

WHAT HAS BEEN SEEN IN AMMENTI

An Introduction to Hermeneutics of *Liber 231* with some Personal Remarks

The Holy Books of Thelema can be seen as some of the finest examples of the magical grimoire tradition when we examine the meaning of that word carefully. The word ‘grimoire’ comes from the old French *grammaire* which is itself derived from the Greek root *grammatikos* or “relating to letters,” from which *grammar*, a system of basic linguistic units, is derived. And language can indeed be used as a magical tool to create a universe. Tahuti, Heka, Hermes, Mercury are all gods of magick and language. On the principles of scientific illuminism, in order to understand the esoteric and exoteric mechanisms of our perception of the cosmos around us and within us, it is very important to look at how etymology and semantics can demarcate the boundaries of our own Universe. As magicians, we need to know how to be precise in using our own grimoires, or the grammar of everyday language, in order to raise our consciousness to new levels. Terence McKenna notes in his excellent *Food of the Gods*: “*The evidence gathered from millenia of shamanic experience argues that the world is actually made of language in some fashion. Although at odds with the expectations of modern science, this radical proposition is in agreement with much of current linguistic thinking... Language is not merely a device for communicating ideas about the world, but rather a tool for bringing the world into existence in the first place. Reality is not simply ‘experienced’ or ‘reflected’ in language, but instead is actually produced by language... For the shaman the world appears to be more in the*

nature of an utterance or a tale... Cosmos is a tale that becomes true as it is told and as it tells itself.”¹

Crowley expresses a similar opinion in *Liber ABA*, when he describes magick as an example of mythopeia, and Thoth as simply the discoverer of writing.²

Regardless of our ontological opinions about the subjectivity or objectivity of reality and the role of the subject and object structure of language in interpreting phenomena, life can be viewed as a constant stream of events. It seems to be sufficient for us to go with the flow of such events and use them for our own benefit.

There is a tendency among modern magicians towards the excessive use of the *modus operandi* presented in somewhat old-fashioned grimoires,³ and as a result they paradoxically limit the possibility of establishing contact on much higher planes than the material one. The reader is referred to Chapter 69 of Crowley’s *The Book of Lies* wherein two Triangles of Art are discussed: “the descending tongue of grace” and “the ascending tongue of prayer”.⁴ By working with only one of these concepts many magicians never achieve a perfect control over their devotion (“prayer”) and in worst cases they are literally possessed by beings from Beyond (“grace”). Thus, many are misled by “traditional” or medieval texts and are seduced by the glamour and spectacular effects of workings with spirits. In the terminology of classical yoga, they play with *siddhis* or magical

¹ Terence McKenna, *Food of the Gods*, Bantam Books, New York, 1993, pp.6-8. Heraclitus saw Logos or word as fundamental order of the cosmos, Christian scriptures identified Jesus as an incarnation of the *Logos* or God (*theos*), through which all things were made: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.", etc. Also in many Tantric schools mantra (or sound) is considered as the very essence of the deities. They are created from sounds.

² For an elaborated discussion on that subject, see Crowley’s *Magick Without Tears*, Chapter 3. Hieroglyphics: Life and Language Necessarily Symbolic.

³ The term is here used as its popularly understood, i.e. to denote European magickal text books from the 12th-17th century or thereabouts, in which items such as the Triangle of Art are described.

⁴ Obviously this is one of many possible interpretations of these symbols. Compare this quite unorthodox concept with the instruction given in another Holy Book, *Liber Tzaddi*: “*Since one is naturally attracted to the Angel, another to the Demon, let the first strengthen the lower link, the last attach more firmly to the higher.*” This idea was further developed in Crowley’s more philosophical writings like *Thien Tao*.

powers, which are merely the side effects of much more important alchemical processes. It is clearly indicated in the mystico-magickal system of the A.:A.:⁵ that such grimoires and techniques should be used as a *part* of the magical training. In other words, they should be considered a means of preparation for much higher initiatory experience.

