

The Influence of Aleister Crowley upon “Ye Bok of ye Art Magical”

“There are indeed certain expressions and certain words used which smack of Crowley; possibly he borrowed things from the cult writings, or more likely someone may have borrowed expressions from him” – Gerald B. Gardner, “Witchcraft Today”, 1954.

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This article contains a number of short sections quoted from the works of Aleister Crowley, which are still in copyright. I believe that their use in this context constitutes “fair use”.

In my opinion and that of my High Priestess, none of the material in this essay is oathbound. A marginally longer version of this essay containing a small amount of oathbound additional material is available to Gardnerian initiates on request.

Introduction

Ever since the 1960’s, there has been a rumour circulating that Aleister Crowley wrote the Wiccan rituals for Gerald Gardner.^[1] One author has gone so far as to claim to know the price Gardner supposedly paid Crowley: 3 guineas a page!^[2] Certainly there are grounds that would seem to support this claim: anyone familiar with both the published works of Crowley and with Gardnerian Wiccan rituals will notice quite a bit of Crowley’s poetry in the rituals, even after Doreen Valiente, by her own admission,^[3] rewrote the rituals to remove or disguise much of the Crowley material. However, I hope here to be able to demonstrate here not only that it is completely implausible that Crowley composed the Wiccan rituals, but also that whoever did so, while they took some material from a few of Crowley’s published works, was evidently not very familiar with Crowley’s writings, and seems very unlikely to have even been an O.T.O. initiate.

Ye Bok of ye Art Magical

The earliest copy of the Gardnerian rituals extant, from before Valiente’s reworking of them, are in a hand-written/caligraphed grimoire called *Ye Bok of ye Art Magical* (the BAM for short) which is in Gardner’s own handwriting. Internal evidence in this text makes it clear that it predates the “Text A”, “Text B”, and “Text C” versions of the Gardnerian Book of

Shadows, and that it predates the writing of *High Magic's Aid* in about 1946–1948, since the Wiccan rituals given there seem to be derived from "Text A".^[4]

The BAM contains a jumble of material (like many witches Book of Shadows, it is a sort of magical scrapbook), some of which is related to (Judeo-Christian) Solomonic ceremonial magic, some related to witchcraft, and there is even some which contains references to both. As several authors have noted,^[5] the material in the book is evidently not in chronological order: Gardner seems to have been in the habit of writing material in the book with some blank pages between pieces, and then later adding other material in the blank pages. Some of the material even seems to be scattered in pieces in several different places, possibly as a secrecy measure.

I have in my possession a good transcript of most of the BAM. This transcript does skip some (but by no means all) of the material from *Ye Bok of ye Art Magical* that is of a Judeo-Christian and/or Solomonic ceremonial magic nature (particularly towards the end of the BAM, where the transcriber was presumably running short of time). I have spent some while studying this transcript, with the exception (since I am a second degree Gardnerian) of those parts which my High Priestess has indicated are more than second degree material (principally the text of the third degree initiation ritual). Specifically, I have studied transcripts of all but pages 64, 108–113, 143–150, 165–188, 195–203, 205–224, 229–241, 243, and 277 (Gardner's pagination) of the BAM. From the contents page of the BAM, the summaries given in the transcript of the contents of those pages skipped, and some of Ronald Hutton's discussion of the contents of the BAM,^[6] the nature of the material on most of these pages is clear, and I am fairly certain that, with the possible exceptions of pp. 108–113, 128, 143–150, 203, and 243, they do not contain any Crowley-derived material. (According to Ronald Hutton, the passage on pp. 108–113 does indeed contain Crowley material, derived from his work the *Gnostic Mass*; as we shall see below, other parts of the BAM clearly draw upon this source also.) Specifically, the contents of pages 64, 128, 143–150, 165–188, 205–224, and 229–241 are clearly Solomonic, presumably derived from *The Key of Solomon the King* and the *Lemegeton* (in the latter case, possibly derived from the 1903 edition translated by Mathers and edited by Crowley), 243 is Quabalistic, while 195–203 is described as "Talmud", and 108–113 and 277 are more Wiccan. I believe that (with considerable assistance from Web search engines and assorted O.T.O. websites) I have successfully located all the Crowley-derived material in the portions I have studied, and I will here describe all the pieces I have found.

They fall fairly cleanly into four categories:

1) Passages on Magickal Theory

Passages on the theory of magick from published works of Crowley, quoted pretty much verbatim but with some editing down. There are four of these:

i) Pages 114–117 of the BAM contain material from (and, unusually, explicitly credited in the BAM to) *Book 4* by Frater Perdurabo (i.e. Aleister Crowley) and Soror Virakam (Mary d'Este Sturges). Specifically, the material is from Chapter IV (pp. 27–30, plus the diagram facing p. 27) of Part 2 of *Book 4*, which was published in London in 1913. (This passage has been copied into the BAM with "/" replacing all the punctuation. Quite a lot of the material in the BAM has this feature: my guess is that it was a phase that Gardner went through, and was intended to make the BAM look more archaic.)

ii) Pages 60–63 of the BAM contain material from Chapter IX (pp. 68–71) of *Magick in Theory in Practice* by Aleister Crowley, which was privately printed, available by subscription only, in Paris in 1929, and was not reprinted until 1960. If one had not been one of the subscribers, this would have been very hard to get hold of in the 1930's and 1940's; though interestingly we know that Arnold Crowther obtained a copy by chance during the Second World War,^[7] and that he was by then a friend of Gardner's.^[8] It thus seems possible that Gardner might have been able to borrow Arnold Crowther's copy, read some of it, and copy some of it into the BAM.

