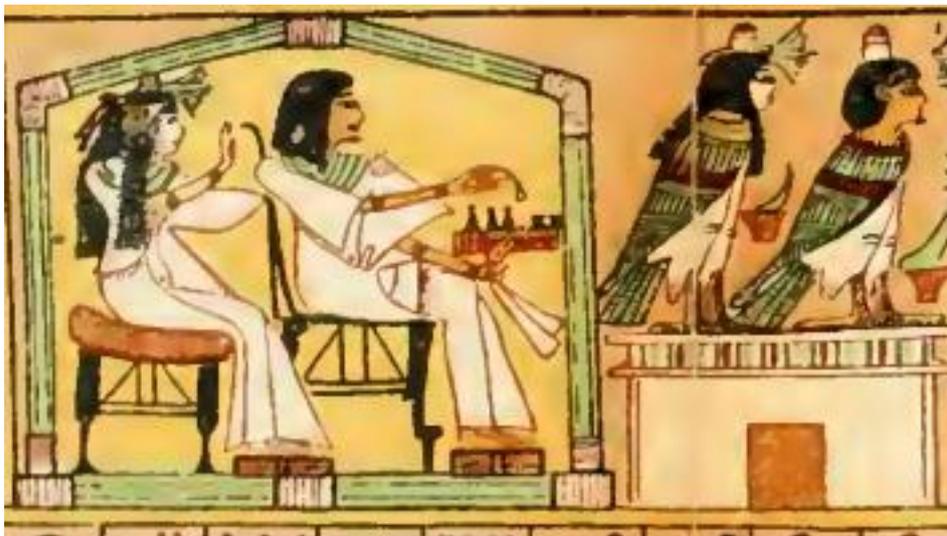


24 Women and the Trumps

A very important feature of the Senet Tarot Trumps is that the Trumps are equally distributed between men and women. Women generally have different roles than men in society, but that does not make them in any way inferior. Many societies today still do not treat women as the equals of men, and in some societies women are treated no better than slaves or domestic animals and have few or no human rights. In some situations men feel they have the right to take “justice” into their own hands and even kill their own kinswomen if they feel the women have not behaved “properly”. Such men should notice that the Justice Trump is a woman. She is in charge of law and order and her spouse is Thoth, the Lord of Intelligence, so he ought to know.

With the Emperor there is the Empress. With the High Priest there is a High Priestess. Even Ra has a hidden female counterpart in the Role of Nephthys. The real Strength of the Chariot Warrior is the lioness Tefnut/Sekhmet. Even the Devil is female on the Oracle Board. Then we have a Lover, a midwife, and a nanny.