However, the Holy Books of Thelema grant the freedom to establish one's own hierarchy of the spiritual realms according to one's inclinations, requirements and magical capacity. They are not focused on so-called 'result' magic, but instead give instructions in *karma yoga* or union by action, which is a vital aspect of Thelema and life in general. And magick is life. In that context, all depends on a relationship being established between the practitioner and an individual scripture. Even the basic founding documents of the O.T.O. like *Liber 101* and *Liber 194* are practical grimoires.⁶

In order to establish a close esoteric relationship between an individual self and the Holy Books, we need to develop a dialectical interaction between the following three characters:

1. The text itself
2. The reader
3. The interpretive community

None of these three can exist autonomously, but only as a part of a larger unity through which the "meanings" of the Holy Books can be interpreted. The Word or *logos* of Thelema will only be truly manifested in the harmonious development of all three factors.⁷

⁵ See *Liber Collegii Sancti sub figura 185*.

⁶ In *Liber 194* we read: "This is the Constitution and Government of our Holy Order; by the study of its Balance you may yourself come to apprehension of how to rule your own life. For, in True Things, all are but images one of another; man is but a map of the universe, and Society is but the same on a larger scale." The examination of much more technical, specific degree papers of the O.T.O. would be inappropriate for obvious reasons.

⁷ All these three factors are discussed in detail in Nathan Bjorge's *Spiritual Exercises of Thelema* for which see <http://www.thelemistas.org/en/MSS/SpiritualExercises>

The Holy Books of Thelema give a much wider operating field for the magician than any “traditional” magical text since they cover a wider range of spiritual experiences. From the textual and conceptual perspective of the individual *libri*, we can divide them into three categories:

1. Practical instruction written in symbolic language for achieving direct spiritual or mystical experience of the higher grades of the A.:A.: This accomplishment directly influences our perception of all planes of reality, with the Holy Books providing the codes of communication to commune with such planes. *Liber 65* is one of the finest examples of such an approach, giving “*an account of the relations of the Aspirant with his Holy Guardian Angel.*”⁸
2. Others, like *Liber 27* and *Liber 813* are elaborations on the fundamental theoretical and practical Qabalah or as Crowley called it “the alphabet of Magick”.
3. The third group of Holy Books is focused on practical matters and gives very potent techniques which can be easily deciphered and safely used on an almost everyday basis. Examples of such books are *Liber 66* which “*describes an extremely powerful ritual of practical Magick*” and *Liber 231* which is “*a technical treatise on the Tarot ... explained as a formula of initiation.*”⁹

It is perhaps due to its mysterious textual and hieroglyphic form that *Liber 231* drew my attention during my early studies of the Holy Books.

⁸ Hymenaeus Alpha, *Preface to the Holy Books of Thelema. Synopsis*, p. XXIX.

⁹ *ibid.*

Aleister Crowley “received” the hieroglyphic portions of *Liber 231* – “Arcana in Atus of Tahuti” and “Sigils of genii” – in December 1907, and the textual part was “produced” in 1911.

Liber 231 can be divided into four sections:

1. The title itself is worth mentioning since it divides the book into two parts: *Liber Arcanorum...* or *The Secret Book of the Atus of Tahuti which Asar (Osiris) saw in Ammenti* (The Egyptian Underworld), *which is numbered 231* and *Liber Carcerorum... or The Book of the Prisons of the Qliphoth with their genii*.
2. The second part consists of two tables showing the sigils of genii from *Liber Arcanorum* and *Carcerorum*. Both have a technical title, *Liber 22*, the symbolism of which will be discussed later. Between the tables, there is a small textual portion which gives an instruction in pairing and comparing the Hebrew letters attributed to the sigils.
3. Next is a collection of 22 verses based on the Egyptian mythological motives. The verses are numbered in exactly the same manner as Major Arcana of the tarot, i.e. from 0 to 21.
4. The last portion of the book gives 44 (2 x 22) names of the “*genii of the Scales of Serpent and of the Qliphoth.*”¹⁰

The synopsis of *Liber 231* gives a key to the interpretation of the book: “*This is an account of the cosmic process so far as it is indicated by the Tarot Trumps ... Liber CCXXXI is a*

¹⁰ To the above sections of the book, we may add *Note by H. Fra. P. on the R.O.T.A. by the Qabalah of Nine Chambers* written by A. Crowley as Philosopus of the Golden Dawn in 1899. That note was published just once as appendix to *Liber 231* in *The Equinox* I.7 and can be considered as an interesting commentary on the book. Personally, I classify it as a document written in Class B.

technical treatise on the Tarot. The sequence of the 22 Trumps is explained as a formula of initiation."¹¹

The technical titles of the charts are now very obvious; they show the sigils of genii connected with tarot Trumps, the first in relation to the Tree of Life itself, the other to the Qliphoths.

