

The Scarlet Letter Volume VII, Number 1 | March 2002 Who And What Are Those Egyptian References In Liber Resh

Description

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Who And What Are Those Egyptian References In Liber Resh?

By Sr. Lutea

The Stele of Revealing from which Aleister Crowley created Liber Resh, was translated from the Ancient Egyptian to the French by the assistant creator of the Boulaq Museum in Cairo. This was done under the supervision of the Egyptologist Bugsch Bey in 1904. In 1912, Crowley had the translation done again by Sir Alan Gardiner and Battiscombe Gunn. There were not surprisingly, differences of opinion about the spelling and meaning of some of the words and names. In *The Holy Books of Thelema*, Frater Superior Hymenaeus Alpha included an additional modern translation done in 1982. Since the three different translations are available in *The Holy Books of Thelema*, I sought to add some additional historical and phonetic observations upon the three. (It is interesting to note that the words that Crowley created for Liber Resh were never updated from the second or even the third translation.) I shall take each stanza and elaborate.

Hail unto Thee who art Ra in Thy rising, even unto Thee who art Ra in Thy strength, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the Uprising of the Sun. Tahuti standeth in His splendour at the prow, and Ra-Hoor abideth at the Helm. Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of Night!

The sun god had a plentitude of names, Ra or Re being the Sun God of Heliopolis. The hieroglyph for Ra is an open mouth, an extended arm and a God seated with a sun and Uraeus upon its head. Watching the sunrise upon the horizon, one can easily see why it appears as a mouth opening, its arms of light extending outward. A God sitting upon the edge of the world, or appearing to be born from the primeval abyss of water, which for the Egyptians was the Red Sea in the East. Budge declares that it was "by the agency of the god Khepera who brought this result about by pronouncing his own name". And, indeed, Khepera does proceed, Ra coming from the darkness unto the light of day.

Ra's bark is the Sektet (or *Manjet*) boat ("the barque of millions of years"), which carries Him across the watery abyss of the celestial sky. Sektet can be translated as *sek*—that which gathers together and girds itself against something; and, *te*—meaning a kiln or something very hot; and *t* is often used as an ending on nouns; also *tet* signifying stability or duration. Closely meaning the stable "hot boat" which is and protects Ra.

The crew of this boat is made up of the gods of creation, wisdom and magic. Tehuti, or Thoth, the God of Wisdom and magic, inventor of hieroglyphic writing and scribe of the gods sits in the front of the Sektet boat, like the baboon that ceremoniously, every day faces the rising of the sun; but in this case appears as an Ibis bird. Ra-Hoor, is another name for Horus, meaning "the house of Ra". An ancient

hymn from the papyrus of Ani describes this: “Thoth stands at the prow of thy boat, smiting all thine enemies,” and “I have seen Horus at the helm and Thoth acting at his command. “

Hail unto Thee who art Ahathoor in Thy triumphing, even unto Thee who art Ahathoor in Thy beauty, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the Midcourse of the Sun. Tahuti standith in His spendour at the prow, and Ra-Hoor abideth at the helm. Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of Morning!

Ahathoor, Het-Hert, Het-Heru or Hathor when translated means “the dwelling or house of Horus” and was also known as “the mother of Light.” She is the symbolic celestial cow who gave birth to the universe. She was a sky goddess in general; but she was also considered both a sun goddess and a moon goddess. She also represents the sky from the eastern to the western horizon. Honoring Her at noon is to give recognition for Her creation at its peak. She is often depicted being carried upon a boat, as water was Her element. She was also identified astronomically with the star Sept, or Sothis, which is called “the second sun”.

Hathor was also the goddess of beauty. Women of the Pharaoh’s courts used the Hathor Mirror with its round brass face when highly polished as a personal hand mirror. The sun’s celestial light was captured in the face of the beholder. The beauty of the sun transferred to the one who held the mirror. From the papyrus of Ani comes this sentence: “O thou beautiful being, thou dost renew thyself in thy season in the form of the Disk within thy mother Hathor.” The solar disc is often depicted between her horns. And Her role of caring for the dead led Her to be called the Queen of the West, as she also ushered the dead to the underworld and fed the souls upon her milky breasts.

Historically speaking, Hathor was not known to be the noon deity, Ra was, and Khepri or Khephera was the morning God, as Atum was in the evening. In the Boulaq translation, however, she is mentioned as one of the four main gods.