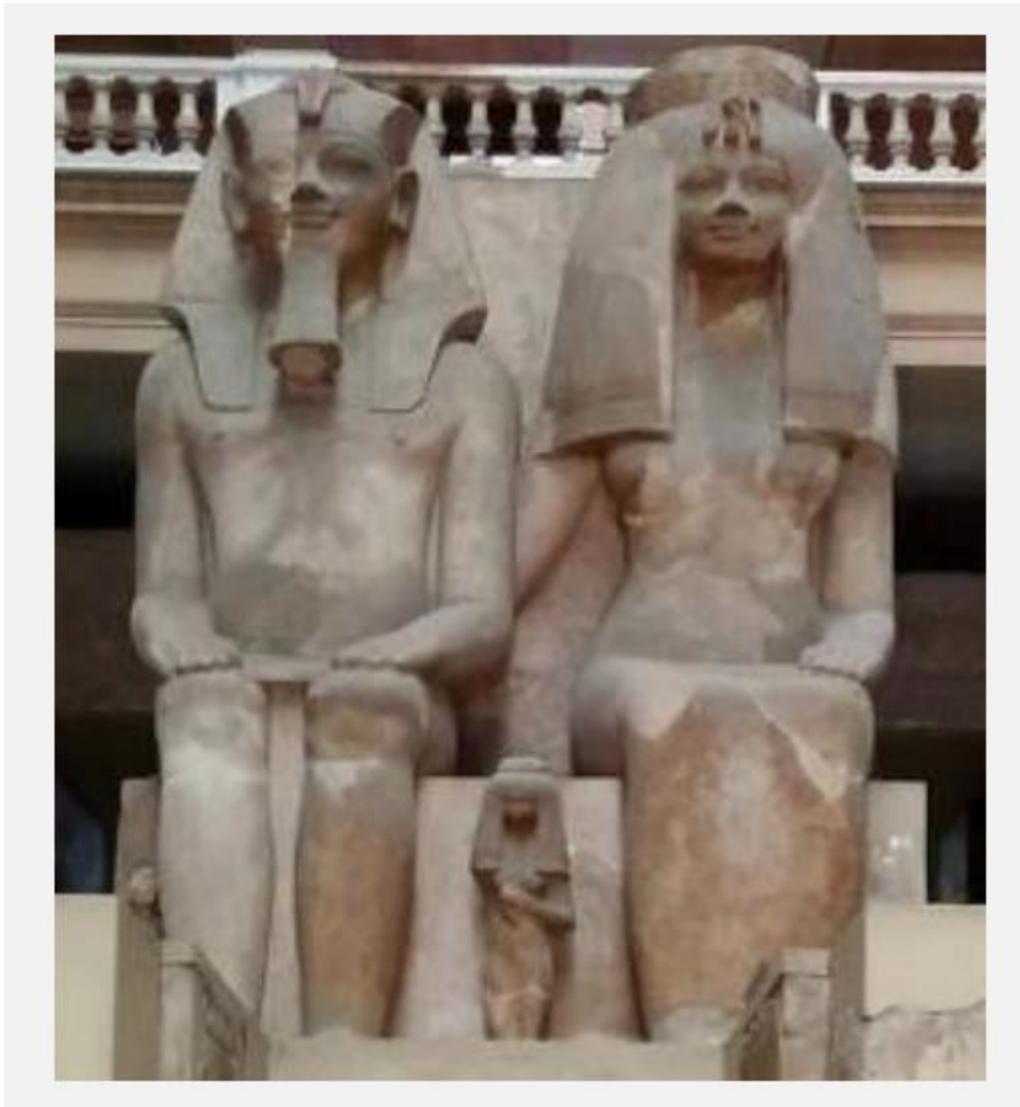
The Hanged Man and Magician can be either male or female. Egyptian queens traditionally called themselves Osiris when they passed on.



Look closely at the couple sitting in their booth and consulting the Oracle about their future life together. The wife sits behind her husband giving support with her right hand, but notice where her left hand is.

