

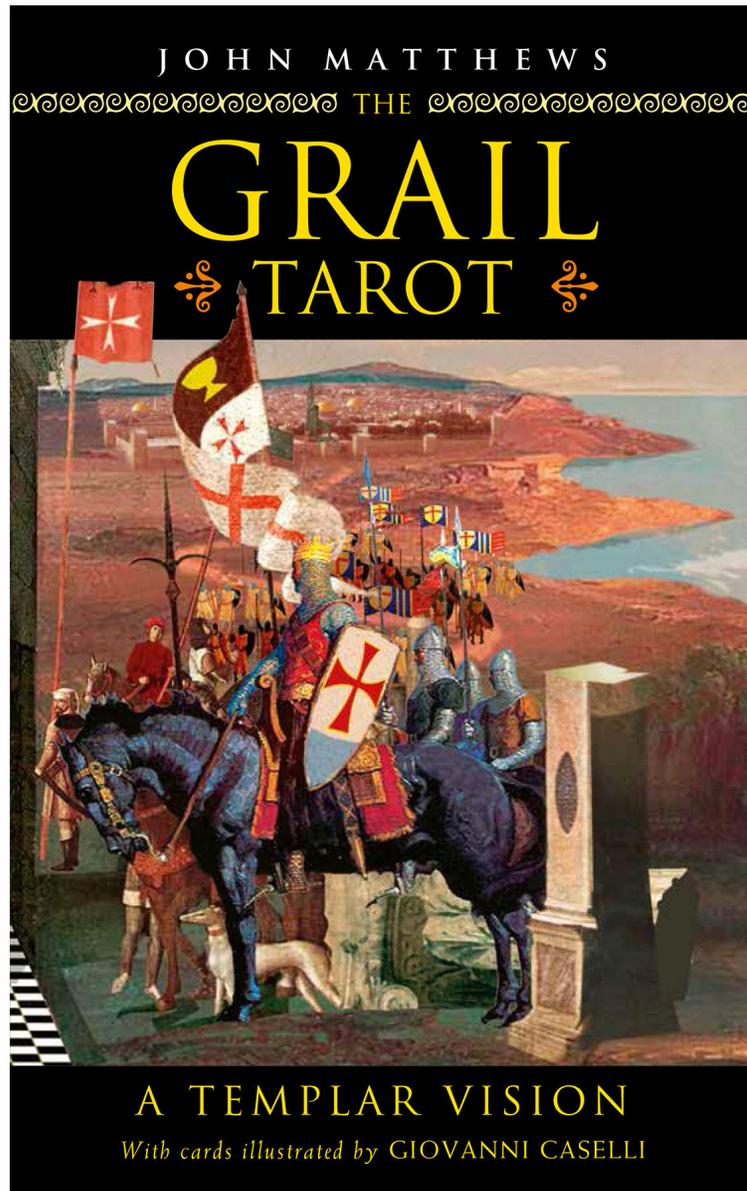


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The Gnostic Christ



DESCRIPTION

Robed in red and with a bright halo of light surrounding his entire body, the Gnostic Christ raises his right hand and delivers an ancient sign of blessing—first and second fingers raised, thumb and other fingers bent inward, palm facing outward. He stands at the center of the landscape and looks out toward us.



BACKGROUND In Gnostic Christianity, Christ was seen as the Logos or Word of God, an inspirational figure whose mysteries guide the soul to reunion with spirit. Some of the most powerful sayings ascribed to this figure are radical instructions for the receipt of divine revelation. This Jesus is surprisingly different, instructing his followers, “Dance, all of you”. He is a miracle-working savior who laughs, spreading joy to all who come into his presence. Many Gnostics were repulsed by the literal

interpretation by orthodox Christians of Christ's resurrection, preferring to see Jesus as one who was accessible in all times and places: "Hew the wood and I am there, Lift the stone and I am with you," he is said to have told his followers. But the Gnostics went further. What Christ did, the human soul can emulate, is their argument. By respecting the divine seed of power within everyone, they believed they could transform themselves into people in whom the human is fully and spiritually realized. Jesus was thus regarded as a prophetic figure, sometimes almost as a magician, whose miracles were the outward signs of his power.