In the context of the BAM, which contains both Wiccan and Solomonian ceremonial magic material, this passage seems much more related to the Solomonian magic, since it discusses the use of barbarous names, a fundamental technique in Solomonian magic, but little used in Wicca.

iii) Pages 132–138 of the BAM also contain material from *Magick in Theory in Practice* (1929) by Aleister Crowley, specifically from Chapter XII (pp. 92–99). Unlike the other passage from *Magick in Theory in Practice*, but like that from *Book 4*, this has slashes replacing the punctuation.

Again, in the context of the BAM this passage seems much more related to the Solomonian ceremonial magic material than to the Wiccan material; indeed, Gardner's contents page to the BAM includes a cross-reference from it to a passage taken from *The Key of Solomon the King* on the same subject.

iv) Pages 12–13 of the BAM contain a short passage on magical theory which is clearly related to a passage from Chapter X pp. 80–81 of *Magick in Theory in Practice* (1929) by Aleister Crowley. This passage falls into two halves: the part on p. 12 is parenthetical notes added to the part on p.13. The wording of the piece on p.13 does not closely resemble

anything in *Magick in Theory in Practice*, but is very similar to a passage on pp. 150–151 *The Tree of Life: A Study in Magic* by Israel Regardie (London, 1932) (which in turn was clearly influenced by Crowley's *Magick in Theory in Practice*). The notes on p.12, on the other hand, contain several turns of phrase not found in *The Tree of Life* but that are found in *Magick in Theory in Practice*. It thus seems clear that (unless there is some unknown common source from which both *The Tree of Life* and *Magick in Theory in Practice* are drawing) the author of this passage in the BAM had read both *The Tree of Life* and *Magick in Theory in Practice*. From the format of the material, the most likely order would seem to be that he had read *The Tree of Life* first, had copied out a short chunk from it, and then later, on reading *Magick in Theory in Practice* he had noticed the similarity of the two passages, and had added some notes to his copy including some of the material that Crowley gave but that Regardie had omitted. Since *The Tree of Life* was published 10 years after *Magick in Theory in Practice*, this would suggest that the author of this passage in the BAM had somehow obtained access to a copy of *Magick in Theory in Practice* well after its publication.

2) Crowleyisms

Words, phrases, concepts or symbols coined by, associated with, or reminiscent of Crowley that occur in the text:

i) On p. 28 of the BAM, next to a description of the blessing of cakes and wine, are a collection of symbols that could possibly be an ornate form of "O.T.O."; however, I can see several possible interpretations of these symbols, at least one of which (relating to a Wiccan mystery) I find more plausible than "O.T.O.".

The wine blessing ritual these symbols accompany would be very familiar to any Gardnerian initiate, and bears no particular resemblance to any of Crowley's published rituals beyond that of containing a cup, wine, and Freudian symbolism. Indeed, the most similar ritual I have been able to find is a point in the Golden Dawn initiation ceremony of the Grade of Adeptus Minor, where one of the three initiators holds a cup of wine and another dips a dagger into it and then uses it to bless the person being initiated (with a cross sign). This can be found on p. 215 of Volume 2 of Israel Regardie's monumental *The Golden Dawn* (Chicago, 1938). However, the Freudian symbolism of this is not made explicit in the Golden Dawn ritual, and it is one small element in an extremely long and elaborate ritual. This ritual was first published in a summarised form by Alister Crowley in *The Temple of Solomon the King*, Part 2 in *The Equinox* Volume I Number III (London, 1910): in this account of it, the cup and the dagger are held by the same person, and Crowley's comments upon the ritual view the dagger as symbolizing the Cross or Death, while the cup symbolises the Lotus or Resurrection, which in the context of the rest of the (heavily Christian) symbolism of this

ritual makes much more sense than a Freudian interpretation. A detailed version of this ritual was later published by Israel Regardie in Vol. 2 of *The Golden Dawn* (1938), as mentioned above, but with no commentary on the symbolism. This has different people holding the cup and the dagger as described above: this may be an inaccuracy in Crowley's version, or may simply reflect a change in Golden Dawn ceremonial practice between the time of Crowley's Adeptus Minor initiation by Mathers of the Golden Dawn in Paris in 1900, and Regardie's initiation in the early 1930's into the Stella Matutina, a Golden Dawn daughter group.

ii) On p. 37 of the BAM, accompanying the text of *Blessèd be...* are some symbols that could conceivably be intended to symbolise Crowley's phrase "love under will", though I can again see other possible interpretations of them, at least one of which I find more plausible.

