

Temple of Set Reading List
Category 9: The Æon of Horus
Das Äon von Horus
as of February 26, 2003

In 1904 CE the British magician Aleister Crowley - the self-acknowledged Beast 666 - proclaimed the Æon of Horus, an initiatory climate characterized by actualization of the most refined sense of the human Will towards conscious unification with the Universe. This was a major advance in the coherence and evolution of occultism, comprising the most sophisticated basis for initiation until 1966 CE and the advent of the Æon of Set.

In his writings, Crowley sought to integrate what had previously been a haphazard collection of medieval superstition and ancient paganism into a legitimate magical philosophy. He was more or less successful, but his works are so complex - requiring for their understanding an extensive background in philosophy, occultism, comparative religious mythology, and world cultural history - that it remains open to question how many [if any] of his present-day disciples can be said to truly possess and apply the extremely rigorous magical skills he sought to codify and communicate. That there are numerous "Aleister Crowley fan clubs" is undeniable. Whether any of them would have gained his personal endorsement as a legitimate embodiment of the Silver Star (A.'.A.'.) or Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) as he originally conceived them to be is an issue that cannot be resolved by argument, decree, or civil law - but only by the test of time. At this time there is no legitimate A.'.A.'. in evidence. There are only two O.T.O. organizations with meaningful claims to legitimacy: The California-incorporated/New York-headquartered O.T.O. (the "McMurtry" or "Caliphate" O.T.O. - which is recognized as the O.T.O. under U.S. law) and the "Metzger" O.T.O. in Switzerland. The Temple of Set recognizes and enjoys cordial relations with the U.S. O.T.O.; we have had no contact with the Swiss organization. We do not recognize the credentials of any group claiming to be the A.'.A.'..

The Book of Coming Forth by Night establishes the Temple of Set's interest in and responsibility to the Crowley legacy. Because of the continuing and highly-emotional controversies over Crowley organizations, concepts, and successors, we have thought it best to allow water to seek its own level over a period of time, concentrating our Crowley-related efforts towards meaningful and serious discussion and application of Æon of Horus principles as they may complement and enhance those of the Æon of Set.

The books cited below represent only part of the entire corpus of Crowley literature. While the Temple's archives include virtually the "complete Crowley", many books by/about him contain overlapping/ reprinted material ... and/or confuse more than they clarify. Some Crowley-related books - most conspicuously those by Kenneth Grant and Marcelo Motta - contain severe distortions of Crowley's original concepts and are not recommended accordingly. If you want to go Crowley-hunting, the books listed in this category ought to be the most informative and rewarding.

9A. *The Great Beast* by John Symonds. London: Macdonald, 1971 [Weiser paperback edition available]. [Deutschland: *Das Tier 666*, Sphinx Verlag, CH-Basel, 1983] (TOS-3) (LVT-1) MA: "This remains the most comprehensive and objective biography of Crowley. The 1971 Second Edition is expanded and updated from the original 1951 First Edition. #9A has been criticized for describing certain episodes of Crowley's life in a scornful and condescending light, but it would be more accurate to say that a description of his behavior without attention to his **magical motives** for such behavior is misleading. #9B and #9C in particular reveal these motives. So complex were Crowley's life and works, however, that any attempt to understand other works in this category without first having digested #9A will result in confusion." J. Lewis VI°: "The Work of the Magus of the Æon of HarWer is one of the invaluable legacies passed down to Setians, who have the benefit of historical perspective. Understanding the Word *Thelema* is an essential step along the path of Initiation."

9B. *The Eye in the Triangle* by Francis I. Regardie. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1970. (TOS-3) MA: “Regardie worked with Crowley for many years as his personal secretary. Although the two became estranged in 1937, Regardie went on to edit and publish a number of Crowley’s major works, including #9D, #9F, #9H, and #9I. More than any direct testimony could establish, Regardie’s sensitivity and skill at such editing established him as the single most reliable authority on Crowley. #9B is more of a portrait than a biography, although it was written in part as a protest against the bias Regardie felt to be present in #9A. [While Regardie did not recognize the Church of Satan, he did enjoy pleasant and cooperative relations with the Temple of Set and myself from 1975 to his death in 1985. It was he, incidentally, who put the Temple in touch with the California O.T.O.]”

