be a type of *peg* (YThD) wedged into the *axle* (YD).

As we find with most cards in Dellarocca’s later designs, there are uncanny alphabetic details to be found. He replaces the descending figure at the card’s left with an urn atop a pedestal, and illustrates a winged goddess of fortune pouring out disk-like stones. The entire image seems to suggest *yadad* (YDD) or ‘the casting of lots’, which included the burning of incense and the sacrificing of animals (Joshua 18:6; Lev 16:8-13). This ancient practice was the means by which state officials were *appointed* (YOD) and important matters *decided* (YKCh).

The figure at the top of Dellarocca’s design shows the *yiddoni* (YDONY), the *soothsayer* or *diviner* (Lev 19:31; 20:6; Deut 18:11); she is the *knower* (YDO), and the *one who makes known* (YDO). In her *right hand* (YMN) is a rod

Yud

of power (Ex 15:6) which may allude to the knobbed staff carried by ancient rune casters. The rod and lightning are also symbols of *Jupiter* (YVPYTR), or Zeus. In her left hand she holds a *yobel* or *ram's horn* (YBL), which becomes the cornucopia or everflowing *horn* (YBL) of *riches* (YThRH). The urn and *pillar of smoke* (YTVR) refers to the *burning* (YQD) of incense during the *casting of lots* (YDD), and the fox on the wheel's rim suggests a *fowler* (YQVSh), the hunter of birds.

The smallest letter in the alphabet, and the only one which is 'suspended in mid-air' above the baseline, the yud corresponds to the geometric point at the center of a circle. Its form is the structural building block for all of the Hebrew letterforms.

At the same time, its mathematical value of 10 implies cyclicity and the circumference or closing of a circle. This is represented by the fact that the numeral 10 is a return to the first digit, known also as 'the single monad recurring'. The Pythagoreans represented the concept of *united plurality* by the ten points of their *Tetraktys*, and the kabbalists by the ten spheres of the *Tree of Life* and the ten fingers of the hands. The Pythagoreans also called it *Kosmos*, because it represents the mathematical structure of the universe; *Eternity*, since it contains completion and continuity; *Fate*, since order derives from it; *Necessity*, since it circumscribes all things.

These numeric ideas are reflected in the interpretations of continental European authors, who described this card as *Destiny* (YOVD), change of fortune, *Necessity*, and *Divine Order*. Even kabbalist sages had a place for this teaching: "Life, children and food do not depend on merit, but on *Destiny*" (*Moed Katan*, 28a).