Pamela Colman Smith & Austin Osman Spare:
Tarot: Amplification, Visualization & Sigilization
Austin Osman Spare
b. 1886, d. 1956

His is now the first extant proper 78 card deck with illustrated pips.

Pamela Colman "Pixie" Smith:
b. 1878, d. 1951
Tarot: Rider-Waite-Smith deck, drawn 1909, published 1910 (age 32)

Assumed to have created first proper Tarot with illustrated pips.

(Moon Card), Golden Dawn Cipher Manuscript, author unknown, proposed dates ranging from antiquity to early-mid 19th century.

Arthur Edward primarily used the Cipher for visual outlines of his Major Arcana.

The Cipher has no iconic depictions of the Minor Arcana; before RWS, assumed no proper deck did

That was before 2013...

Sola Busca: A 78 card deck dating from the late 15th century, it has illustrated pips and a Major Arcana of 22 cards, but these cards bear little in common with the archetypes of the Visconti-Sforza and subsequent Tarot decks
Colman’s Circle:

Colman’s artistic sphere included legendary author Bram Stoker (Dracula), Peter Pan author J.M. Barrie, poet William Butler Yeats, Grand Dame of the Stage, Ellen Terry (her surrogate mother), and a bohemian/actress/first wave feminist and Golden Dawn leader named Florence Farr. Both Terry and Farr were models for RWS cards.

Her most successful gallery show was held by famed photographer, Alfred Stieglitz (Georgia O’Keefe). Much of what we know about PCS’s work on the RWS deck comes from correspondences with Stieglitz.

Another likely associate was extreme left wing suffragette and artist, Sylvia Pankhurst. Pankhurst, in turn, may have served as a bridge between Colman Smith and Austin Osman Spare…

Above: images from Bram Stoker’s *Lair of the White Worm*, 1911
Below: left, W.B Yeats right, Yeats family
Ellen Terry, as Hiordis in Ibsen’s *The Valkyries* (1903), and at age 16 (1863), PCS lived with Terry, who gave her the nickname “Pixie”.

In 1925, Terry was made a Dame (GBE) for her professional achievements, the second actress to receive the honor.
Florence Farr was a Teacher, Actress, Bon Vivant & Suffragette

Yeats initiated Farr into the GD in 1890. From 1896 to 1890 Farr was the GD’s Praemonstratrix, taking charge of the educational system, and giving classes in tarot divination, scrying and Enochian magic.

After leaving the Golden Dawn, Farr became involved with the Theosophical Society, which eventually led her to teach young women in Ceylon.
A.E. Waite

Arthur Edward Waite, b. 1857, d. 1942, commonly known as A. E. Waite, was an American-born British poet and scholarly mystic who wrote extensively on occult and esoteric matters, and was the co-creator of the Rider-Waite Tarot deck.

Interestingly enough, both Aleister Crowley and H.P. cast him as a villain: In Crowley’s Moonchild, he is the nefarious Arthwate, while Lovecraft has an evil wizard named Ephraim Waite in The Thing on the Doorstep.

In 1909, Waite hired Pamela Colman Smith to Illustrate an artistic Tarot for him. The 22 Trumps would be modeled after the outlines in the mysterious (and contentious) Cipher document, which formed the basis for Golden Dawn practices.
Examples of Cipher Drawings:
Sun, Justice, Moon, Star & Tower
Sola Busca:
The Sola-Busca tarot is the earliest known example of a 78-card Tarot card deck. It was created by an unknown artist and engraved onto metal in the late 15th century. Photographs of a complete version of the deck were donated to the British Museum by the Sola-Busca family of Milan in 1907.

The Sola-Busca deck comprises 78 cards including 22 Major Arcana and 56 Minor Arcana cards. It is also the earliest known Tarot deck in which the Major Arcana cards are named and numbered, and the earliest known deck to include rich artwork for all 56 Minor Arcana cards.

The Major Arcana cards loosely follow the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, but also include members of the Roman Pantheon such as Bacchus.

Undoubtedly, Waite and by extension Pamela Colman Smith would have known and had access to collection at the British Museum.
The Sola Busca and the Illuminati?!?

One academic, Dr. Nadya Chishty-Mujahid*, points out that when placed in a circular formation, the 22 major arcana cards of the Sola Busca display a distinct pattern indicative of an initiation ritual, possibly into a mystery tradition or secret order.