9C. *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* by Aleister Crowley (Ed. Symonds & Grant). NY: Hill & Wang, 1969. [Deutschland: *Confessions - Die Bekenntnisse des Aleister Crowley* (2 Bände), Johanna Bohmeier Verlag, Bergen an d. Dumme, 1986] (TOS-4) (LVT-4) MA: “Crowley’s autobiography - elegantly written, with a treasure-house of his magical philosophy to be found along the way. While it adds the missing motives to most of the unflattering episodes cited in #9A, #9C probably ignores or minimizes events that Crowley disliked recalling. All things considered, the picture of the Beast that emerges from this work is that of a far more sensitive and principled individual than his media reputation suggests. One suspects that Crowley indeed suffered from the Curse of a Magus (not to be understood, much less Understood), and that those who could not u/Understand him lashed out at him to allay their own feelings of frustration and inferiority.” J. Lewis VI°: “This fascinating and oversized book is one of the best portraying the Task and the Curse of the Magus. DCLXVI reached for the eternal; #9A and *Liber Legis* tend to question whether he truly attained it. Read and draw your own conclusions.”

9D. *Magick Without Tears* by Aleister Crowley (Ed. Regardie). St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1973. [Deutschland: *Magie mit/ohne Tränen*. Kersken-Canbaz, 2 volumes, ISBNs: 3-89423-076-2 & 3-89423-077-0.] (TOS-3) (LVT-4) MA: “This is an extensive ‘interview’ with Crowley in the form of a series of his letters [answering those of a new student]. Most aspects of his magical philosophy are covered, and the absence of magical jargon makes the book relatively easy to understand. Since this exchange of letters took place rather late in Crowley’s magical career, his discussion of many of his more controversial ideas shows a more reflective approach than in earlier works.” J. Lewis VI°: “#9D is not a book to be taken down for an evening of easy reading. It calls for an attentive examination, which will show Crowley’s exceptional insights.”

9E. *Magical and Philosophical Commentaries on the Book of the Law* by Aleister Crowley (Ed. Symonds & Grant). Montreal: 93 Publishing, 1974. [Deutschland: *Liber Al vel Legis mit Kommentaren*. Kersken-Canbaz, ISBN: 3-89423-001-0.] (TOS-4) MA: “In 1912 and again in 1920 Crowley wrote two extended commentaries on the *Book of the Law*, the magical Working through which the Æon of Horus was announced and defined. These commentaries are consolidated in this beautifully printed book. Its only shortcoming consists of an introduction and footnotes by Kenneth Grant, who attempts therein to twist the *Book of the Law* and Crowley’s commentaries into supports for his own theories and pretensions. The same Crowley commentaries appear in *The Law is For All*, published by Llewellyn in 1975. In this volume their layout is somewhat confusing, but there is the advantage of an excellent introduction and annotation by Regardie. A third volume containing the Crowley commentaries - *The Commentaries of AL*, published by Weiser - has been butchered so badly by ‘editor’ Motta as to be virtually useless. [See also the section on the *Book of the Law*, containing the complete text and my own commentaries to same, in *The Book of Coming Forth by Night: Analysis & Commentary*, in the *Ruby Tablet of Set*.]”

9F. *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.* by Francis King (Ed.). London: C.W. Daniel Company, 1973. (TOS-4) MA: “Distributed in the U.S. by Weiser, this is both a capsule history of the original German and later Crowley versions of the Ordo Templi Orientis, and the texts of its rituals from 0° to IX° as written and/or revised by Crowley. Also included are several essays of secret ‘instructions’ to the IX° by Crowley. This volume is valuable for the insight it provides into the innermost initiatory doctrines of the original Crowley O.T.O. It also provides a good introduction to the older German O.T.O., which is the parent organization of virtually all Illuminati/Rosicrucian societies presently in existence [such as San Jose’s AMORC, whose founder, H. Spencer Lewis, received its charter from the O.T.O.’s Theodor Reuss in 1915]. Present-day Illuminated Rosicrucians will probably be disappointed to discover that the enthusiastic sex-magic of the original O.T.O. Illuminatus IX° has been abandoned in favor of more spiritually uplifting meditation with the ‘Cosmic Masters’. For more information on the original German O.T.O., see ‘German Occult Groups’ in #4E.”