The number of the Book, 231 also corresponds directly to the Major Arcana being the sum of the first 22 numbers, 0 to 21 as printed on the tarot Trumps in Roman Numerals.

In *Sepher Yetzirah* or "The Book of Creation", we read: "*Twenty-two Foundation Letters He placed them in a circle like a wall with 231 Gates.*" This refers to the lines connecting each pair of Hebrew letters, which are referred to as 'gates'. The Rabbinic tradition teaches that a systematic meditation upon the various combinations will open the mind to the mysteries of God.

The sigils of *Liber 231* were redrawn by J.F.C. Fuller according to instructions given by Crowley: "*General Design: Maybe a wheel with 22 compartments on the rim. The wheel has 8 spokes. At the 4 corners are the 4 Kerubim [sketch with Aquarius, Scorpio, Taurus, Leo clockwise from top left]. But the Pillar Scheme is equally good... These sigils are dangerously automatic, and should not be exposed or left lying about...*" Crowley also adds: "*This is perhaps because these are the Atus which are beheld in Ammenti — they are therefore the governors & inspectors of the disordered fabrications.*"¹²

It is not my intention to discuss in depth the symbolism of the book itself, nor the meaning behind Crowley's short comment: "*this book is true up to the grade of Adeptus Exemptus*" of the A.:A.: It is sufficient to say that the story of

¹¹ *Synopsis*, p. xxxiii.

¹² *The Magical Link*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1994.

“Asar in Ammenti” is based on themes found in the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* which describes the ancient Egyptian conception of the afterlife and gives a collection of hymns, spells, and instructions allowing the deceased to pass through the obstacles in the land of the dead. There are many interpretations of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*; one of them puts an emphasis on the guiding nature of the text which can be seen as cartography of the human psyche in confrontation with its shadow. This concept is quite interesting in the light of Crowley’s opinion that people who are not initiates into the mysteries of Life and Death, who live like automatons, are “*dead souls*”. *Liber 231* can be therefore seen as a manual of self-initiation or passing through the alchemical process from gross and literally inanimate “First Matter” to a living being in the fullest sense. There is no mistake that *Liber 231* is connected with the tarot, which is itself a guided spiritual journey through almost all imaginable and unimaginable worlds and archetypes. The Tarot is therefore a hieroglyphic representation of the process of individuation.

These ideas seemed to be interesting enough for several generations of magicians who embarked on the ship of Asar and descended into the underworld in search of new life and light, using *Liber 231* as a guidebook throughout their journey.

The first known person who worked with the genii of 231 was Marcelo Ramos Motta, a disciple of Karl Germer and a high Initiate of the A.:A.: Motta published his “personal research” on *Liber 231* in his edition of *The Equinox*.¹³ His more than 100-page account is very interesting for many reasons. Motta describes his *modus operandi* in the following manner: “*The Seer would lay a straw mat on the floor, consecrate a circle around it, do the Banishings and Invocations from Liber Al, invoke his H.G.A. and the force radiating from Boleskine, and execute the skrying.*” Concerning the skrying, Motta gives the following instruction: “*You imagine a door, paint the symbol on*

¹³ *The Equinox*, Vol V, Number 2, Thelema Publishing Company, Nashville, 1979, pp. 283-394.

it, and imagine that you are going through it. Mental images differ from astral images, but only practice brings understanding and discrimination of the difference involved. They are unmistakable to anyone who practiced regularly."¹⁴ Prior to the workings, Motta used to paint the sigils of the genii and some "*Qabalistic Pentacles in [the] Queen Scale*" around them and then usually affixed the seal on his forehead. He started his experiments in July 1969 and finished them in March 1975. Despite the chaotic records and methodology (he seemed to pick particular paths quite randomly and then madly worked with them) his grimoire is a fascinating lecture, written with painful honesty.

Ray Eales published his own *Equinox* Vol VII, no 1 in 1992. It is in this issue that we find descriptions of another set of experiments with *Liber 231*, this time regarding the Qliphotic genii only. Workings were undertaken by Frater S.T.S. – possibly David Bersson, Motta's disciple in the A.:A.: He started them in May 1978 and finished in December 1980. In comparison to Motta's account, the material presented in *Visions by S.T.S.*¹⁵ is less chaotic, with more elaborate rituals and the "seer" seemed to be much better prepared than his precursor. The "scaffolding" – the Qabalistic Tree of Life – seems to have been used more wisely and constructively, despite the nature of the Qliphotic genii. S.T.S. started from "dealings" with Thantifaxath residing on the 32nd Path leading from Malkuth to Yesod, then encountered Qulielfi in order to meet Shalicu completing therefore the explorations of all the paths leading from Malkuth. He then proceeded to work with Qliphotic genii on higher levels of the Tree.