iii) The symbols "V,V,V,V,V." (or "v,v,v,v,v.") occur in several places in the BAM, including pp. 37, 98 or 99 (the original pagination of my transcript is unclear at this point), and 226. From the context this is used in, it seems always to be written in place of some secret deity name(s) where these occur in the text of a Wiccan ritual. In some places the name(s) have been added nearby (later, one assumes) in Theban script. At first sight this is rather disturbing, since one of Crowley's many magickal names was normally written "V.V.V.V.V." (this stands for "Vi Veri Vniversum Vivus Vici", i.e. "By force of Truth I have conquered the Universe while living", and he took this name in 1909). However, I suspect that the composer was unaware of this, and was not intending to imply the Crowley was (both of) the God(s) of the Witches, but that they had merely seen the symbol in Crowley's writings and they thought this was a suitable symbol for implying the presence of a name while not spelling it out. This form of Crowley's name occurs in many places in his published works, including *Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente*, *Curriculum of the A.'.A.'. , Liber LXI vel Causae, A Syllabus of the Official Instructions of A.'. A.'. Hitherto Published*, *The Vision and the Voice*, *Liber Liberi vel Lapis Lazuli*, *Liber Porta Lucis*, *Liber NV*, the *Abuldiz Working*, *The Book of Lies*, *The Book of Thoth* and the Introduction to *Magick in Theory and Practice*. The first three of these were published in *The Equinox* Volume III Number 1 (*The Blue Equinox*, Detroit, Michigan, 1919). In most of these it is fairly clear that "V.V.V.V.V." is the name of a person, but in almost all it is (at least until one is familiar with Crowley's habit of talking about himself in the third person under various pseudonyms) extremely inobvious that it is Crowley, and only in *The Vision and the Voice* is it explained what it is short for (though "Vi Veri Vniversum Vivus Vici" also occurs without "V.V.V.V.V." in *The book of Thoth* and *The Herb Dangerous*).

iv) On p. 47 of the BAM the phrase "P.L. and P.T." occurs twice. In context, this clearly means "Perfect Love and Perfect Trust". As has been suggested out by Doreen Valiente, this

may derive from the sentence "Perfect love, perfect faith, perfect trust, and you are unassailable." which occurs in Part 1 of Aleister Crowley's *The Revival of Magick*, which was published in *The International* in August 1917. However, *The International* was a pro-German literary magazine published in a small circulation in New York during the First World War (which Crowley had just taken over the editorship of). It will thus have been extremely hard to obtain in England. The only library in Britain that has a collection is the British Library, and even their collection is missing a few issues (though they have the August 1917 issue). The phrases "perfect love" and "perfect trust" also occur in various Christian contexts, such as in the "The words, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God," require perfect obedience, perfect fear, perfect trust, and perfect love." in *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* by Martin Luther (1535) as translated by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1949). It is also possible that both Crowley and the BAM were drawing on some unknown common source (the phrases would not sound out of place in a Masonic context). They are also short enough that their simply being reinvented is not implausible: I have found them together in both amateur poetry and BDSM erotica that were not obviously Wiccan in origin.

v) On p. 47 of the BAM "position of Enterer" is mentioned twice, and on p. 94 the "position of enterer" is mentioned. This presumably derives from the Golden Dawn's "Sign of the Enterer" (which is more a position or a stance than what one would normally think of as a "sign"). This could be taken from the Golden Dawn, either directly or via Volume 3 of Israel Regardie's *The Golden Dawn* (Chicago, 1939), or it could come via the writings of Aleister Crowley. Crowley only uses the expression "position of the Enterer" once, at one of the points where this stance is mentioned in his extracts from the Z.2 papers of the Golden Dawn in Part 2 of his autobiographical column *The Temple of Solomon the King in The Equinox* Volume I Number III (London, 1910). However, in this article it is never actually explained how it is done or what it looks like. The sign is mentioned by various other names in quite a lot of places in Crowley's works: he mostly calls it either the "sign of the Enterer" (in *Liber Pyramidos*, *The Mass of the Phoenix*, *Liber V vel Reguli*, *Liber Samekh* and *The Book of Thoth*), or else the "sign of Horus" (in *The Star Ruby* and *Liber V vel Reguli*). However, the only place where he actually explains how to do it is *Liber O vel Manus et Sagittae*, where it is referred to only as "the typical position of the God Horus". It thus seems unlikely that Crowley's published works are the source that this was taken from. Another possibility is that it derives from Israel Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, which does contain Golden Dawn instructions explaining how to do it (though here also it is almost always referred to as the "Sign of the Enterer", except in one place in the Z.2 papers), but in view of the lack of other evidence of material in the BAM derived from Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, this also seems implausible. The most likely candidate for a source, in my opinion, is an

earlier book by Israel Regardie, *The Tree of Life: A Study in Magic*, from which a couple of other passages in the BAM clearly derive, and which on pp. 142–143 also explains (in terms clearly derived from Crowley's *Liber O vel Manus et Sagittae*) how to do the Sign of the Enterer.

vi) On p. 98 or p. 99 of the BAM (as mentioned, the original pagination of my transcript is unclear at this point) the use of cords to bind magical objects is mentioned. From the specific terminology used, this seems to derive originally from the Z papers of the Golden Dawn. The relevant extracts from these were first published by Crowley, in his magazine *The Equinox* Volume I Number III (London, 1910) in Part Z.2 of his autobiographical column *The Temple of Solomon the King*, and were later published in full by Israel Regardie in Volume 3 of his monumental work *The Golden Dawn* (Chicago, 1939). Since there is very little material from this in the BAM, and most prominent overlap (see 3) ii) below) is evidently via Crowley and another book of Regardie's, rather than direct from the Golden Dawn, I suspect that the composer of the BAM had not read Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, and thus that the source from which this was drawn was Crowley rather than *The Golden Dawn*, but the latter cannot be ruled out.

vii) One well-known Crowleyism that is **not** in the BAM is the spelling of the word "magick": throughout the BAM (even in the passages quoted from Crowley's works mentioned above), the spellings "magic", "magician", and "magical" are used, rather than Crowley's "magick", "magickian", and "magickal". This alone is enough to suggest to me that the composer(s) of the material in *Ye Bok of ye Art Magical* were not O.T.O. initiates at the time. If Crowley himself had written it, he would surely have titled it something like "The Art of Magick, vel Liber XL" (or *De Arte Magica*), not *Ye Bok of ye Art Magical*!