9G. *The Equinox* (Volume I, #1-10) by Aleister Crowley. NY: Samuel Weiser, 1972 (reprinted). [Deutschland: *Der Equinox Band I*. Kersken-Canbaz, ISBN: 3-89423-078-9.] (TOS-4) MA: “This series of books was intended by Crowley as a loosely-organized [not topical or alphabetical] encyclopædia of the A.'.A.'. magical system. Most of Volume I is exclusively A.'.A.', but as Crowley lost confidence in the ability of students to master the A.'.A.'.s difficult curriculum - and as he became enthused over the sex-magic/Masonic atmosphere of the O.T.O. - the O.T.O. began to appear as well. Weiser’s 1972 reprint is out-of-print, but a 1994 reprint has since appeared from the same publisher. Since most of #9G’s essential contents may be found in #9H and other extracted books [there are quite a few Crowley collections which are just selected extracts from #9G], acquisition of #9G is generally necessary only to the advanced student of Crowley. Nevertheless it remains unique among magical source publications for its size, scope, and sophistication. A single volume followed the original ten - the so-called ‘Blue *Equinox*’ (Volume III, #1) [there was no Volume II]. [Deutschland: *Der Blue Equinox*. Kersken-Canbaz, ISBN: 3-89423-097-5.] Weiser reprinted it separately from Volume I, but it is also now out-of-print and sells used for +/- \$50. Among other things it contains the blueprint for the O.T.O. organization as Crowley planned to restructure it. [Note: In recent years Marcelo Motta, an O.T.O./ A.'.A.'. pretender, published a series of books purporting to be the ‘*Equinox*, Volume V’ - with bindings, layout, and typeface in imitation of the actual *Equinox*. Setians are cautioned against this misrepresentation. [See also #9P.]”

9H. *Gems from the Equinox* by Aleister Crowley. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1974 [reprinted 1982 by the Israel Regardie Foundation]. (TOS-4) (LVT-4) MA: “This is a single-volume condensation of the best material from #9G (Volume I, #1-10 & Volume III, #1). The contents are selected, introduced, and edited by Regardie. For all but the most detailed research, this volume is a quite adequate - and better organized - substitute for #9G. Regardie’s purpose was to consolidate ‘all the magical writings’ and eliminate the literary/poetic/dramatic ones, as well as those by contributors other than Crowley himself. So, from a purely organizational/ magical/initiatory standpoint, #9H is the ‘meat’ of #9G. 1,134 pages in length, and about \$25.” J. Lewis VI: “*Gems* is a reference volume deserving a place in anyone’s magical library. It does not have the OL’s ‘1’ rating, but is worth tracking down for the wealth of ritual, magical rules, and approaches to life it contains.” DW: “Much of the material in #9H can be found in on-line archives maintained by the O.T.O. on the Internet.”

9I. *The Magical Record of the Beast 666* by Aleister Crowley. Montreal: 93 Publishing, 1972. (TOS-4) MA: “Edited and annotated by Symonds & Grant, this book contains the 1914-1918 record of Crowley’s O.T.O. sex magic experiments, the 1919-1920 *Magical Record*, and the non-annotated text of the *Book of the Law*. Primarily valuable for the extemporaneous philosophical reflections found in the *Magical Record*. The Grantnotes are the better for being ignored.”

9J. *The Magical Diaries of Aleister Crowley* by Stephen Skinner (Ed.). NY: Samuel Weiser, 1979. (TOS-4) MA: “This diary covers the year 1923 and is capably edited by Skinner. A very helpful Crowley chronology is included. ‘I may be a Black Magician, but I’m a bloody great one. The world may have to pass through a period of error through me, but even the error will tend to the truth.’ - A.C. 6/10/23.”