Hail unto Thee who art Tum in Thy setting, even unto Thee who art Tum in Thy joy, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the Down-going of the Sun. Tahuti standeth in His spendour at the prow, and Ra-Hoor abideth at the helm. Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of Day!

Tum or Atum, was the original god of Heliopolis, preceding Ra. He was a sun god whose name means “to be complete” or “to make an end of”. He represents the sun in the evening and in His form of the snake, he represents the concept of the end of the universe. Atum is also pictured as a bearded man wearing the Double crown of the Pharaoh. Also from the papyrus of Ani is found this line: “I am Atum when he was alone in Nun, I am Ra when he dawned, when he began to rule that which he had made.” There is also: “The glory of Unas is in the sky, his power is in the horizon, like Atum his father who fashioned him,” which is from the Pyramid Texts of the Fifth dynasty (2600BC). Tum is the representation of the “old god, who grows weary,” the father of Ra. The Boulaq translation spells his name “Toum”. Gardiner & Gunn spell it “Tom” and the modern translation is “Atum”.

Hail unto Thee who art Khephra in Thy hiding, even unto Thee who art Khephra in Thy silence, who travellest over the heavens in Thy bark at the Midnight Hour of the Sun. Tahuti standith in His splendour at the prow, and Ra-Hoor abideth at the helm. Hail unto Thee from

the Abodes of Evening.

Khepra (the Boulaq translation) or Khepri (Gardiner & Gunn translation) and Kheperi (the modern translation) is known as the sacred scarab beetle and “he who becomes” or is “self created”. Historically, again, Khepra symbolized the dawning sun, having been born in the East, not—as Crowley spoke of him—at night. His interpretation of the beetle which rolls its eggs into a ball of dung, burying it in the earth until it is time to hatch, gives the impression that this was a time of darkness.

At the time of an Egyptian funeral, it was a scarab amulet that was placed over the heart. It was intended to stimulate the dead heart to beat again at some future time. From the “Book of That Which is in the Underworld,” (Papyrus Naskhem), it says: “In the twelfth hour of the night, Ra enters into the confines of thick darkness. In this region the god is born under the form of Khepera.” It is not Ra who is seen in the boat now, but a beetle that stands in the center. And from the papyrus of Nesi-Khensu: The god Khepera “who is unknown and who is more hidden than the other gods. The unknown one who hideth himself from that which cometh forth from him.”

*Unity uttermost showed,
I adore the might of Thy breath,
Supreme and terrible God,
Who makest the gods and death
To tremble before Thee:
I, I adore thee!*

“Unity uttermost showed” is the poetic paraphrasing of the grouping of the Stele’s gods, Khepera, Ra, Hathor and Atum. The above became the dramatic interpretation from the Boulaq translation, “o formidable soul, who inspires terror of himself among the gods.”

*Appear on the throne of Ra.
Open the ways of the Khu,
Lighten the ways of the Ka.
The ways of the Khabs run through
To stir me or still me,
Aum, let it fill me.*

The throne of Ra is the horizon. It is also that which is our eternal, internal flame. The Khu is known as several things. Primarily, it is of the spiritual self. It is a spirited intelligence that has a higher and a lower form. In the lower form it shows itself visually as a specter of low flame. It is the seat of intelligence and mental perception. It is part of the person and their thought forms that perform thought, reason, judgment, analysis, reflective facilities, memory and the creative self. It can be trained and disciplined and dedicated to the higher form of Khu. There is always the possibility of it developing as vampiric.

The higher form is the “Glorious, or Shining One. “ Its form is the crested heron, having a shining or luminous effect. It is the spiritual side of man. The Gods and Goddesses and divine persons can have several spirits or Khus. Using this Khu, one can pass into the domains of Thoth and Hathor. One of the seven souls of Ra was a Khu, depicted as a disc raining down in the meaning of “splendour”. In the

Boulaq translation, it is spelled *n khu* meaning “to the bright one. Or *khu* “the brightness.” For Gardiner & Gunn, they translated it as the Sekh; and the modern translates to *ah* or *i*. The sentence refers to opening to this higher source within.

The Ka is the double or abstract personality, the inner self, the principle of the body, the consciousness self, the protective genius. It is the transcendent part of man. The Ka governs the senses, perceptions and consciousness. It is the sum of all the senses. Visually, it is a light shadow. It is the etheric and astral body. It can separate itself from or unite itself to the body at will and can move about freely. Funeral offerings were made to the Ka or offerings were painted on the tomb walls.