3) Ritual Passages

Intact segments of magical ritual which seem to be taken from Crowley's works. There are three of these, and they are all fairly short, more ritual elements than complete rituals:

i) Page 29 of the BAM has on it a piece of poetry which is clearly derived from the first half of Crowley's poem *La Fortune*, which was first published on p. 54 of *Seven Lithographs by Clot from the Water-Colours of Auguste Rodin. With a chaplet of verse by Aleister Crowley (Rodin in Rime)*, London, 1907, edition of 500 copies), reprinted on p. 120 of Volume 3 of *The Works of Aleister Crowley* (Foyers, 1907). Crowley's original runs:

"HAIL Tyche! From the Amalthean horn
Pour forth the store of love! I lowly bend

Before thee: I invoke thee at the end
When other gods are fallen and put to scorn.
Thy foot is to my lips; my signs unborn
Rise, touch and curl about thy heart; they spend
Pitiful love. Lovlier pity, descend
And bring me luck who am lonely and forlorn.”

According to the person who made the transcript I have a copy of, the version in the BAM is rather hard to read, since it is not calligraphed but is in Gardner’s scrawled handwriting, but it appears to be little altered, with the exception that the name of the Goddess invoked has been changed: in place of Crowley’s Tyche there is a blank space, presumably intended to be filled with the name of a Wiccan deity.

ii) Pages 44–45 of the BAM contain the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram, and there are references to its use in the opening portion of Wiccan rituals on p. 46 and p. 94 (this is by no means the only occurrence in the BAM of the use of ceremonial magic material of a clearly Judeo-Christian nature in the context of a Wiccan ritual). While the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram seems to have been a creation of the Golden Dawn (possibly based on a Jewish prayer), from the details of the wording and translation of the Hebrew given with it, the text in BAM has clearly come via the works of Crowley rather than directly from the Golden Dawn. However, it differs from Crowley’s version in four significant respects. Firstly, the transliteration of the Hebrew into the Roman alphabet has been altered from the Christianised version (based on that used for transliterating Hebrew words in the Bible) used by the Golden Dawn and (with one minor change) by Crowley, to an accurate transliteration of the Hebrew pronunciation in the Ashkenazic (Eastern and Northern European) dialect. Secondly, some notes are attached to it that are evidently a commentary by someone familiar with both Crowley’s works and Judeo-Christian Solomonic magic: one of these uses the phrase “Holy Guardian Angel”, much used by Crowley but originally derived from S.L. “MacGregor” Mathers translation of *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*. Despite this apparent Crowleyism, the contents of these notes are not based on material from anywhere in Crowley’s published works. Thirdly, the BAM version uses arabic numerals where Crowley uses roman ones; and fourthly the BAM version omits some of Crowley’s comments. However, all four of these elements do occur in another published source: *The Tree of Life: A Study in Magic* by Israel Regardie (London, 1932). Since Israel Regardie spoke the Ashkenazi dialect of Hebrew and advocated its use by native-English-speaking magicians, and was Crowley’s secretary from 1928 to 1932 (though by his account Crowley never actually taught him magic, he had clearly read many

of Crowley's published works), neither the fact that his version of the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram was based on Crowley's, nor the nature of the differences, are very surprising.

The relevant passage from *The Tree of Life: A Study in Magic* runs:

1. Touching the forehead. say Atoh (unto Thee).
2. Touching the breast, say Malkus (the Kingdom).
3. Touching the right shoulder, say ve-Gevurah (and the Power).
4. Touching the left shoulder, say ve-Gedulah (and the Glory).
5. Clasp the hands upon the breast, say Le-Olahm, Amen (for ever, Amen).
6. Turning to the East, make an Earth Pentagram with the wand or sword, and say (vibrate) YHVH.
7. Turning to the South, the same, but say ADNI.
8. Turning to the West, the same, but say AHIH.
9. Turning to the North, the same, but say AGLA.
10. Extending the arms in the form of a cross, say:
11. Before me Raphael.
12. Behind be Gabriel.
13. On my right hand Michael.
14. On my left hand Auriel.
15. For about me Flames the Pentagram.
16. And in the column stands the six-rayed Star.
17. Repeat 1 to 5, the Qabalistic Cross.

In this connection it may prove of interest to the reader that Aleister Crowley has remarked that those "who regard this ritual as a mere device to invoke or banish spirits, are unworthy to possess it. Properly understood, it is the Medicine of Metals, and the Stone of the Wise." Within its performance there is, as I have remarked, a complex movement. The ritual first invokes, and, having banished by the Pentagram all the elements from the four cardinal points with the aid of the four names of God, it then evokes the Four Archangels as divine guardians to protect the sphere of magical operation. In closing, it once again invokes the Higher Self, so that from beginning to end the entire ceremony is under the surveillance of the Spirit. The first section, comprising points one to five, identifies the Holy Guardian Angel of the Magician with the highest aspects of the Sephirothic universe; in fact, it affirms the soul's identity with Adam Kadmon. In the second section, points six to nine, the Magician traces a protecting circle, while his imagination is formulating an astral Circle of Fire within which to pursue his work. At the North, South, East and West of this Circle banishing Pentagrams of the element Earth are traced with the wand or sword. As these Pentagrams are formed in mid-air with the elemental weapon, every effort should be made to impart vitality and reality to them. The blind performance of this ritual, as is so true of every aspect of Theurgy, is quite useless, and is a waste of both time and energy. The imagination, simultaneously, should be stimulated to create these Pentagrams about the Magician on the Astral Plane in glowing figures of fire, so that through the streaming lines of light and power, representative of the spiritual being, no lesser entity of any kind dare make