GRAIL QUESTION *What knowledge informs your life?*

MEANING This card represents self-will and determination. It fosters strength, skill, and a sense of purpose, together with the ability to move forward through the most tangled webs of life and to emerge victorious. In Gnostic terms, this refers to the human ability to perceive the innermost secrets of the mystical life, to transcend even the darkest moments through love and devotion, and to transform oneself into a fully realized human being. Its presence in a reading indicates access to great personal power and blessing. In terms of the Grail and Templar traditions, it is an essential aspect of the empowerment of the Seeker, who undertakes the trials and tests that the Grail search offers with the support of the Gnostic Christ.





THE VISION OF THE HALLOWS

The Minor Arcana

Just as with the Major Arcana, the four suits of *The Grail Tarot* form a sequence that tells a story. It follows the journey of the Seeker of the Major Arcana from Neophyte to Knight, to Master, and finally to Guardian of the Grail. All are based on the experiences of knights in the many medieval versions of the Grail myth, and each suit is based on one of the four sacred objects—called Hallows—that form a quaternary, representing different aspects of the Grail, stages on the quest, and the four elements:

- The Suit of Stones (traditionally the Suit of Pentacles): Earth
- The Suit of Swords (traditionally the Suit of Swords): Air
- The Suit of Lances (traditionally the Suit of Wands): Fire
- The Suit of Vessels (traditionally the Suit of Cups): Water

Replacing the “families” of the classic suits (King, Queen, Knight, and Page) are:

- *The Lady, who represents four aspects of the Virgin Mary, to whom the Templars had a particular devotion. The Lady (Queen) is placed first as an indication of her importance.*





- *The Master (King)*, representing four different Grand Masters of the Templar Order.
- *The Preceptor (Knight)*, representing the initiatory aspects of Templar hierarchy.
- *The Brother (Page)*, representing the Seeker and the Neophyte of the Order.

A brief reference to the card's place within the initiatory journey scenario will be found at the end of each divinatory meaning—with the exception of the court cards, which are not directly involved in the journey. These are intended as signposts for those who choose to align their own spiritual quest with the archetypal journey of the Seeker.

The Grail Tarot Card Back



DESCRIPTION

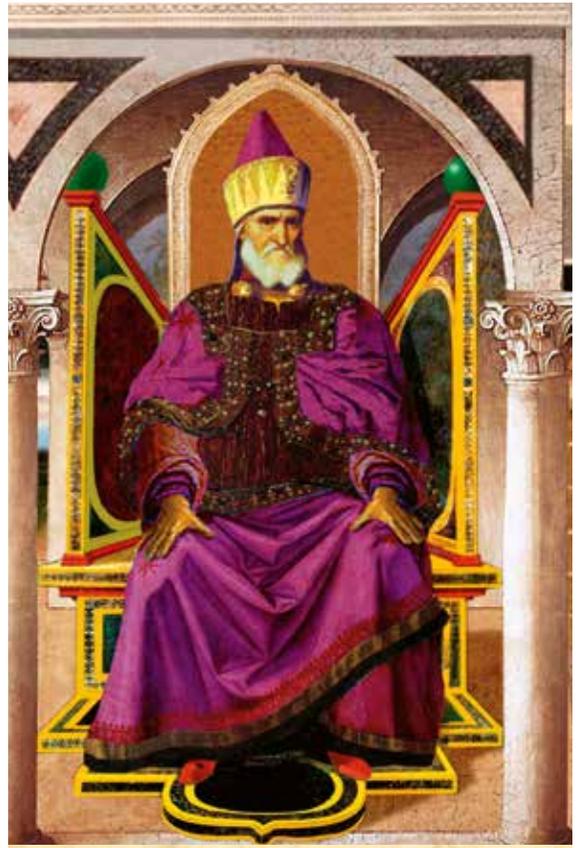
The back of the cards shows an image of the great Templar seal, depicting two men riding on one horse, representing brotherhood and the quest.