Since the element of fire is prevalent in this major arcana it is likely that this deck represents metaphorical illumination…

Chishty-Mujahid concludes that whatever group pursued this type of illumination came to be known in Europe as the Illuminati.

Speculative, but intriguing.

* See her ‘An Introduction to Western Esotericism’ [Edwin Mellen, 2008]
Sylvia Pankhurst

Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst (b. 1882-d. 1960) was an English campaigner for the suffragette movement, a prominent communist and, later, an activist in the cause of anti-fascism and anti-imperialism (to the point that British intelligence (MI5) kept an active file on her).

It is improbable that she didn’t know Florence Farr; it’s quite likely she knew Pamela Colman Smith..

Before her activism, Pankhurst attended art school, having won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art in 1900.

There, she befriended a fellow student named Austin Osman Spare...
Possibilities:

So here is the winning trifecta, the perfect storm that Pamela Colman Smith was at the epicenter of:

Art + Occultism + Feminism

A similar confluence would run through the Surrealist movement, but in 1909 Frida Kahlo was just a baby, and Leonora Carrington wasn’t even born. 1909, when PCS was conjuring up her Tarot.

 Conjuring up a Tarot was precisely what Sylvia Pankhurst’s close friend Austin Osman Spare had already done, between 1905-06.

So, the question is, did PCS and AOS ever cross paths? And if so, did they talk Tarot?

At the very least, did Pankhurst ever mention Spare to her sister-in-arms, Pamela Colman Smith?
Austin Osman Spare

B. 1886 – d. 1956, Spare was an English artist and occultist who worked as both a draughtsman and a painter. Influenced by symbolism and art nouveau his art was known for its clear use of line, and its depiction of monstrous and sexual imagery.

In an occult capacity, he developed idiosyncratic magical techniques including automatic writing, automatic drawing and sigilization based on his theories of the relationship between the conscious and unconscious self.

Spare in pop culture:

Among Artist Magicians, Spare remains a hero. Filmmaker and Thelemite Kenneth Anger was a collector and occult collaborator. Comic writer and practicing Warlock Alan Moore is equally vocal about Spare’s significance, as is industrial musician/Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth co-founder Genesis P-Orridge.

During Spare’s lifetime, one of his patrons was Aleister Crowley; while Spare ended up abandoning Thelema, he remained a member in Crowley’s A·A· from 1909-1912, in part due to his friendship with Crowley’s secretary, Victor Nueberg (see Choronzon, 1909, Voice and Vision; also Babalon Working, Parsons/L. Ron Hubbard).

Chaos magic is openly indebted to Spare’s system, Zos Kia Cultus (see Liber Null & Psychonaut (Peter Carroll)).

Marjorie Cameron, Jack Parson’s Scarlet Woman, In Kenneth Anger’s Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome
THE LOVERS.

Failure where put to the test.

with 9♦

and ACE (of ♦)

6

THE LOVERS.

Fierce disposition, poor

Wiles surround you.
The Juggler, Austin Osman spare, tarot deck, c1908

Details: Courtesy The Magic Circle

Right: Images and texts formed by linking The Juggler to the
following cards clockwise left to right, top to bottom: Knight of
Diamonds, right edge, and Red of Diamonds, right edge.

14 Temperance. Combination. Confirmation. Unifying. With these things nothing happens. A tempering public is provide according.
“Note the dress, the type of face; see if you can trace the character in the face; note the pose. . . .

First watch the simple forms of joy, of fear, of sorrow;

look at the position taken by the whole body. . . .

After you have found how to tell a simple story, put in more details. . . .

Learn from everything, see everything, and above all feel everything! . . .

Find eyes within, look for the door into the unknown country.”

-Should the art student think?
PCS, 1908
Thoughts on Tarot, AOS

It takes months of work to create a really rational pack. Start with playing cards, writing your meaning on them. Later, make your own pack and draw your own symbols—geometrical shapes will serve. Be original—it gives the best results.

Cards may be used for formulating the will, casting spells, mathematical numerology, and fortune telling.

Fifth Formula: Of Fortune Telling by Cards (Foretelling by Familiars), the Zoetic Grimoire of ZOS, AOS

The more Chaotic I am, the more complete I am – the Focus of Life