its way. It is necessary that the Magician make certain that he does not lower the elemental weapon after formulating a Pentagram in mid-air. The Circle must be complete, continuing in an unbroken line from Pentagram to Pentagram. The blazing five-pointed star is like the flaming sword which debarred Adam from the Edenic paradise. The four Archangels, the spiritual regents of the planets of the Sun, Moon, Mercury and Venus, are then invoked to give legitimacy to the working, and spiritual power and protection to both the surrounding Pentagrams and the Circle wherein the Magician is enclosed. The last phrase of the ritual declares the Pentagrams aflame about him, and invokes once again the Holy Guardian Angel so that the operation is sealed with the stamp of the divine light.

The notes in the BAM cover several of the same points as the commentary given above, using much the same phrasing. They are much briefer, but are clearly derived from Regardie's commentary.

For anyone wishing to do a comparison, Crowley's version of the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram can be found in *Liber O vel Manus et Sagittae* in *The Equinox* Volume I Number II (London, 1909) on p. 19, and in *Magick in Theory and Practice* (Paris, 1929) in Appendix VII on pp. 379–380. The Golden Dawn original can be found in Israel Regardie's *The Golden Dawn* Volume 1 (Chicago, 1937) pp. 106–107.

iii) Pages 191–193 of the BAM contain a piece of Crowley's writings, apparently intended to be declaimed by the "H.P." (in BAM terminology, the High Priestess: the more modern "H.Ps." or "H.P.S." do not occur in the BAM). This is a ritual fragment, and is not given in the context of a larger ritual. There are two places in Crowley's works where it could be taken from: the first is his channeled writing *The Book of the Law*, Chapter I Verses 61 and 63–65, and the second is the *Gnostic Mass*, where exactly this extract from *The Book of the Law* occurs and is spoken by the Priestess.

Here are verses 60–66 of Chapter I of *The Book of the Law*:

60. My number is 11, as all their numbers who are of us. The Five Pointed Star, with a Circle in the Middle, & the circle is Red. My colour is black to the blind, but the blue & gold are seen of the seeing. Also I have a secret glory for them that love me.

61. But to love me is better than all things: if under the night-stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine incense before me, invoking me with a pure heart, and the Serpent flame therein, thou shalt come a little to lie in my bosom. For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso gives one particle of dust shall lose all in that hour. Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the

nations of the earth in splendour & pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy. I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich headdress. I love you! I yearn to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desire you. Put on the wings, and arouse the coiled splendour within you: come unto me!

62. At all my meetings with you shall the priestess say — and her eyes shall burn with desire as she stands bare and rejoicing in my secret temple — To me! To me! calling forth the flame of the hearts of all in her love-chant.

63. Sing the rapturous love-song unto me! Burn to me perfumes! Wear to me jewels! Drink to me, for I love you! I love you!

64. I am the blue-lidded daughter of Sunset; I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky.

65. To me! To me!

66. The Manifestation of Nuit is at an end.

Crowley wrote (or wrote down) *The Book of the Law* in 1904, and published it privately in *Thelema* (*The Holy Books*, London, 1909) Volume 3, in his periodical *The Equinox* in Vol. I Number VII (London, 1912) as a near-illegible photo-reduced facsimile of the original handwritten (scrawled) version along with a commentary, in Vol. I Number X (London, 1913) in a printed transcript, and again in Vol. III Number 3 (*The Equinox of the Gods*, London, 1936) in a printed transcript with a lengthy commentary. It was also privately printed as a booklet by the Church of Thelema in Pasadena, California in 1938 and also by the O.T.O. in London, 1938. Crowley was in the habit of using extracts from *The Book of the Law* (which he regarded as the foundation stone and Holy Book of his philosophy-religion "Thelema", and claimed had been dictated to him by a "praeterhuman intelligence") in many of his later writings.

Here is the Priestess's speech from the *Gnostic Mass*. Crowley wrote the *Gnostic Mass* in 1913, and published it in the American magazine *The International* in March 1918 (as discussed above, this would have been very hard to obtain in England), in his periodical *The Equinox* Volume III Number 1 (*The Blue Equinox*, Detroit, Michigan, 1919), and in *Magick in Theory and Practice* (Paris, 1929): Appendix VI. The version in *The Blue Equinox*, though it has been re-typeset, is almost identical to the one in *The International*, but the version in *Magick in Theory and Practice* has a number of minor differences (mostly correcting minor

errors in the quotations from *The Book of the Law*), some of which are in this passage. The differences are shown below in [square brackets], with the three versions separated with a slashes thus: [*The International*/*The Blue Equinox*/*Magick in Theory and Practice*].

