

## **Elemental Attributions of the Court Cards**

A great number of Tarot readers find the sixteen Court Cards of the Minor Arcana extremely difficult to read; this is largely because the titles are medieval, referring to figures that bear little relevance to the modern world. Similarly, Tarot deck artists often get stuck in this medieval mode, preferring to simply illustrate the Court Cards with images of queens and kings and knights on stallions, rather than convey the card's meaning through symbolism. Without this symbolism to respond to, and without a card title (such as that found in every Major Arcana card), a reader is often left confused and blank when faced with these cards. However, there are symbolic systems that can be attached to these cards to make them easier to understand.

Many authors, including Aleister Crowley, have attributed an element to the four types of Court Card:

*Page* – Earth (feminine)  
*Knight* – Air (masculine)  
*Queen* – Water (feminine)  
*King* – Fire (masculine)

And to each of the four suits:

*Coins* – Earth (feminine)  
*Swords* – Air (masculine)  
*Cups* – Water (feminine)  
*Wands* – Fire (masculine)

By linking both the attributed elements of the suit and the Court, we can get sixteen different perspectives:

**Page of Coins:** Earth and Earth/ Earth mixing with Earth/the Earthy part of Earth  
**Page of Cups:** Earth and Water/Earth mixing with Water/the Earthy part of Water  
**Page of Wands:** Earth and Fire/Earth mixing with Fire/the Earthy part of Fire  
**Page of Swords:** Earth and Air/Earth mixing with Air/the Earthy part of Air  
**Knight of Coins:** Air and Earth/Air mixing with Earth/the Airy part of Earth  
**Knight of Cups:** Air and Water/Air mixing with Water/the Airy part of Water  
**Knight of Wands:** Air and Fire/Air mixing with Fire/the Airy part of Fire  
**Knight of Swords:** Air and Air/Air mixing with Air/the Airy part of Air  
**Queen of Coins:** Water and Earth/Water mixing with Earth/the Watery part of Earth  
**Queen of Cups:** Water and Water/Water mixing with Water/the Watery part of Water  
**Queen of Wands:** Water and Fire/Water mixing with Fire/the Watery part of Fire  
**Queen of Swords:** Water and Air/Water mixing with Air/the Watery part of Air  
**King of Coins:** Fire and Earth/Fire mixing with Earth/the Fiery part of Earth  
**King of Cups:** Fire and Water/Fire mixing with Water/the Fiery part of Water  
**King of Wands:** Fire and Fire/Fire mixing with Fire/the Fiery part of Fire  
**King of Swords:** Fire and Air/Fire mixing with Air/the Fiery part of Air

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Crowley's *Book of Thoth* (pages 151-171) serves to highlight the interaction of the elements in the Court Cards further, by assigning a natural occurrence to each based on the elemental attributions. Thus:

**Page of Coins:** The kingdom, foundation

**Page of Cups:** Crystallization

**Page of Wands:** Fuel of Fire

**Page of Swords:** Fixation of the volatile, materialization of an idea

**Knight of Coins:** Fluorescence and fructification of Earth

**Knight of Cups:** Water's elasticity, volatility, catalytic faculty

**Knight of Wands:** Expanding and volatilizing of Fire

**Knight of Swords:** Pure air, intellectual, flexible, and penetrating

**Queen of Coins:** Mother Earth

**Queen of Cups:** Water's power of reception and reflection

**Queen of Wands:** Fluidity and colour of Fire

**Queen of Swords:** Air's power of transmission

**King of Coins:** Mountains, earthquakes, Earth as giver of life

**King of Cups:** Rain and springs/Water's power of solution

**King of Wands:** Lightning Flash

**King of Swords:** Rushing forth of wind, the storm