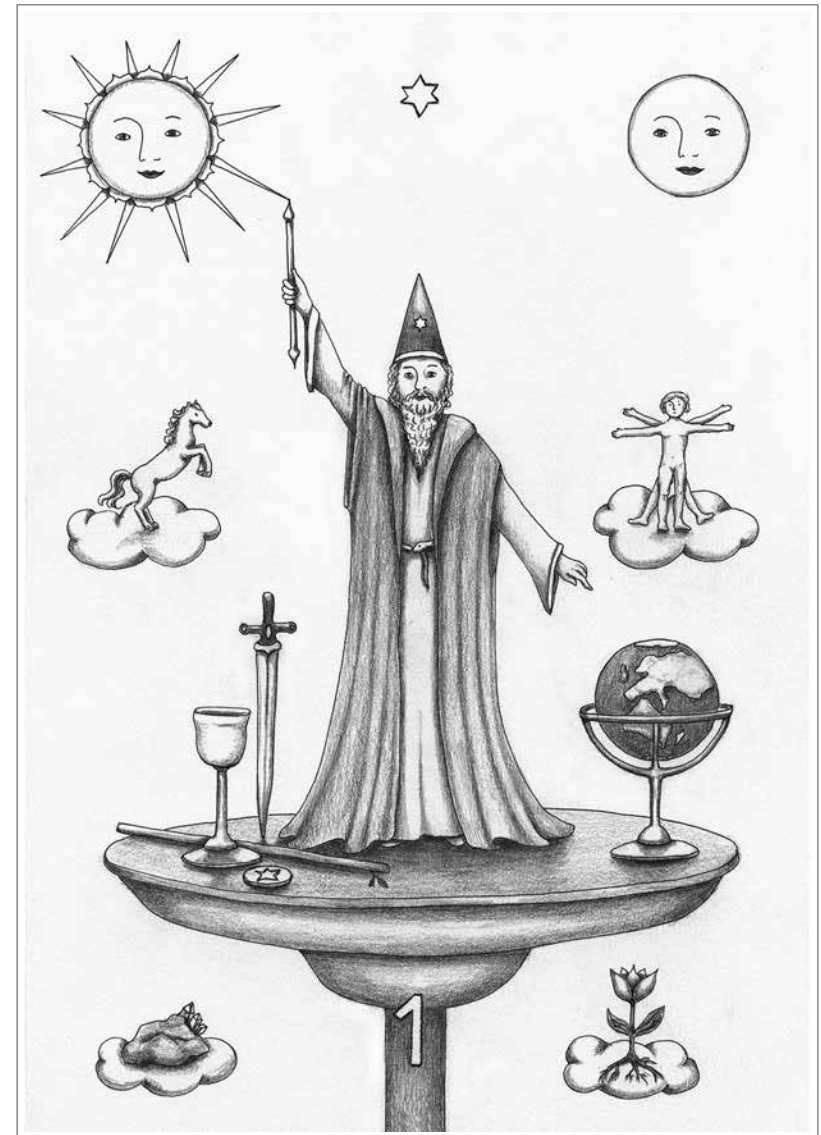


The number one signifies oneness. One, without a second or third. It points to the idea, the principle that provides the basis for multiplication.

One symbolizes pure being (which releases becoming from itself), the primal ground from which all things arise and to which they return again. The oneness that can be experienced is the highest conceivable state of consciousness. Cusanus (Nicholas of Cusa, 1401–1464), an eminent philosopher, mathematician, cardinal and mystic of the Middle Ages, described it as the ‚coincidence of all opposites‘, a state in which irreconcilable opposites dissolve.

The image shows a magician* who, as on the first card of the Tarot, establishes the connection between heaven and earth. Only through the grace of heaven and the power bestowed upon him from higher spheres can he master the world, both the outer and inner. He is not at the arbitrary mercy of the elements, here defined as the basic alchemical elements, namely, the principles of the world, such as fire, water, earth and air. He is therefore capable to a certain extent of directing destiny. He is girded with an ouroboros. The ouroboros (ancient Greek for ‚tail eater‘) is a snake biting its own tail,

* Incidentally, the word ‚magician‘ has nothing to do with ‚hocus pocus‘ but derives from the word ‚magi‘. This was the term used by the priestly caste in ancient Persia.



thereby forming a closed circle. It is considered a symbol of infinity, of eternal return, as well as of perfection in the spiritual sense.

Before the magician are the symbols of his power, which are freely available to him. The sword stands for the alchemical element of air, the chalice for water, the coin for earth and the staff for fire. Floating around him are a stone, a plant, an animal and a man, which in ascending order show the earthly evolution of both form and consciousness.

In his dealings with the world, the consummate magician attempts to treat every living thing (yes, even the stone) with respect. He respects its dignity and regards it lovingly at its respective stage of development within the overall framework.