There were “priests of Ka,” who performed services in honor of the Ka. Its hieroglyph is seen as two connecting arms held up. It is a part of the astral inner self. The Boulaq translation states that Ka means *elevated* or *sublime*. Kha means *elevated* or *appearing*. Gardiner & Gunn translated it to a different part of the subtle body, the *basoul*. The modern translation spells it *ka* meaning the “high one”. The sentence refers to the lightening of those physical senses and allowing the astral to ascend.

The *khabs* is from the Boulaq translator who was referring to the Khaibit. It is the shadow, the dweller on the threshold. *Khaibit* means “to veil or cover.” In general it is where the power of the seven planets converge and manifest in each individual. The Boulaq translation spelled it *n khab* meaning “to the shadow” or “to the body.” Gardiner & Gunn named it the *khabt*. The modern translation is very different, *sw(t) (i)*, meaning “my shadow”.

There are two aspects to the *Khaibit*, the lower and the higher. The lower *khaibit* is the black shadow attached to every person. It can be independent and free at will and can go out into open sunlight. Sometimes it is visible as an aura of light. It can be vampiric and similar to Don Juan’s shadow. The Greeks call it the “Umbra”. When it is seen as light in its lower form, it appears as a flickering ectoplasm-like light.

In the higher *khaibit* form the hieroglyph is depicted as a shade. Within the *khaibit*, as the dweller on the threshold, it is the “protective God of the heavens,” the “opposer and terrible defender of the door”. Within it rests the element of self-deception, but it is also the bridge to the higher planes where the “ill will” will not go. It is the producer of motion and emotion; it sustains sensory perception; and sustains blood; and is therefore very important in diseases. It is considered to be the “abode of the psychic pattern”. Because of its heavenly influences, it can cause delusions and the “sin factor”. It is the root of emotional sensitivity and the proficiency of creative arts.

As the dweller, it sustains and enhances pride, jealousy, fear and anxiety. It is therefore also volatile and can influence others. It is the plus and minus poles of the imagination. There are invocations to bring it out from the physical body through the use of a mirror. It is also closely associated with the *Ba* soul. The sentence refers to the association we have with our shadow. Will it keep us still to the point of stagnation or will it stimulate us to our fullest creative potential?

*The light is mine: its rays consume
Me: I have made a secret door
Into the House of Ra and Tum.
Of Khephra and of Ahathoor.
I am thy Theban, O Mentu,
The prophet Ankh-af-na-khonsu.*

We are each filled with our own individuated light. The secret door is that process by which we open ourselves up to the different aspects of ourselves in the form of each of these Gods, which are a phase, a path, or a transmutation in which we find experience. We are equally influenced by the amount of light we receive through our bodies by the lighted heavenly bodies that give us their light night and day, and that which we experience through time from birth until death. This is the consuming culmination of all the rays. May this light transpose us all.

It was in Thebes, now Luxor, the great city of the dead, that the greatest tombs and monuments are found. Thebes was the home of the High priests that ruled Upper Egypt when it was divided in the XXI Dynasty. Its Egyptian name means “Wise”. It is also the largest city in which Mentu or Montju or Mont was honored. Mentu was the warlike falcon-headed or bull-headed god who came to power in the XI Dynasty. In the XII Dynasty, Amun rose to power and Mut his consort adopted Montu into the Theban triad. He was compared and equated with Ra, Amun and Horus. One of his titles was “Horus with the strong arm”.

Ankh-af-na-khonsu is the deceased prophet of Mentu, Lord of Thebes, who is “true of voice,” honored in the Stele of Revealing. He is also the son of a person of the same rank as Bes-n-maut, and of the priestess of Ammon-Ra, the mistress of the house Ta-nech. On the reverse of the stele in the Boulaq translation, it says that it is he who “has left the multitudes and rejoined those who are in the light, he has opened the dwelling place of the stars; now then, the deceased, Ankh-af-na-khonsu, who has gone forth by day in order to do everything that pleased him upon earth, among the living.” In the Gardiner & Gunn translation, he is “the Opener of the Doors of Nut in Karnak—the Justified.” The modern translation spells his name Ankhef-en-Khonsu.