Kenneth Grant's *Nightside of Eden* is perhaps the most renowned work on *Liber 231*. Grant gives a fascinating insight into the nature of the Qliphotic genii, analysing their sigils and names, describing their powers, *kalas* (emanations, woman's

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 289-292.

¹⁵ *Liber CCXXXI; Visions by S.T.S., The Equinox*, Vol. VII, Number 1, Silver Star Publications, Tampa, pp. 63-124.

nectar) and *bindus* (serpent's venom) and the modes of combining them in accordance with the power zones governed, or rather, haunted by beings from the "other side" of the Tree of Life. Grant states that "*the actual method of magical evocation has not been given explicitly because of the obvious dangers involved, and because its abuse, either through accident or design, is only too likely to occur.*"¹⁶ The techniques mentioned above will be evident for those who have studied Grant's Typhonian Trilogies.

Grant clearly makes mistakes in calculating the gematric values of the names of the genii, and as a result, there follows a series of mistakes in analysing their nature.¹⁷ Despite this, his study is recommended for any serious student of *Liber 231*. The author prepared a beautiful cartographic representation of "the Tunnels of Set", "*a network of dream cells in the subconscious mind.*" His elaborated descriptions of certain columns from 777 which served him as a basis for a detailed qabalistic exegesis of *Liber 231* can also serve as a preparation ground and meditative tool for new and advanced psychonauts alike.

Grant deliberately left the Mercurial genii out of his book, stating that Crowley described them in his *magnum opus* on the tarot, *The Book of Thoth*. Personally, I don't agree with Mr Grant's assumption. Based on my own experiments and those conducted by Mihrab Camp of the Ordo Templi Orientis, the Mercurial beings of *Liber 231* are better seen as Yetziratic guardians watching over the pylons leading to the realms of Major Arcana located in Briah. The nature of the Mercurial genii will be briefly discussed later.

Nightside of Eden inspired an artist Linda Falorio, and her partner Fred Fowler to create the Shadow Tarot. "*The method of producing the images was to paint the ancient magickal sigil –*

¹⁶ Kenneth Grant, *Nightside of Eden*, Skoob Books, London 1994, p. 154.

¹⁷ After detailed analysis of Grant's using of colours for sigils they also seem to be mixed up. He follows King and Princess scale but up to some point only. Then the matter becomes quite confusing. The nature of the shapes of material basis for the sigils themselves is doubtful as well.

probably of Sumerian origin or older, resurrected by Crowley in Liber CCXXXI – of the Qliphoth of each dayside Path, then immerse in the energies for weeks or months via meditation/tantra ... While ‘regular’ tarot cards depict the familiar world of ego-consciousness, in this dark tarot each sigil evokes the ancient interdimensional shadow forces. Each painting provides a means of positive integration/acceptance of potentially explosive/corrosive dark material into the personality without shattering its fragile vessel.”¹⁸

Falorio undertook a series of magical workings based on Grant’s book between July 1983 and February 1988. “*Rather than ascending by way of Malkuth as in dayside explorations using Golden Dawn techniques, one explores the underlying tunnels by projecting consciousness through Daäth – ‘the gateway of the manifestation of non-manifestation’ – the entrance to the Nightside of the Tree of Life.*” According to her description, the experiments with exploration and reification of the Sethian Tunnels took place in a group context and the basic operational structure was possibly similar to that used by Mihrab Camp.¹⁹

Another artist and magician who developed a personal interest in the sigils of *Arcanorum* and *Carceroum* is Barry William Hale. Being artistically inclined, he has produced some amazing artwork based on the *Liber 231* for Australian *Oceania* Lodge of the O.T.O.. His drawings can be used as extremely potent meditative tools. In his artistic concepts, Hale developed alternative arrangements of the sigils and placed them in a wheel surrounded by four Cherubic Beasts. He created a large number of such drawings, with the sigils placed in different combinations. In some pictures, he worked just with the Mercurial genii, in others he placed both the Mercurial and Qliphotic in concentric circles. The axis of the wheel was usually a flower, the sun or an eye in the triangle, all of which

¹⁸ See, Linda Falorio, *The Shadow Tarot*, Aeon Books, 2004 and www.shadowtarot.net.

