

Figure 5: Renenutet

Scene 3

Standing in the Desert, a staff with a ram's head, with two kneeling figures either side of it. Left of the staff, Duat; right of the staff, Desert.

The accompanying text reads:

“My Akhet to you;
The ordinance of brightness to you who are foremost!”

While *they* are dismembered for him,
They have been selected who exist on the Desert:¹⁴

“I have hidden you from those atop Earth.
My breath to you.
Provided is the Ribbon for the Best!”

Say these, who are of the gods:

“This is Re; and are these not the ordaining words
Of the Great God who raises/refines his members?”

Say these of those in the Desert to Re:

“O you who have hidden us,
Come then to us,
Re, from whom we came forth.

Oho! For who is in his sun-disc?
It is the Great God, of myriad developments.”

Their gifts are bread loaves,
Their beers are strong ales,
Their cold refreshment is water.¹⁵

Now, putting forth to this Desert,
Rendering gifts to those in it,
Means (being) one of those in it.¹⁶

¹⁴Here, *they* refers to two different groups.

¹⁵Here is the next stage of the gifts theme: now three sorts of gifts are provided. For easy future reference, we will call this triplet the “offering list.” The theme will deepen greatly, as will the meanings of the offerings, as we journey through the book.

¹⁶The first instance of another theme whose meaning will deepen as we journey through the book: the synthesis of one who “renders gifts to X” with X itself.

Commentary

In the third scene, a main feature is the Ram's head of Re. On either side of the pole, two deities are kneeling. They are the essence of the spirits of the Duat/Underworld and the Zemit/Inner Desert. Re addresses these powers, and the Justified ones within the Desert, and more or less repeats what was said in the last scene: he is delivering the Finished Ones so that they can be guided to the First Gate of the Duat.

It stands upright, in contrast to the image above it of the Was sceptre, Power, also flanked by the powers of the Duat and the Zemit, but placed upside down or in opposition.

Though this scene mainly repeats the last scene's content, it still holds pertinent clues to the magician. In fact, quiet clues are scattered throughout the *Gates*.

We know the allegory of bread and beer—that the gods and Justified in the Desert have been alchemically reborn/remade—but what about “their cold refreshment is water”? This refers to a process that happens in the path of the adept through life.

Those who reach deeply into the Inner Mysteries—which today means adepts and mystics and in Ancient Egypt would have meant some kings/queens and some priests/priestesses—learn through experience and sound judgement to tame and tap into the *fire within*. This is a deep and profound power that burns within some people destined for magic. If they learn to tame it and work with it then it becomes a source of their magical power—*wAs*. The fire is cooled, tamed, and worked with: it becomes their “refreshment” so long as they do not deviate from their fulcrum of balance, in which case they burn once more.

If they do not learn how to tame it then it consumes them. This is the basis for the mental, emotional, or physical imbalances that can literally burn through a magician. It becomes the fire of madness, or the fire of inflammation that consumes and destroys. The taming of the fire is never finished; it is a constantly developing process of polishing, refining, and constant testing. The fire burns when the adept makes a wrong move. The fire is the root of the “adversary,” a power in constant opposition to the magician, which grinds away at them to polish them through struggle throughout their lives. The experiences of these struggles, and the wisdom and perception they gain from them, become keys that help them navigate the *Gates*.

In ancient Egypt, this adversary was the power of Set, a destructive force of fire and heat, yet part of creation, destruction, and order. This power opposes creation to maintain balance: it is part of the process of Ma'at. Set was an adversary to Apep, the power of chaos which threatens everything.

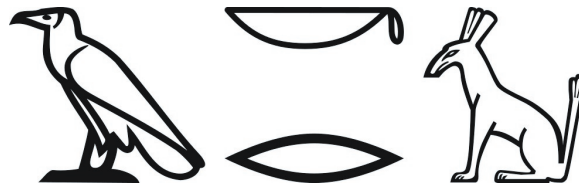
The power of Set within Justified ones who serve has been tamed, and thus nourishes them. They can work with the power in coolness, and the Desert holds no threat to them.

So the first set of scenes of the First Hour establishes who the newly dead are. It also introduces who the assistants and guides of the Desert are that receive the Finished Ones, and introduces the power of the Desert, Zemit, and the power of the Underworld, Duat, who act together to create a threshold.

As an aside, the two powers of Duat and Zemit which act together are heavily linked to Aker, the two powers within one that constitute the Akhet (the horizon, or the threshold between one world and another) who is often depicted as two lions facing each other. Magically, when you are working in this system, it is important to pay attention to details and to understand fully the often mind-

boggling series of connections and weaves between the powers. Understanding the connections between Aker and the two powers of Duat/Zemit will be helpful to magicians working this system.

This is one of the hieroglyphic names of Aker: notice Set and the bird? And remember that hieroglyphic words were not just sounds put together; they have many layers of meaning and interpretation.



In the first hour you have the staff of Set, the Was staff, and the staff of Re, the Ram staff. Set—fire and air—is one of the main powers of the outer Desert and the Zemit, and Re is the power of the sun which lights up the Duat.

Aker is the threshold, and has a big presence in the Zemit and the Duat. In *The Coffin Texts* Aker becomes the ferryman of Re in the nocturnal barque, and in *The Book of the Dead* Aker carries Khepri's sarcophagus through the Underworld Caverns.

Aker is the past and future—yesterday and tomorrow—the threshold that allows the 'now' to exist, and he guards the east–west boundaries: life and death.

Magically, the power of the Zemit and the Duat are entwined. The Desert is the threshold between the living world and the Underworld. When you add Aker into that mix, and understand the presence of Aker in the Zemit and Duat, then you get some interesting power patterns.

The ones who are “of the gods,” the Justified ones who work in service here, meet and greet the newly dead, and explain the processes they are about to undergo. If the dead king is successful, then he or she will become ‘Osiris’ i.e. as bread that is risen and/or reconstituted.

When an adept candidate undertakes this process while still in life and succeeds, then they become first an Osiris in life, a Finished One, and then Justified: of Just Voice. The meanings of those terms will become clearer to you as we go through the gates.



From the tomb of Horemheb.