A translation of the name might be close to the following: Ankh is both a tool and a symbol meaning “new life.” The hyphen af is always part of another word that lends exclamatory force. The word, *na* is generally used as a preposition, such as “to, for, belonging to, through, or because.” Khonsu was the adopted son of Amun and Mut from the Theban triad. His name comes from a word meaning, “to cross over” or “wanderer” or “he who traverses.” So, his entire name may be translated as “the truth that has crossed over.”

*By Bes-na-Maut my breast I beat;
By wise Ta-Nech I weave my spell.
Show thy star-Splendour, O Nuit.
Bid me within thine House to dwell,
O wing'd snake of light, Hadit,
Abide with me, Ra-Hoor-Khuit.*

In the Boulaq translation, Bes-na-maut is the “son of mnbsnmt (the father’s name who was a foreigner) and born of the Sistrum-bearer of Amon, the Lady Atne-sheer.” It is also stated that Bes n mut, was the

son of the priestess-musician of Amun-re, mistress of the house Ta nech. Bes-na-Maut (also spelled Bes-en-mut in the modern translation) can be broken down to mean, Bes, as *bs* meaning to introduce, to be initiated into a mystery or having mysterious form. Bes was also a popular domestic deity, a bearded dwarf with shaggy hair, bandy legs and a tail, often wearing a lion's skin. He was the patron of music, jollity, and childbirth. He was associated with human pleasures of all kinds and he protects mankind by first strangling then devouring any serpent that might threaten the one wearing his likeness as a charm. The word, *na*, again to reiterate, means "to, for, belonging to, through, or because." It can also be a negative, meaning "not," or in this case may introduce a proper noun.

As for Maut, we must assume the phonetic pronunciation and make it that of the Goddess Maat. Maat, in short, was the personification of Truth, Justice and Balance, who was seen as wearing a single feather. The feather represented truth and it is seen in the judgment scene as being weighed on a scale in balance against the heart of an individual. So, even though the name is foreign and there is no clue to the vocalization, if we use the Gardiner & Gunn translations, the name could be translated as an oath meaning essentially, "by the mysteries of initiation, I swear by all that is true."

For Ta-Nech we may break it down thus: *Ta* is the singular, feminine form for "this" or "the". Once again, the particular spelling of Nech is not to be found on its own, and only conjecture can aid us here. It is of interest to note that it sounds very close to the God Nekht, one of the fourteen names for Ra's souls, meaning strength. It is also the root word for Nechabet, who was the vulture goddess most often shown on the double crown of Egypt, which represented the union of upper and lower Egypt. The name itself could be translated as meaning "by the wise uniting powers that guide."

The starry splendour that is Nuit, or Nut, is offered both an eager and desirous request to be shown the night sky, and to be placed therein, as a star "in the company of stars".

The god Hadit in the Boulaq translation was spelled Hudit, by Gardiner & Gunn as Behdet, and in the modern translation as Hehedite. If we break down the syllables of the form that Crowley chose, we get these various meanings: *Ha* is a desert god. *Had* or *hd* means "to punish" or "defeat" or to be victorious. The *it* may translate as "father". If we add an *n* to it, it means the "sun" or the "sun's disk." So, I think we begin to see what Crowley was trying to say. He was invoking the light of night and the light of day that wing their way across the heavens, to be a part of him.

Ra-Hor Khut was, as the Boulaq translation tells us, "chief of the gods" who faces Ankh-f-na-khonsu on the stele. Thankfully, there is a god of Egypt's history, spelled only in a slightly different manner, as Ra-heru-Khuti. This is a compound name of the gods, of Ra, Horus and Khuti. There is only one reference with Crowley's spelling of "Khuit." She was an ancient female deity from Anthribes that later became directly associated with Hathor. It is not surprising then, that Crowley chose the spelling of a goddess that was the personification of the great power of nature which was perpetually conceiving and creating. She was "the mother of her father," and "the daughter of her son." Thus, Ra-Hoor-Khuit was the Father, the son and the Mother, a potent triad in one magical formula. And after saying this all-encompassing powerful name, what could possibly be conveyed but the power of silence, with the sign of silence.

Soror Lutea began her studies of Ancient Egypt in 1980 under the tutelage of a Priest of Ptah through the Church of the Eternal Source, which was founded in 1970 to re-establish the teachings of the Ancient Egyptian religion. In 1990 after ten years of study, she took the name of Ankhsumon when she became an initiated Priestess of Hathor. In the last twelve years she has continued her research,

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