¹⁹ As to the Falorio’s tarot images, it is not my intention to discuss them in this short essay. Above all, the criticism of art is a result of personal aesthetic and taste.

have their own unique place in the hermeneutics of the Western Mystery Tradition. From the central axis of the picture circles appear like ripples on the waters of unconsciousness. Wheels are seen within wheels. Then, an amazed eye sees figures as if gravitating towards the sigils, or even towards the central point. The form assumed by these entities are of the inhabitants of different pantheons, philosophies and cultures: Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Haitian Voudoun, Congolese Palo Mayombe and native Australian Aborigines – all watched over by four Cherubs, guardians of the corners outside of which there is a vastness of realities.²⁰

In his *Preliminary Study Towards a Sigillic Exegesis of Liber 231*,²¹ Hale gives an interesting account of an encounter with one of the genii. After creating his mandalas he “*was afforded a visit from one of these Genii in a most remarkable manner. One of these artistic works was sealed in a frame and used during a working involving these sigils. The face of the frame was broken by a ‘secondary’ means, breaking the seal. It cracked directly in between sigil that had just been worked with and the one that was next upon the wheel. Given that the art piece was very large and the space between sigils was pretty small it was an interesting turn of events to say the least.*”

Hale’s essay develops the idea of combining sorcery with art, and carries strong thelemic overtones. It is a great introduction to a comparative study of the Mercurial and Qliphotic seals.

There are many other magicians and artists exploring the realms of the 231 gates from different perspectives. Paul Hughes-Barlow wrote a book *Tarot and the Magus* which is partially based upon the pairing of the Major Arcana according to principles presented in instructions of *Liber 231*.

²⁰ These reflections were written down during the “Heralding the Apocalypse”, an exhibition of Hale’s art influenced by *Liber 231* which took place at The Horse Hospital, London, in March 2004.

²¹ Barry Hale, *Preliminary Study Towards a Sigillic Exegesis of Liber 231*, Waratah, no 2.:*Oceanic Currents*, House 418 Publishing, Newtown, 2004, pp. 108-116.

Michael Sanborn conducted some group experiments at Cheth House of the O.T.O. and developed “The Orphic Egg Meditation” based on the “22 Scales of the Serpent” of *Liber 231*.

Interviews with some magicians in England and America show that the modes of using the sigils and names of the genii, of employing astral and evocatory formulae, etc. vary significantly. A comparative and critical study of those approaches and the results obtained therefrom is in preparation.

II

There is a good reason for working with such magical guide books as *Liber 231*. Participants will not only acquire basic knowledge of ritual magic, the tarot, and Qabala but the conducted experiments should also create a strong egregore or an energetic engine within the group. While the A.:A.: system is strictly based on solitary work, the O.T.O. allows us to share our own individual initiatory experiences; the results thus enable us to go beyond our limited conception of the universe and ourselves. It is only by reconditioning and reprogramming of our points of view that we can tune into the archetypal and perennial dimensions of existence. This will lead us towards the accomplishment of the Great Work which we all have to perform as Magicians. The exchange and sharing of ideas and experiences between initiates are tools we should use in order to achieve it. We're all traveling on the same boat across the Solar System, and sharing that adventure with other living beings is an exciting experience. Communication is a communion.

On a more esoteric level, *Liber 231* provides us with an extremely powerful tool for such high magickal operations as obtaining the knowledge and conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. The 22 scales of the Serpent if understood properly create a spiral staircase directly to this communion. The path can and actually should be travelled both upwards and downwards, thus uniting the ascending head of the ancient Serpent Nechesch “who initiated Eve” (“Messiah”, “blue triangle of prayer”) with the descending Flash of Creation (Mezla, “red triangle of grace”).

One of the practices studied by a Neophyte of the A.:A.: is *Liber HHH*, part MMM which is a meditative equivalent of the Ritual of Initiation known as *Liber Pyramidos*. In that text, we find a striking analogy with the 22 scales of the Serpent mentioned in *Liber 231*: “*Let [the aspirant] aspire fervently unto the Holy Guardian Angel ... Two and twenty times shall he*

figure to himself that he is bitten by a serpent, feeling even in his body the poison thereof.” We may also add that the magical power attributed to the initiatory stage of a Neophyte is “The Vision of the Holy Guardian Angel”.

