

13 The Phoenician Secret and the Tarot



Now that we have a clearer idea of how the Senet Oracle Board emerged from a simple combining of two fundamental Egyptian Wisdom Tableaus onto the mathematically precise Senet Board design, we can begin to reveal one of the great secrets of the Phoenician alphabet.

The Phoenicians were also called Canaanites, Cana'an people. They were a diverse group of Semitic people who very early began to specialize in trading and seafaring. Many of them did not have a land that they called a country. They built sturdy sailing boats and pursued commerce all over the Mediterranean Sea, establishing fortified port cities at key locations in their trade network. Three of their important cities in the Eastern Mediterranean were Biblos, Sidon, and Tyre. Phoenicians later developed a major center at Carthage on the north central African coast of the Mediterranean south of Sicily and the Italian peninsula. From there they could control trade throughout the Mediterranean.

The Phoenicians invented their alphabet, because it was simple and practical for people on the move. It was so practical that people along their trade routes picked it up and adapted it to their own languages. Their fierce competitors the Greeks, Romans, and others soon copied the alphabet technology and it still dominates trade and communication throughout the world.

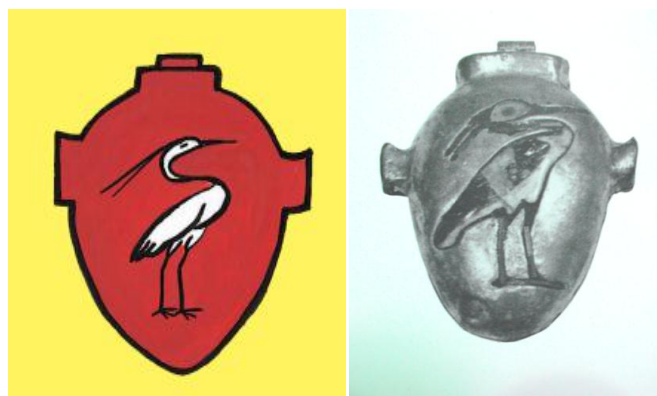
Virgil wrote his epic **Aeneid**, beginning with the words, "Arma virumque cano". "I sing of Arms and a Hero." "Arms" can mean weapons, and there is some fighting in the story, but the word really means the arms that wield the weapons. In the case of Aeneas the arms may also refer to his fellow sailors, his deck hands and oarsmen. According to the story Aeneas and a small group escaped from the destruction of Troy when the Greeks finally sacked the city to end a long stalemated war. Aeneas wandered in the Mediterranean and visited early Carthage (traditionally founded by the Phoenician Queen Dido). Then he went

to Sicily, and eventually to Italy where he began a settlement among the Etruscans that eventually developed into Rome. Rome eventually grew so powerful it defeated and destroyed Carthage and also went back and carried out the 9th destruction of Troy, oddly perhaps wiping out its own homeland if the tale of Aeneas is true.

For the Egyptians the word “arm” meant engaging in some form of service. Horus was the ideal military and administrative hero. The Followers of Horus followed the “Way of Horus” and employed all their various skills in the defense and operation of the civilization.

It was all about commerce and control. The Greeks cut into the Phoenician trading network, and then finally the Romans took it entirely over. Ironically, the Phoenician civilization eventually was destroyed by their own customers who became competitors and used their tools against them. The Trojans were so tough they came back and rebuilt their destroyed city at least 9 times before it was finally abandoned. Being at a key trade point, it was vulnerable. Maybe it was the Canaanite ability to die and be reborn that earned them the perhaps Greek-given nickname “Phoenix People” [Phoinike]. The phoenix (sometimes called the Firebird) was a mythical bird that lived a certain time, then made a nest, got into it, and set it on fire. Out of the ashes of the burned nest would come a new young phoenix.