The entwined mysteries of the Grail and the Templars are summed up in this image. The great seal of the Templars, depicting two knights riding on a single horse, brings together two themes at the heart of *The Grail Tarot*: brotherhood and the quest.





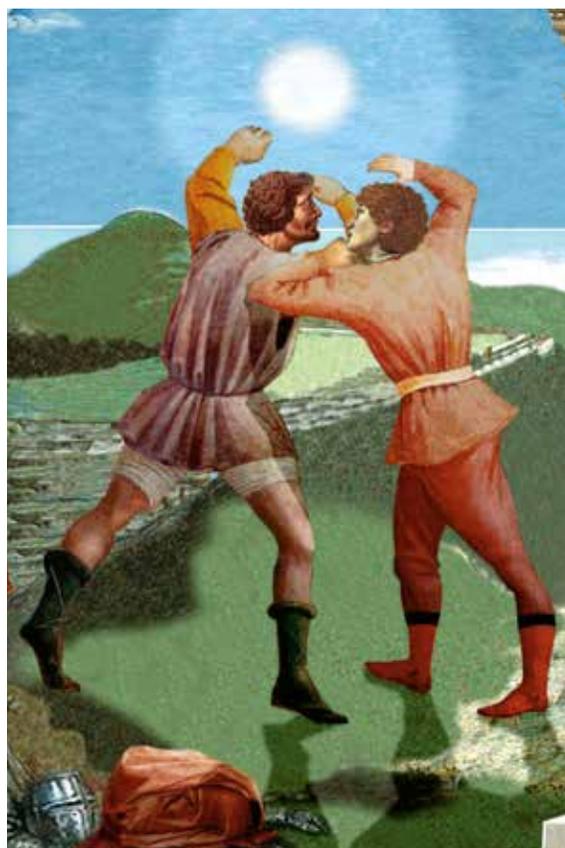
→ 1 *The Gnostic Christ* ←



→ 4 *Solomon* ←



→ 18 *Dindrane* ←

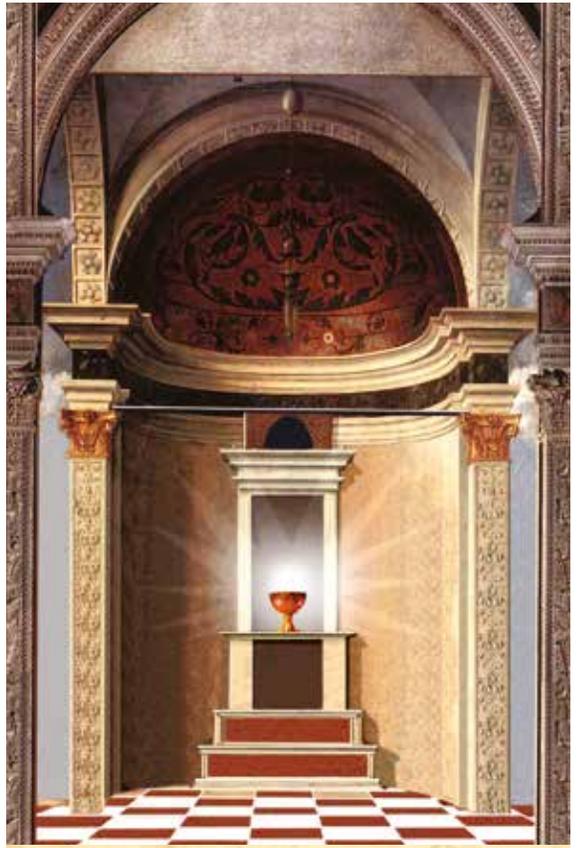


→ 19 *Bors* ←

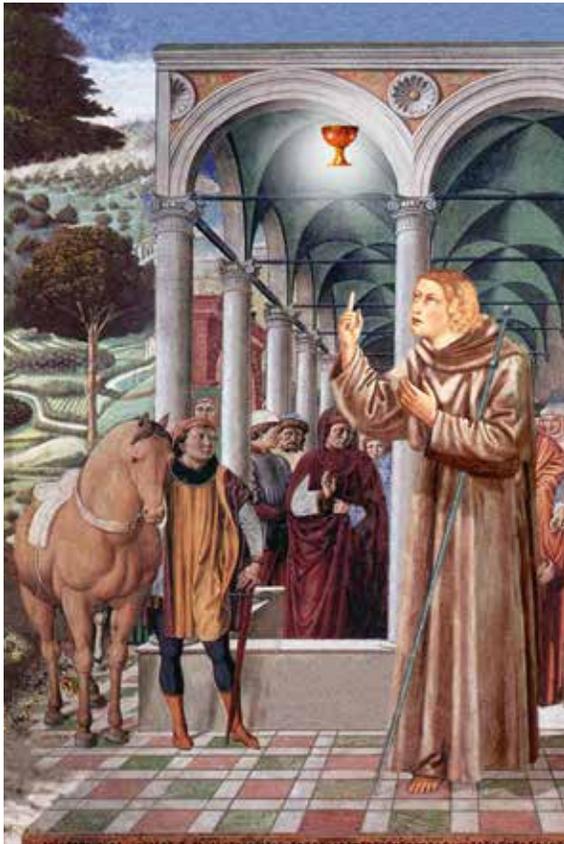




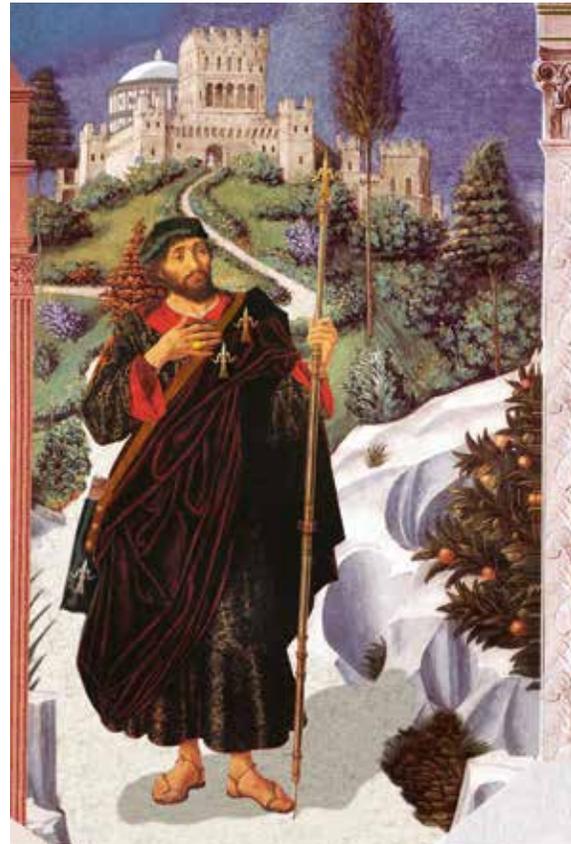
↳ Lady of Vessels ←



↳ One of Vessels ←



→ Six of Vessels ←



→ Nine of Vessels ←





SUIT OF LANCES

The Lance of Longinus

The lance is a weapon that pierces inward corruption and lets in the healing rays of the sun to cleanse it. Just like the Sun's rays, however, it can both warm and burn. The lance thus has a double action and is sometimes called "the weapon that wounds and heals."

In the Grail tradition, the wounding of the Fisher King happens when the impetuous knight Balin uses the sacred lance to defend himself, causing a wound that will not heal until the tip of the weapon itself is applied to it. Interestingly, only a specific person, possessed of the necessary qualities, can bring about this healing.

Though it almost certainly began as a pagan weapon, much like the sword, the cross-fertilization of the Grail traditions with Christianity identified the spear with the lance of Longinus—the *pilum* of the centurion who pierced the side of Christ. Contrary to popular thought, this was not an act of violence, but one of mercy. Before breaking his legs, an act that usually resulted in the death of the crucified victim, Longinus thrust his lance into Christ's side. From the wound flowed water and blood that, according to tradition, was caught in two vessels by Joseph of Arimathea, who later bore them to Britain.

