

ARCANUM 10 - THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE



The Tarot Images.

The most common image that is associated with Uranus, especially within the tradition of The Sacred Tarot, is the Wheel. Why a Wheel?

Here we look at some of the contemporary and classical representations of *The Wheel of Fortune*. Here is one interpretation:

THE SPHINX HERMANUBIS ASS EARS

The iconography of Arcanum 10 has manifested in a wide variety of traditions which would demand exhaustive attention. This process of research and amplification will be carried out as an ongoing project.

ANALYSIS OF THE FIGURES ON THE WHEEL.

At the right Hernanubis, genius of good, strives to mount to the summit of the circumference.

The God Knephta, the Spirit of Good;

On the ascending side is Anubis, who according to Cavendish, "...in Egyptian belief led the soul to judgment in the Hall of Truth after death.

"...the soul is rising to a higher level..."

At the left, Typhon, genius of evil, is precipitated.

Typhon, the Spirit of Evil.

On the descending side is the evil Seth.

"...on the other it is sinking into bondage on the material plane."

THE SPHINX.

The image above is from the first Egyptian Tarot, ¹ but there are many examples of the Sphinx in the same position in other Tarot designs. One version even calls Arcanum 10: The Sphinx. This needs to be explored.

THE SPHINX QUESTION

Arcane X (I-J-Y=10.) The Sphinx.

¹ R. Falconnier, *Les XXII lames hermétiques du tarot divinatoire*, Paris 1896.

"We have here the most ancient drawing of the Wheel of Destiny turning upon its axis.

On one side we see the God Knephtha, the Spirit of Good; on the other side, Typhon, the Spirit of Evil, who is about to be thrown off from the wheel the Spirit of Good is rising. Over the whole presides a full figure of a winged Sphinx representing the four forces of human nature: to Know, to Dare, to Act, to Be Silent. The Sphinx remains in perfect equilibrium as if the constantly revolving wheel of fortune had no influence over him. He thus symbolized the mysterious power of God disposing of human destinies according to the good or bad actions of everyone. In his claws, the Sphinx holds a javelin, the emblem of supreme justice. At the foot of the supporting beam of the axis, two snakes symbolize the even forces that balance each other, while both constantly struggle for supremacy.

This Arcane, X., means that if we want only what is true, what is just, what is within our reach: if we keep silent as to our designs: if, finally, we add perseverance to the rest, we shall find ourselves one day in possession of the Key to Power.



15. WINGED SPHINXES, GRIFFINS

"The winged sphinxes have been segregated from the wingless sphinxes which are purely Egyptian types. Several of the following, however, have strong Egyptian characteristics, as adopted in Phoenicia; others, generally simpler in treatment, are more Greek. The griffins are all of Egyptian type, without the Greek ears and mane, virtually 'falcon-headed', but they are winged."

Serpents.

The Two Genii - On polarity in The Wheel:

"Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence. From these contraries spring what the religious call Good and Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the springing from energy."

William Blake, *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

HERMANUBIS

Amin Benaissa:

“It is clear that the name is a result of the assimilation of the Egyptian god Anubis to the Greek god Hermes, which is well attested in a number of literary, epigraphic, and artistic sources. Although Hermes was traditionally equated with the Egyptian Thoth, his function as *psychopompos* encouraged his association with Anubis given the latter's comparable funerary role in Egyptian religion as embalmer and guardian of the dead and as leader of the deceased to the tribunal of Osiris. This assimilation resulted in widespread Graeco-Roman representations of the canine-headed Anubis with attributes of the Greek Hermes, such as the distinctive staff known as the *kerykeion* or winged sandals. As far as I know, none of these representations whose provenance is known was found in Egypt, though this may be due to mere chance. But in Roman Alexandria there emerges a new iconographical type, well represented in coins and sculpture, in which a fully anthropomorphic young god is flanked by a dog and holds the same attributes as the said Anubis, in addition to wearing the calathos headdress. It is this type that art historians have traditionally labeled "Hermanubis." In making this identification, they have been encouraged by Porphyry's statement about the god's "composite" and "half-Hellenic" character. However, it is important to stress that the reference to the fully anthropomorphic type as "Hermanubis" is only a hypothetical convention, and that not a single of the numerous representations of this type bears a legend or inscription identifying it as such.”²

ASS EARS

Notes from Apuleus, *The Golden Ass*.

Ass loathed by Isis – an animal of Set . . . who DISMEMBERED Osiris . . .

Charite was about to undergo a *hieros gamos* [marriage] when the bandits abducted her . . . the bandits worship MARS – and have an Old Hag as a servant . .

p.163 – the anima in the dead rotting ass –

nigredo – putrefaction

p. 205; p.165 – Fortune described

10 – donkeys into humans on wheel

15 – theriomorphic human with ass-head -Seth

22 - Ass ears only . .

² Amin Benaissa, *The Onomastic Evidence for the God Hermanubis*, Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth International Congress of Papyrology, Ann Arbor 2007, *American Studies in Papyrology*, Ann Arbor 2010, pp.67- 68.