During a series of workings with the genii of *Liber 231*, members of Mihrab Camp employed an experimental method based on the principles of scientific illuminism and sceptical theurgy. This approach opened the way to experiential contact between the genii and the participants. Thus, scientific methodology was combined with an intuitive insight.

The key to successfully exploring a particular domain, such as those accessible through *Liber 231*, is obtaining the magickal trance. Modern writers on the subject tend to disregard this necessary prerequisite, and focus entirely on repeated descriptions and unproductive analyses of basic rituals. Fortunately, there are some exceptions; Austin Osman Spare gave us an interesting insight into the concept of trance and his ideas were further developed by such magicians as Peter J. Carroll.²² Even preliminary rituals such as those of the Pentagram and Hexagram can induce a very real trance state if the practitioner has achieved the necessarily high level of consciousness. The induction is made possible by the ferocity of intention, followed by specific and fully understood actions.

Workings conducted by the members of the Camp usually started with relaxation practices which open the gate to the state of *gnosis*. These consisted of yogic techniques such as *Body Awareness*, calming the mind and relaxing the whole psycho-psychological system; *Anuloma Viloma*, increasing mental concentration and inducing states of meditation; *Nadi Shodhana Pranayama*, regulating the flow of the *prana* in subtle bodies and removing blockages of the *nadis* (subtle energy passages); *Kapalbhati*, energising the mind and removing sleepiness. All of these practices are ideal before commencing a meditation and

²² See especially chapter on Gnosis in Peter J. Carroll’s *Liber Null*.

astral working. All can lead to *dharana* or other levels of concentration depending on individual's capacity and experience in such practices.²³

The preparation of the space involved personal purifications, banishings, and invoking the energies of Mercury, since the genii of *Liber 231* are of Mercurial nature.

The purified and properly consecrated space was used for the reception of Briatic Mercurial influences. This was achieved by an Invocation of Thoth by the formula described in *Liber Israfel* which can be considered as an occidental equivalent of a Tantric practice called *nyasa* or “ritual infusion of life force into an object, including one's own body, by which it is divinized.”²⁴ It's worth mentioning that this ritual is perfect for any kind of group workings; it explicitly indicates its suitability for use as such by referring to “listeners” in the text. Also, according to the Ancient Egyptian ways of communicating with the *neteru*, it would be appropriate for an officer to wear a mask of Tahuti in order to empower his or her own ability as a channel for energy transmission.

Next, the verses from *Liber 231* were read up to the one the group was working with. Each verse is obviously connected with a particular Hebrew letter and the name of the genius. During the recitation, the sigil of the genius was unveiled and the mantra was chanted.

The sigil was painted using the colours in the following manner: the background was coloured in the Princess Scale and the seal itself in the King Scale as if to combine that which is Below, with that which is Above and the Outer with the Inner. To illustrate this process, let us examine the sigil of Aiu – iao – Uia as an example. The background behind the sigil would be

²³ Most of the practices were taken from teachings of Bihar School of Yoga. See, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, *A Systematic Course in the Ancient Tantric Techniques of Yoga and Kriya*, Yoga Publications Trust, Bihar, 2004.

²⁴ See, Georg Feuerstein, *Tantra. The Path of Ecstasy*. Shambhala, Boston, 1998, p. 128.

painted in “emerald, flecked gold” and the seal itself in “bright pale yellow.” Obviously, there are other possibilities of using different scales of colour; they will lead to different results.

Les objets magiques employed in this basic procedure were of a Tantric nature. It is my own personal opinion that one of the aims of the O.T.O. is to create a bridge linking the esoteric traditions of the East with those of the West and to annihilate the dichotomy between them by opening the path to *ek-stasis* or transcendence of illusionary realities. The method used in these workings is a good example of such an eclectic approach.

The sigil is a perfect example of a *yantra* – a geometric figure widely used in Tantric worship as the “body” of a chosen deity. This theurgical device or *energeia* is an ideal basis for the manifestation of the Aristotelean *entelechy*.

The name of the genius serves as a *mantra* – a mystical syllable, a song, a spell or a vibration. Not only does it create single-pointed concentration and a perfect focus on the *telos* of the working, but also serves as a tunnel, usually in the shape of a cone of light by which a particular genius “slips down” from the Atmanic or Buddhial plane into the astral. The temple itself would also be charged with proper incenses, totems, and other paraphrenalia corresponding to the path, whereas the sigil would be placed in a geomantic figure in order to attract the genius.