9K. *Magick* by Aleister Crowley. NY: Samuel Weiser, 1994. Available by mail from 93 Publishing Ltd.; P.O. Box 2593; Asheville, NC 28802; USA (US\$49.95 + postage). [Deutschland: *Magick*. Kersken-Canbaz, 2 volumes, ISBNs: 3-89423-007-X & 3-89423-008-8.] (TOS-4) MA: “This volume is divided into three parts: a discussion of Yoga and a description of the various artifacts required for ceremonial magic (parts I & II = *Book Four*) and a series of essays on magic itself (part III = the famous *Magick in Theory and Practice*). This Weiser edition is recommended instead of the older ‘pirated’ Castle Books edition of *Magick in Theory and Practice* because of its extensive annotation and because parts I-III are best considered together. While *Magick in Theory and Practice* appears at first glance to be an introductory text, it contains many comments and references which are understandable only after exposure to many of Crowley’s other works. For maximum value it should be read after the other works in this category. This most recent revised edition contains over 100 photos & illustrations, as well as color plates.” R. Winkhart IV°: “Die beiden hier angeführten Bände beinhalten im wesentlichen den Inhalt der englischen Originalausgabe (Anm.).”

9L. *The Book of Thoth* by Aleister Crowley. NY: Samuel Weiser, 1969. [Deutschland: *Das Buch Thoth*, Urania Verlag, Waakirchen, 1981] (TOS-4) (SHU-4) MA: “Crowley’s guide to the Tarot, this is vastly superior to any other published book on the same subject. [The O.T.O. Tarot deck manufactured by U.S. Games Systems, Inc., 38 East 32nd Street, New York, NY 10016 should be used in conjunction with this book. Ask for their ‘Best of Cards’ catalogue, which at last report costs \$2 and contains almost every Tarot deck in existence.]”

9M. *777 and Other Qabalistic Writings of Aleister Crowley* by Israel Regardie (Ed.). NY: Samuel Weiser, 1973. [Deutschland: *777 und andere kabbalistische Schriften*, Verlag Sigrid Kersken-Canbaz, Berlin, 1982] (TOS-4) MA: “A volume bringing together all of Crowley’s principal writings on Cabalistic correspondences. Since this edition corrects and expands upon earlier editions of *777* and *The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley*, it is recommended in place of them. As a point of clarification, Crowley used the term ‘Qabalah’ to describe any system of magical correspondences a magician might find personally meaningful or useful. He was **not** a slave to the Hebrew Cabala, though he was fluent with its terminology and was perfectly capable of bending same to his purposes as he might be so inclined.”

9N. *The Equinox of the Gods* by Aleister Crowley. O.T.O., 1936 [publisher unidentified]. (TOS-4) MA: “A reprint of the *Book of the Law* together with a number of autobiographical and analytical extracts from Crowley’s diaries and #9G bearing upon it. Useful in understanding Crowley’s own attitude towards *Liber AL* - a supplement to #9E.”

9O. *Liber Aleph: The Book of Wisdom or Folly* by Aleister Crowley. Chico, California: L.A. Brock [undated]. [Deutschland: *Liber Aleph: Das Buch von Weisheit oder Torheit*, Verlag Johanna Bohmeier & Co., Clenze, 1986] (TOS-4) MA: "In Crowley's own words: '*Liber Aleph* was intended to express the heart of my doctrine in the most deep and delicate dimensions. It is the most tense and intense book that I have ever composed.' #9O consists of 208 paragraphs, each encapsulating some aspect of Crowley's philosophy. He is correct in saying that these summaries are the most 'intense' he ever penned; at the same time they are so poetic, so couched in metaphor as to be confusing and mystifying to the reader who is not familiar with Crowley's magical jargon. Recommended, like #9K, only **after** the more elementary books in this category."