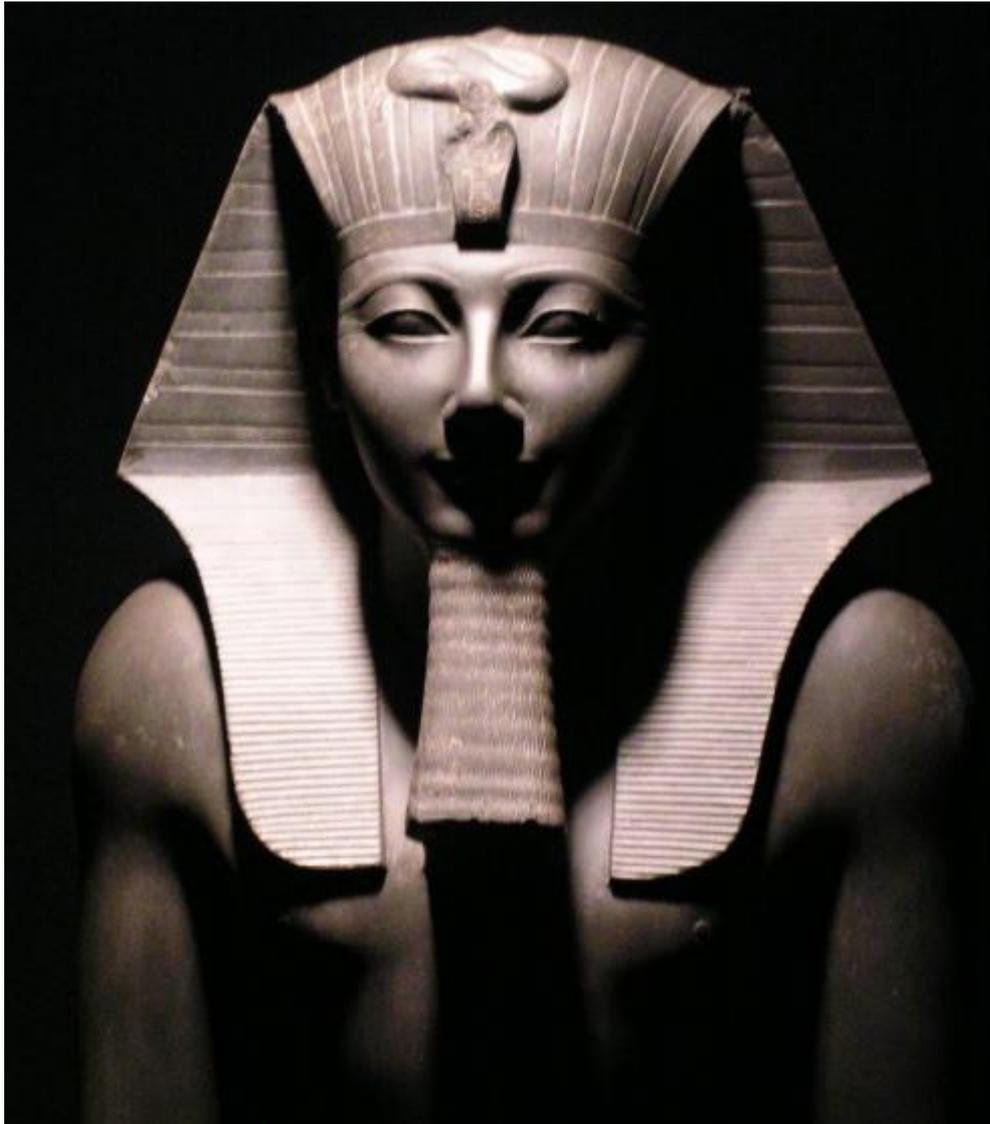
She is quietly putting her hand on his left shoulder over his heart. She is very much involved in the game and is not just taking a back seat.

Here is a photograph of pharaoh Amenhotep III and his wife Tiya sitting together on a throne in the Great Hall of the Cairo Museum. The size is megalithic, since you can see the railing of the mezzanine above is even with the tops of their heads. They are serene and regal, and of equal size, though a small child stands between them. Notice that, whereas the pharaoh's two hands are on his thighs, and also the queen's left hand is on her thigh, the queen's right hand is discretely extended behind the back of the pharaoh, presumably giving him energetic support in the small of his back.



You must watch the details of Egyptian formal art, and you will discover that the women often quietly add romantic touches to the extremely formal royal art, telling us that women in Egypt played a significant role.

The creator of the first Tarot deck was Tutmose III. When he became pharaoh his was only a small child, so his aunt, Hatshepsut, became regent and ruled as pharaoh for many years as the child grew up. She even put on a false beard so she looked the part of a male pharaoh. She also carefully trained Tutmose and gave him more and more responsibilities. When she saw he was ready to rule, she made him co-ruler for a while and then retired to let him rule as pharaoh. Tutmose then followed suit and trained his heir. He made him a co-regent "intern" pharaoh before then turning over the kingdom to him and retiring. This was wise stewardship and the model was set by the lady Hatshepsut, one of Egypt's greatest pharaohs. Later male chauvinism led to diminishing her standing, but her amazing obelisk still stands at Karnak and her mausoleum is a masterpiece of architectural design.

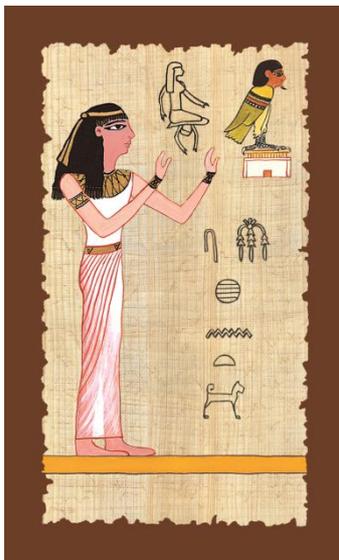


Mature Hatshepsut dressed as pharaoh with a false beard. We have a pretty good idea from sculptures what she looked like in her prime. She was a wise and efficient administrator helping develop Egypt's New Kingdom Golden Age. She managed the education of Tutmose III, who developed the first nearly complete Tarot deck.