In Tantric practices, *yantra* and *mantra* are used for invoking certain deities. The invocation can take two forms: a practitioner either visualises him or herself as a deity or experiences the *darshan* or a vision of the divine form.²⁵ In the workings described here, the latter method was employed by means of communication which took place on the astral plane. The procedure was standard: the practitioners visualised doors, a curtain or a veil, enlarged it to natural proportions, and projected

²⁵ N. N. Bhattacharyya, *Tantrabhidhana*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2002.

the sigil of the genius painted in appropriate colours, then assuming their “bodies of light” they opened it and entered the astral realm. The latter section is analogous to the Tantric practices where initiates perform *Jiva-nyasa*, a process of revitalising, sanctifying and charging the subtle bodies. The “imagined” body which serves as a vehicle is called *shakta-deha* (power-charged body) or *sakali-karana* (a complete instrument).²⁶

In most cases, the establishment of communication took place within a short period of time; this was due to the Mercurial qualities involved in the process.

I opened the doors and saw thick and sticky nets which were glued to the gate and that what was behind. I couldn't see much. A dark and narrow, very narrow, almost claustrophobic tunnel. I entered it feeling low and almost material astral plasma.

After a while of struggling with the nets I found myself in the very large open space. On the horizon, there were pyramid-like peaks of the mountains. It was a daytime, the sky wasn't blue but yellowish so I assumed it had to be fully covered with clouds. Suddenly, I saw how the air was forming into the fast and violent formations of the wind. It was blowing in almost equal sequences so that I could perceive it as a swastika created of "four" winds blowing and rotating one by one.

The wind snatched me up and carried me away. I was swirling violently in the air. Somehow did I realise that I was carried on the Breath, an expiration of something or somebody big enough

²⁶ G. Feuerstein, *Tantra*, p. 206.

to make me feel as a virtually invisible minute atom in the stream of a single breath. After a while, I saw some particles in the air that had power of resistance or perhaps the wind lost its speed and impetus? The particles stopped on their way and started to form visible shapes mostly in green and gold. At the stopping place of the wind (where does the wind stop and what changes are happening at the threshold of inertia and activity, seem to be open questions) the particles have formulated a Shape of an Entity. A harlequin or a trickster seemed to be very good words to describe it. It was an amazingly tall and thin figure of a man. His body was “painted” in these colours; the whole uniform including a characteristic long peaked hat of a wizard was also green and gold. The figure smiled sarcastically keeping a cigar in one hand and a whip in the other. Suddenly, he moved or I should rather say he relocated himself quicker than a blink of an eye to a few places around me. It was very difficult to actually follow his movements and the whole narrative of the event. It made me feel quite uncomfortable and I sensed a chaos and disorder around.

In series of minute flashes, I experienced a confusion of thoughts, forms, and astral shapes.²⁷

The genii seemed to be communicative, friendly but sometimes frivolous, cunning, with trickster-like attitude and a tendency to play pranks; it was for that reason that the standard tests and questionings had to be employed. It all depended on “courtesy” and the level of mastery of the astral plane. I’ve had the chance to interview members of another experimental group who have evoked those Mercurial genii into the Triangle of Art,

²⁷ A fragment of an account from encounter with Aiu-iao-Uia on the path of Aleph.

however the spirits didn't seem to like the idea of being imprisoned and forced to communicate. In the case studied in this essay, the genii very often sent their own messengers in order to check if the operator was prepared for the contact. In such situations, an unexperienced psychonaut could be easily deceived by those beings. One strange case was recorded during the operation with *Salathlala-amrodnathainist* during which a magician asked a question to the group of entities who came to greet him at the threshold between the worlds: "*What can you teach me?*" One of them replied: "*Nothing.*" The disappointed traveller decided to come back soon after he heard the answer. That situation wouldn't be strange at all but in the first chapter of the *Book of the Law* we read: "*Nothing is a secret key of this law*"...²⁸ The whole communication was broken due to a very simple fact that the operator was not prepared to receive information which could be of a great importance in relation to the Law of Thelema.