9P. *The Equinox* #III-10 by Hymenæus Beta (William Breeze) (Ed.). NY: Thelema Publications, 1986. (TOS-3) MA: "Shortly after the McMurtry O.T.O. won its court fight against Marcelo Motta in 1985, it set about to organize the O.T.O. literature into some kind of coherent whole. This book, released in early 1986, was intended to be a 'basic collection' of administrative documents, rituals, and exhortations. To this extent it is successful, since it makes available easily and inexpensively (ca. \$15/paperback) many Crowley writings on the O.T.O. that are otherwise accessible only in rare and expensive volumes. Unfortunately, since this collection contains only O.T.O.-related works, the novice Crowley student will not be exposed to the crucial A.'.A.'. background to Crowley's philosophy - nor, for that matter, to a hard-hitting biographical profile of Crowley himself. Also some of the most interesting magical aspects of the O.T.O. system - the symbolism and structure of its various degrees - are omitted from this compendium, presumably to keep them mysterious. [See #9F.] Finally, the history of the O.T.O. as presented here is rather more serene than that of the actual O.T.O.(s) since Crowley's demise. Although this volume endeavors to capitalize on the well-known name of the *Equinox*, its claim to that title is questionable, since the *Equinox* was actually the periodical of the original A.'.A.'. , while the *Oriflamme* was that of the O.T.O. I would consider the 'blue' *Equinox* #III-1 the last of the true *Equinoxes* [see #9G]. #9P is reviewed more extensively in *Scroll* #XII-5/October 1986."

9Q. *The Magick of Thelema* by Don Milo Duquette. York Beach: Weiser, 1993. (TOS-1) DW: "This book has copies of the major rituals of the system and a useful commentary on them. Duquette has been a practicing Thelemite for 20 years, and he discusses Crowley's system from its initiatory use, as well as providing factual and practical tips on the work. This book clears up a great deal about the A.'.A.'. , Crowley's death, averse pentagrams, and other matters of interest. Because of its straightforward language and initiatory applications, I would recommend it highly. The secret of this book is the interrelationships between the rituals and real-life practice of initiation."

9R. *The Key to it All* by David Allen Hulse. St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1993 (two volumes). (TOS-4) DW: "These two books are an expansion of *Liber 777* with a good deal of scholarship, but firmly in the Crowley camp as opposed to objective scholarship. Book #1 deals with Cuneiform, Hebrew, Arabic, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese. Book #2 deals with Greek, Coptic, Runes, Latin, Enochian, Tarot, and English."

F9A. *Night of the Demon*. Sabre Film Productions Ltd, 1956. Dana Andrews. (LVT-3) MA: "Later released in the USA in a cut-down edition as *Curse of the Demon*. A runes-oriented film with the sinister sorcerer modeled on Aleister Crowley. The full-length original British version is now available in DVD (which also includes the *Curse* version" J. Lewis VI°: "All right, so it's in black and white and the dialogue leaves something to be desired. *ND* is also a story with a Black Magician conversant in the theory and practice of LBM, which the film portrays very well. The scriptwriters fell flat when attempting to show GBM in actual practice. The magician Karswell, portrayed by Niall McGinnis, is based in part on Aleister Crowley."

F9B. *The Devil Rides Out* - see #F6C. MA: "The character of Mocata is modeled on Crowley. The dress and ceremonial behavior of Mocata's disciples are probably about as close a portrayal [less human sacrifice] of A.'.A.'. rites as modern audiences will see on the screen."

F9C. *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*. 1954. MA: "One of the films in Kenneth Anger's *Magic Lantern* series, being an interpretation of Crowley-themes. Anais Nin stars as the goddess Astarte."

F9D. *Lucifer Rising*. 1970-1980. MA: "Another cassette in the *Magic Lantern* series, this one contains the most sophisticated Anger film, *LR*, with Marianne Faithfull as Lilith and music by Bobby Bueausoliel (of the Manson Family). On the same tape is the earlier *Invocation of my Demon Brother*, with Anger as a Crowleyesque sorcerer, a cameo appearance by Anton LaVey, and a weird soundtrack consisting of a 2-second clip of music from Mick Jagger's *Sympathy for the Devil* played over and over. Art, sort of."

F9E. *The Magician*. MA: "This silent film version of Maugham's novel-treatment of Crowley is almost unavailable, and is on this list simply to alert you to the fact that it **does** exist and would make interesting viewing if it eventually surfaces as a cassette [as many silents do]."