But to love me is better than all things[;:/:] if under the night-stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine incense before me, invoking me with a pure heart, and the [s/s/S]erpent flame therein, thou shalt come a little to lie in my bosom. For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso gives one particle of dust shall lose all in that hour. Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in splendour and pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy. I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich head[-/-/]dress. I love you! I yearn to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desire you. Put on the wings, and arouse the coiled splendour within you[;:/:] come unto me! To me! To me! Sing the raptuous love-song unto me! Burn to me perfumes! [//Wear to me jewels!] Drink to me, for I love you! I love you[././!] I am the blue-lidded daughter of [s/s/S]unset[;:/.] I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky. To me! To me!

The BAM matches the *Magick in Theory and Practice* version of the *Gnostic Mass* in four of these eight places: the word "serpent" is capitalized, "head-dress" is hyphenated, the phrase "wear to me jewels" is present, and "sunset" is capitalized; but there is a comma after "things" (inconclusive), a comma after "within you" (inconclusive), a full stop after the second "I love you" (matching the earlier versions), and a comma after "sunset" (inconclusive). Nevertheless (particularly in view of the inclusion of the phrase "wear to me jewels") this is sufficient to make it clear that this passage in the BAM is taken not the version of the *Gnostic Mass* in *The International* or *The Blue Equinox*, but either from the version of the *Gnostic Mass* in *Magick in Theory and Practice* or directly from *The Book of the Law*.

Given the coincidence that the BAM reproduces exactly same extract from *The Book of the Law* that is in the *Gnostic Mass*, starting and ending in the same places, and with the same omission of Verse 62, and also gives it as being spoken by the priestess, this suggests to me that this material was taken from the *Gnostic Mass* (as given in *Magick in Theory and Practice*), rather than directly from *The Book of the Law*. It thus seems plausible that this passage in the BAM dates to the same period as one or more of the passages on magical theory copied from *Magick in Theory and Practice* in the BAM that were discussed above.

Incidentally, some similar material occurs in chapter XXII of James Branch Cabell's novel *Jurgen* (New York, 1919), and I have even heard it suggested that all the Crowley-derived

material in the BAM comes from this source, or that Crowley took material from Cabell, or that all three are derived from some common ancestor. A little textual comparison makes it quite clear that none of these are the case: there is material that is in *Jurgen* and in Crowley's *Gnostic Mass*, but not in the BAM, and there is material that is in the BAM and various of Crowley's works, but not in *Jurgen*, but there is nothing that is in both *Jurgen* and the BAM but not in the *Gnostic Mass*. Similarly, of the material that is in all three, the versions in *Jurgen* and the BAM each resemble the *Gnostic Mass* more than they resemble each other. In addition, some of the material that is in both *Jurgen* and the *Gnostic Mass* originally comes from *The Book of the Law*, which was first published in 1909, and which we have good reason to believe was originally written down in 1904. Since Cabell was a prolific writer, who wrote over 30 books, it seems unlikely that a manuscript of *Jurgen* existed in 1904, fifteen years before its publication in 1919, and thus extremely unlikely that Crowley could have taken material from Cabell rather than vice versa. (Indeed, this sort of plagiarism would be most unlike Crowley: on the only occasions I am aware of on which he committed plagiarism, it was of Golden Dawn magical papers, and it was done with malice aforethought after Crowley had fallen out with the authors/editors.) It is thus clear that the material in *Jurgen* derives from the *Gnostic Mass* (indeed, it is basically a parody of it: *Jurgen* is a wryly humorous book), presumably based on the version that Crowley published in the literary magazine *The International* in New York in March 1918 (likely whilst Cabell was writing *Jurgen*, which came out the following year), and that the BAM is independently derived from several of Crowley's published works, including (but not limited to) the *Gnostic Mass*.

4) Reuse of material

Phrases, sentences, or passages derived from Crowley's works and reused in the context of a Wiccan ritual, typically with considerable modification:

i) On pp. 95–96 of the BAM occur a couple of lines in a ritual which are very similar to these lines from "The Supreme Ritual", in *Two Fragments of Ritual* supposedly translated from the German originals of Wesihaupt by "Fra. [Greek letter Kappa] [Greek letter Phi]" (likely one of Crowley's many pseudonyms) and published in *The Equinox* Volume I Number X (London, 1913):

I. Art thou armed?

O. With a knife.

[O. *draws the dagger from her hair.*]

ii) Pages 225–227 of the BAM contain a piece of ritual (possibly intended at a continuation of the piece on pp. 191–193). First the High Priest says a piece which (while it includes a couple of quotes from different parts of *The Book of the Law*) is clearly derived from the *Gnostic Mass* (1918, 1919, 1929). In the *Gnostic Mass* it is spoken by the Priest, and runs:

O secret of secrets that art hidden in the being of all that lives, not Thee do we adore, for that which adareth is also Thou. Thou art That, and That am I.

[There is no paragraph break here in *The International*.]

I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star. I am Life, and the giver of Life[; ; / ,] yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death. I am alone; there is no God where I am.

In *The International* this is one paragraph, not two, and the punctuation of the *The International* and *Blue Equinox* versions differ as marked from the *Magick in Theory and Practice* version. The BAM has it broken into individual sentence paragraphs, and has a comma after “life”, so again it matches the *Magick in Theory and Practice* version best, though the evidence is much less conclusive than above.

There is then a short piece, also spoken by the High Priest, which seems to be derived from Masonic and other sources. Then the High Priest and High Priestess together say another short piece clearly derived from the *Gnostic Mass*, in which it is spoken by the Priest alone, and runs:

Encourage our hearts. Let thy light crystallize itself in our blood, fulfilling us of Resurrection.