During the 22 Mercurial workings, the genii seemed to show general characteristic of the archetypal trickster who could be compared to figures from other cultures like the Greek Hermes, the sacred clowns of Pueblo people, the Aboriginal Great Breaker of Taboo – Banapana, Hopi Pan-like Kokopelli or Haitian Papa Legba. All of them serve as guardians of the crossroads, psychopomps guiding dead souls to the afterlife, and helping with the transmutation of the First Matter into Gold...

A dwarf led me to the large hall; the floor of that hall was covered in black and white squares and at the end there was a throne with figure sitting on it. The figure was dressed in a long black cloak, on the face had a mask which resembled a skull without the lower jaw. In the middle of the chamber there was a sarcophagus made of stone. I came closer to it and the figure from the throne did the

²⁸ *Liber Legis*, I:46.

same. Everything was bathed in crystal blue astral light.

We stood on two sides of the sarcophagus. The figure threw dice which fell down on the tomb. The score was 6 and 3.

[note: 63 is number of Abaddon, an angel of pitiless well, destruction, sixth hell]

Then I had a vision in which I saw an empty coffin placed inside the sarcophagus. Naturally and instinctively, I lied down in it. Then, a strange funereal ceremony started. The hall was filled with a procession of fauns and children playing on pipes and joyously dancing. All of them sprinkled the sarcophagus with rose petals.

My Casual body started to move up from the coffin. I was losing my weight leaving behind first Physical, then Etheric, Astral, and finally Mental body. It was a process of putrefaction and reification during which different “images” of myself portrayed in different subtle bodies were falling down like old leaves. I started to lose my senses, one by one. At the end, I lost sight. The darkness was soon transformed into the brilliance. I lost memory.²⁹

The genii of *Liber 231* were in this case personified thresholds, stages on the initiatory journey leading to Mount Abiegnus. Similar to the tricksters, they exhibited a variability of gender and forms, changing them according to their own fancy. That matter was deeply studied during the astral communication with the spirits. Some of the genii showed characteristics of a two-spirit or a third gender which could be

²⁹ A fragment of account from encounter with Nadimraphoroiozothalai on the path of Nun.

further explored in the studies involving complex problematics such as dualistic cosmology.³⁰

All participants kept records of their workings which were compiled, carefully examined, and compared. After the studies of the accounts, it appeared that most of the genii had a tendency to take a quasi-anthropomorphic form and their individual characteristics corresponded to the nature of the pylon or path they inhabited.

In most cases they exhibited enormous knowledge about the magical weapons and powers attributed to their realities. In that context, they resembled familiars or shamanic “allies” who guide a magician and teach them the “secrets” of their own worlds. In fact, many of them gave very practical instructions concerning healing, preparations of protective amulets and spells in Tantra known as *kavaca* or “armor” and some other helpful suggestions in regards to an individual initiatory path.

During the whole series of the operations, the members of the group received a large amount of information about seals, names and qualities of the genii. They also paired the letters and sigils and thus opened completely new ways of exploring the mysteries of *Liber 231*.³¹ A grimoire giving the detailed methodology of the experiments and describing the visions will be published in the near future.

Some of the paths required several explorations and there is still a lot to be discovered. Obviously, all results depend on the capacity and initiatory level of the individuals involved in the operations. That means the possibilities for the exploration of different realities within *Liber 231* are virtually endless.

³⁰ That would be beneficial especially in the context of comparativism of the Mercurial and Qliphotic nature of the genii.

³¹ For the sake of this essay it is enough to say that the mystery of pairing the letters opens a new possibility of the esoteric interpretation of the nature of the genii. The key may be found in the 13th Aethyr of *Liber 418*.

Some members of the group decided to stop the experiments at an early stage because they had found all they expected from such magickal operations; yes, the experiences from the astral plane have an effect on everyday reality. Some others simply gave up the whole idea since they approached the spirits with a lack of respect which mirrored the lack of respect to themselves. They are still in the darkness of ignorance. Perhaps, it was their own natural stopping point, the very same thing which happens during the explorations of the 30 Aethyrs – if you are not prepared to go further you will see only blackness. There are some others who endured until the end and now meditate upon the meaning of the visions. The experiences and the messages need to be assimilated and put together in order that a certain perennial pattern could emerge from the chaos of the astral realms. Regardless of the level of success, all individuals who decided to open the gates and explore the unknown realities got something out of *there*, either positive or negative knowledge about themselves and a better understanding of the Path they choose to tread upon in this incarnation.