

IN MOST DECKS, the Rods in cards 1-9 have red shafts with blue center grips. While the GRIPS have stayed blue in this Tarot because growth, development and innovation are driven by desire (Lt. blue), the SHAFTS are green here relating them strongly to nature and to the club on the Ace.

● On the **ACE**, an OAK LEAF clings tenaciously to the club, just as they do in nature, clinging all through winter and even into spring when other trees have long been barren. Herakles' club, symbolizes strength, and potential. Abraham is said to have received divine revelations in oak groves, making it especially appropriate as the opening symbol of the first suit in the Tarot, an oracle.

● **2 OF RODS**—obstacles, delays, deliberations, and yet there is a FLOWER. In this suit, only the even, feminine numbers have flowers. It seems that Rods only bloom when there is a pause in the frenetic action—a moment of peace.

● **3 OF RODS** hosts only leaves in addition to the newly engendered staff; and look—those two leaves each have a protective BARB, but they are not nearly as intimidating as those on the 1701 Dodal card where they really look wicked!

Tarot cards designed for specific metaphysical schools incorporate details in the images that are meaningful only to their own students. These details reinforce the teachings they espouse. This practice was also done in the past, and it has been written about. I understand that Paul Marteau's book, *Tarot de Marseille* is a good example; unfortunately that book is not yet available in English. A book that has been translated into English is *The Tarot* by Joseph Maxwell. Even minute details of design in the Minor Arcana such as the structure of flora, the tabular cogs on coins and the number of hatch marks in shaded areas are discussed. Sadly, I am told that the only translation we have is poor, and much was left out. This book, however, opened my eyes years ago to the fact that information is packed into motifs that one would think merely decorative. It is highly likely that this practice was used in the very religiously repressive 16th and 17th centuries, and even earlier when alternative religious groups were cruelly terrorized by the Church.

In this new Triadic Tarot, the images are simplified and some small details have inevitably been lost. That should not bother us at present however, since their meaning is unknown in the English speaking world. I do look forward to a day when translations from the French Tarot traditions become available and we can fully appreciate them on facsimile Tarots.