This section matches in all three versions of the *Gnostic Mass*.

The High Priest and High Priestess together conclude with another sentence derived from later in the *Gnostic Mass*; in the *Gnostic Mass* it is spoken by the Priest alone, and runs:

There is no part of me that is not of the Gods

Again, all three versions of the *Gnostic Mass* match.

While this material does contain a few short quotations from *The Book of the Law* (all of which are also found in *Gnostic Mass*), much of it is found only in the *Gnostic Mass*, and it is thus clear that the source from which this material in BAM derives is the *Gnostic Mass*. The

evidence does not make it clear which version of the *Gnostic Mass* it is derived, but again, it matches the *Magick in Theory and Practice* version best.

iii) Pages 263–268 of the BAM contain a very interesting piece, there entitled *Leviter Veslis*, which is evidently the source of the material which Doreen Valiente later rewrote into *The Charge of the Goddess*.^[3] (Incidentally, as Stephen Jones has pointed out, the word “charge” is used in Masonic circles to mean “an explanatory or expository speech”;^[9] while in *An Evocation of Bartzabel the Spirit of Mars*, Crowley uses it for a speech made to an evoked spirit welcoming it and giving it instructions.) I shall discuss this piece in detail in the next section.

iv) Pages 271–278 of the BAM contain Sabbat rituals which have some Crowley-derived material in them which is derived ultimately from *The Book of the Law*, probably via the *Gnostic Mass*. However, this Crowley material is all present in the extracts from the *Gnostic Mass* on pp. 225–227 of the BAM discussed above, and thus it seems plausible that these rituals are quoting from this passage in the BAM rather than quoting Crowley directly.

Leviter Veslis

The *Leviter Veslis* passage is sufficiently complex, interesting, and important that I feel it is worth giving here in full, and then analysing in detail the sources it draws from.

The title of the passage, “Leviter Veslis”, while nonsensical in Classical Latin, is a common phrase in Mediæval Church Latin meaning “Lifting the veil”.^[10] (It is interesting to note that the phrase “Lifting the veil” also occurs in Crowley’s “Gnostic Mass” the fourth section of which is entitled “Of The Ceremony of the Opening of the Veil”.)

I cannot reproduce here the transcript that I have of *Leviter Veslis* since I feel it would be a breach of my oath to do so, and also because I have not obtained the permission of the current custodians of the BAM. However, I can avoid this, since a transcript of this piece has already been published by Aidan Kelly, both in *Crafting the Art of Magic, Book I*, and various versions of it on one of the floppy disks he has been selling for many years (under the title “The Public Contents of the Book of Shadows”!), and as a result it can now even be found posted on the Web in about a dozen different places. The version I give here is taken from *Crafting the Art of Magic, Book I*; while this transcript is not identical to that in my possession (indeed, I would go so far as to say that it is sloppy), it is close enough that the (numerous but with two exceptions mostly minor) differences will not affect my conclusions: a similar analysis of the better transcript I have leads to the same results, it just provides slightly stronger evidence for them.

Listen to the words of the Great mother, who of old was also called among men Artemis, Astarte, Dione, Melusine, Aphrodite, Cerridwen, Diana, Arianrhod, Bride, and by many other names.

At mine Altars the youth of Lacedaemon in Sparta made due sacrifice.

Whenever ye have need of anything, once in the month, and better it be when the moon is full, ye shall assemble in some secret place and adore the spirit of Me who am Queen of all Witcheries and magics.

There ye shall assemble, ye who are fain to learn all sorcery, yet have not won its deepest secrets. To these will I teach things that are yet unknown.

And ye shall be free from slavery, and as a sign that ye be really free, ye shall be naked in your rites, both men and women, and ye shall dance, sing, feast, make music, and love, all in my praise.

There is a Secret Door that I have made to establish the way to taste even on earth the elixir of immortality. Say, 'Let ecstasy be mine, and joy on earth even to me, To Me,'

For I am a gracious Goddess. I give unimaginable joys on earth, certainty, not faith, while in life! And upon death, peace unutterable, rest, and ecstasy, nor do I demand aught in sacrifice.

Hear ye the words of the Star Goddess.

I love you: I yearn for you: pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous.

I who am all pleasure, and purple and drunkenness of the innermost senses, desire you. Put on the wings, arouse the coiled splendor within you, 'Come unto me.'

For I am the flame that burns in the heart of every man, and the core of every Star.

Let it be your inmost divine self who art lost in the constant rapture of infinite joy.

Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy and beauty. Remember that all acts of love and pleasure are my rituals. So let there be beauty and strength, leaping laughter, force and fire by [*sic*] within you.

And if thou sayest, I have journeyed unto thee, and it availed me not, rather shalt thou say, 'I called upon thee, and I waited patiently, and Lo, thou wast with me from the beginning,' for they that ever desired me shall ever attain me, even to the end of all desire.

The easiest way to summarize the source(s) that this is drawn from will be if we first divide it into five sections. For each section, I will underline the parts which clearly come from a particular source or sources, since they are either identical or a close paraphrase of material from there. Those parts of Kelly's transcript which **exactly** match the text of the proposed source(s) will also be in **bold** (since Kelly's transcript contains numerous minor errors, not too much attention should be paid to this). I shall enclose pieces taken from different locations in the source in (brackets); where material from different sources occurs in the same section this will be indicated by using (different) [styles] of brackets.