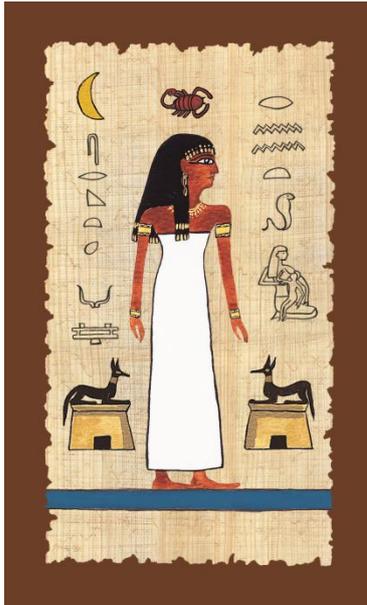


Megalithic statue of Hatshepsut with false beard, crown, and royal scepters stands at the entrance to her mausoleum. Many copies of this statue once stood along the huge front upper facade level, one by each pillar, and several still remain.

The midwife goddess Meskhent was very important, because she delivered the baby who might become the next pharaoh of Egypt.



The nanny goddess, Renenet or Serqet, was vital because she raised the infant during his first critical years.

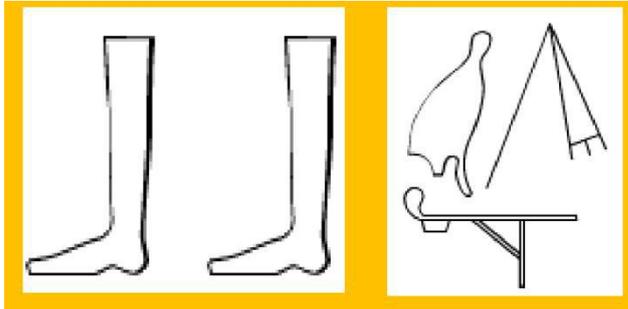


Everyone in Egypt, male or female, was Horus as a child and became a hero in adulthood. When the person died, he or she became Osiris, the Magician.



Above is a small stone stela carved with an image of Baby Horus playing with his toys: snakes, crocodiles, and scorpions. Women would put such Baby Horus stelae in their gardens to protect their children as they played. Watching over the child's head is the head of Bes (Baba's transformation into a dwarf) with a flying Aten solar disk (insignia of an aircraft pilot) above. Bes was a special transformation of the Fool. He

loved dancing, and music, and generally playful fun and was also a favorite totem deity of the harem and the birth room. Ladies even tattooed him on their thighs for fertility. Bes, being a form of Baba, and the partner of Beset, the cat goddess of female sexuality, was really a transformation of Amen, the ithyphallic fertility god.



The two leg glyphs spell Baba's name in its simplest form. On the right are the divine symbols associated with Baba. Notice that Baba himself is invisible (Amen), and he has the flail that Amen holds aloft. He also has the white crown of the South that Tem the Tower wears as his signature. The perch means "divinity" (birds symbolized spirituality). Baba is thus definitely a fertility god, but with much deeper esoteric meanings. Baba loves and respects women.



The dwarf Bes, tutelary deity of the birth room at Hathor's Denderah Temple. There he decorates the pillar capitals of the temple birth room.



Mamisi birth room at Denderah Temple with the amusing dwarf Bes on top of the pillar capitals.

Queen Neith of the sixth dynasty may not have had a pyramid as large as her husband, but she had almost as many of the precious Pyramid Texts as he did on the walls of her burial chamber.

24 Study Questions

- * Make a list of the Trumps and then label which are male and which are female. Remember that technically the Hanged Man and the Magician can be either male or female, because Horus becomes Osiris, and women also become (identify with) Osiris when they die.
- * The Lovers and the Hermit are either male or female. What about the other Trumps in the bottom row? Discuss your ideas.
- * Where do all the Trumps and Court cards come from? And before that?
- * How does this discussion relate to the main theme of the Series Overview?