Phoenicians also were “water birds”. They lived along coastal lands and did not have a sprawling land empire. The ancient Egyptian phoenix was called the Bennew Bird, and it looked rather like a well-known type of water bird, the heron. The Egyptians often etched the image of this bird on clay talismans of the heart, showing the deep ancient connection of the phoenix with the heart.



Bennew: Phoenix of the Heart

The Great Secret of the Phoenician civilization was that their people knew how to do business. The foundation of successful business is trust. You deliver the goods, and the goods match or exceed the value agreed on in the exchange. Honesty, honesty, honesty. This comes from the heart as a spirit of service to others.

They encoded this principle into their alphabet and it was known as the Phoenician alphabet. If you look on the Senet Oracle Board, you find the Hermit of the Heart right next to the Wheel of Fortune, which is the engine of commerce. In the sequence you have to handle the Devil of doubts and fears, achieve a simple state of honesty and integrity in the heart, and then you can begin to do business in service to society for the prosperity of the whole community. The heart opens up to happiness [King of Water] and to unlimited possibilities for future growth [Star].

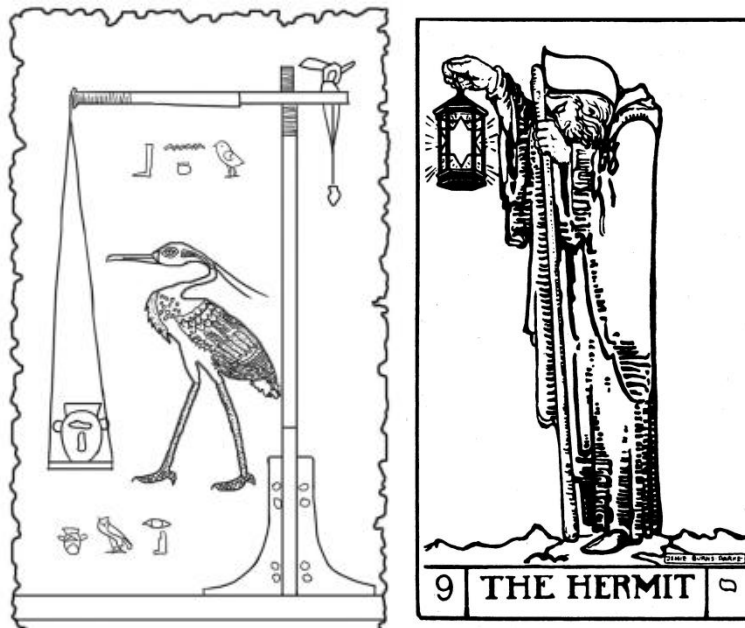
Look at the lantern the old Hermit holds aloft in the BOTA Tarot or the Waite Tarot. The light inside the lantern is the light of the heart. It is a Star of David "The Beloved". In India the heart chakra symbol is the same Star of David.

There is no certainty around the origin of the word Cana' $\Upsilon\Upsilon O$ KNO. However, from our Tarot alphabet we see the cards for Hermit (K), Star (N), and Magician (O). This gives us Heart - Subtle Essences - Eye. The Canaanites were people of the heart with a fine eye for subtle things as any merchant should have. They navigated by observing the stars and had a deep eye of wisdom that made them resilient as a civilization and clear-eyed merchants. In Egyptian culture the Mediterranean was a symbol of expanded awareness and the 8th chakra light body realm. The seafaring Phoenician merchants were like light beings flitting about in the ocean of consciousness delivering values both material and spiritual.

13 Study Questions

- * Who were the Phoenicians?
- * What were their specialties?
- * Why are they important in the story of the Tarot?

- * What is the myth of the phoenix?
- * What was the “weakness” of Phoenician civilization, and what was their toughness that led to their “Phoenix” nickname?
- * What Tarot Trump card is the Secret of the Phoenicians? Study various versions of that card.
- * Why is this Trump so important to understanding the Tarot, Egyptian civilization, and your own life?
- * How does the Secret of the Phoenicians relate to the Series Overview?



A Great Pyramid Solar Boat