The lance is a weapon that should be handled with care and only by those who have the discernment to strike at the heart of a problem. It is an excellent weapon of empowerment for those who have acquired experience of the world through following the quest, and who are mature enough to become instruments for intervention. Sometimes this role is effected in a seemingly destructive manner, but the breaking down of old systems is an action analogous to a surgeon cutting into healthy tissue in order to remove diseased matter from the body.

The lance represents the element of fire in *The Grail Tarot*. In general terms, it symbolizes enterprise and growth, usually arrived at through hard work.

Lady of Lances



DESCRIPTION

This is Mary just after the Passion, holding the dead body of Christ in her lap.

To one side we see the lance of Longinus that wounded Jesus, leaning against the Cross.

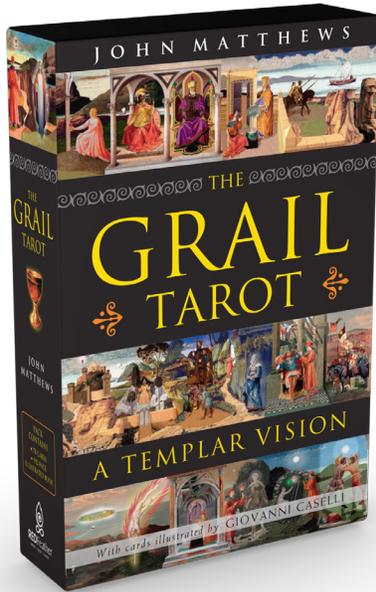


BACKGROUND Here we see Mary at her most sorrowful, mourning the agonizing death of her son. Throughout the Christian world, images representing this moment were central to worshippers, especially for the Templars, since their devotion to the Virgin was so powerful. New brothers swore allegiance to Mary first and foremost, and in the Templar Rule it was stated that devotion to her was to be acknowledged before all others. Bernard of Clairvaux, who wrote the Rule of the Order and helped support its founding, had a powerful devotion to Mary. It is said that he received three drops of milk from the breast of a statue of the Virgin at Chatillon.



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The Grail Tarot

A Templar Vision

John Matthews, with cards illustrated by Giovanni Caselli

The Grail legend is one of the most famous mysteries the world has ever known. This 78-card Tarot deck with spectacular Renaissance-style art relates to the quest for this sacred Christian relic and connects it to our desire to understand the puzzles within our own lives. Characters drawn from over 2,000 years of fascinating Grail history—including the enigmatic Knights Templar, one of the most influential groups of the Middle Ages—take their place in the Major Arcana. The suits are represented by the four Grail Hallows: Stone, Sword, Lance, and Vessel. Discover the symbolism and stories of the Grail as a universal and potent representation of the search for truth, and find how to connect them with your own spiritual quest.

John Matthews has been a practicing shaman for over thirty years and is a leading authority on the Grail and Arthurian legends and the Tarot. The author of a number of successful divinatory systems based on early spiritual beliefs, he has also acted as advisor on several motion pictures, including Jerry Bruckheimer's *King Arthur*.

▶ AVAILABLE **MAY**

Size: 9" x 6" x 1 3/4" Illustrations: 78 art cards
Pages: 192 Binding: box set
Price: £40.79 ISBN: 978-0-7643-5892-0

- ▶ Universally recognized mysteries involving the quest for the sacred relic, the Grail, are brought to light within the Tarot
- ▶ For advanced and intermediate readers interested in Renaissance-style art and who find the Knights Templar a mysterious draw
- ▶ Characters from over 2,000 years of history



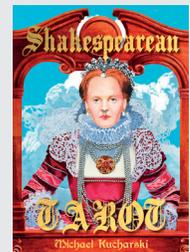
From the author:

Three strands of history, belief, and tradition are brought together in a significant fashion [with this deck]. In the process this gives us a powerful new divinatory tool [the Tarot], based on ancient traditions and archetypal reality, which opens a new window on both the mystery of the Grail and the extraordinary vision of the Knights Templar and enables us to discover deeper truths in our own lives.

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