The first section seems to be almost all original, not taken from other sources that I have been able to locate:

Listen to the words of the Great mother, who of old was also called among men Artemis, Astarte, Dione, (**Melusine**), Aphrodite, Cerridwen, Diana, Arianrhod, Bride, and by many other names.

At mine Altars the youth of Lacedaemon in Sparta made due sacrifice.

The one obvious exception is the one really puzzling name in the list, "Melusine", who is a snake- or fish-tailed faerie from a mediæval French story. What in heaven is she doing in a list of classical Great Goddesses? However, this name occurs in Crowley's *The Law of Liberty*, and is quite pretty: the composer of *Leviter Veslis* may have used it for that reason alone. (It is also possible that the inclusion of the Greek Artemis was inspired by the references to her Roman equivalent Diana in Charles Godfrey Leland's *Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches*.)

(As Kelley has pointed out, the phrase to "the youth of Lacedaemon in Sparta made due sacrifice" may be a reference to the use of flagellation in Spartan religious practices.)

The next section is all taken Leland's *Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches*.

(Whenever ye have need of anything, once in the month, and better it be **when the moon is full, ye shall assemble in some secret place and adore the spirit** of Me who am **Queen**) of all Witcheries and magics.

There (ye shall assemble), (ye who are fain to learn all sorcery, yet have not won its deepest secrets). To these will I teach things that are yet unknown.

And ye shall be free from slavery, (and as a sign that ye be really free, ye shall be naked in your rites, both men and women, and ye shall) (dance, sing, (feast), make music, and love, all in my praise.)

The next section is very short, just half a sentence. It differs from the material after it in that it cannot have come from *The Law of Liberty*; it could, however, have come from Crowley's *The Book of the Law* either directly, or via *Khabs am Pehkt* or *An Evocation of Bartzabel the Spirit of Mars*.

(There is a Secret Door that I have made to establish the way)...

The sentence continues into the next section, which makes up most of *Leviter Veslis*. This follows the second part of Chapter II and the first part of Chapter III of *The Law of Liberty* quite closely, both in content and in the order in which this content appears, and is very likely taken in full from that text. The parts in (round brackets) could only have come from *The Law of Liberty*, while those in [square brackets] are also found in *The Book of the Law* as well as *The Law of Liberty* (and in some cases in other places in Crowley's works), and those in {curly brackets} are found in the *Gnostic Mass* and *The Book of the Law* as well as *The Law of Liberty* (and in some cases in other places in Crowley's works), but not in the *Gnostic Mass*. Note that there is no material in this section from anywhere in Crowley's published works that could not have come from *The Law of Liberty*.

...(to taste even on earth the elixir of immortality.) Say, 'Let (ecstasy be mine, and joy on earth even to me, To Me,)'

(For I am a gracious Goddess. [I give unimaginable joys on earth, certainty, not faith, while in life! And upon death, peace unutterable, rest, and ecstasy, nor do I demand aught in sacrifice.])

(Hear ye the words of the Star Goddess.

{I love you: I yearn for you: pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous.

I who am all pleasure, and purple and drunkenness of the innermost senses, desire you. Put on the wings, arouse the coiled splendor within you, 'Come unto me.}'

For **{I am the flame that burns in the heart of every man, and the core of every Star.}**

Let it be (**your inmost divine self who art lost in the constant rapture of infinite joy.**)

(**{Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy and beauty.} Remember that all acts of love and pleasure are my rituals.**) So let there be [**beauty and strength, leaping laughter, force and fire**] by within you.

The last section does not contain material from *The Law of Liberty* or *The Book of the Law*; it instead draws upon Crowley's *Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente*, either directly, or possibly via *Astarte vel Liber Berylli*. The parts in (round brackets) could only have come from *Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente*, while that in [square brackets] is also found in *Astarte vel Liber Berylli* as well as in *Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente*

And if thou sayest, [**I have journeyed unto thee, and it availed me not.**] rather shalt thou say, '[**I called upon thee, and**][**I waited patiently, and** Lo, **thou wast with me from the beginning.**]' for (**they that ever desired me shall ever attain me, even to the end of all desire.**)

Now, I would like to examine the passages in Leland's and Crowley's works that this draws upon. I shall underline the parts that were quoted, either directly or in close paraphrase, in *Leviter Veslis*.

First is Charles Godfrey Leland's *Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches* (London, 1899), which he claimed was based around a translation of material given to him by an Italian traditional witch. Of the extracts in *Leviter Veslis* one is from the Leland's translations of this material, and one is from Leland's commentary (though this is to some extent a paraphrase from the translation that precedes it).

From Chapter I:

When I shall have departed from this world,
Whenever ye have need of anything,
Once in the month, and when the moon is full,
Ye shall assemble in some desert place,
Or in a forest all together join
To adore the potent spirit of your queen,
My mother, great *Diana*. She who fain

Would learn all sorcery yet has not won
Its deepest secrets, them my mother will
Teach her, in truth all things as yet unknown.
And ye shall all be freed from slavery,
And so ye shall be free in everything;
And as a sign that ye are truly free,
Ye shall be naked in your rites, both men
And women also: this shall last until
The last of your oppressors shall be dead;
And ye shall make the game of Benevento,
Extinguishing the light, and after that
Shall hold your supper thus:

From Chapter II:

...

And if the grace be granted, O *Diana*!
In honour of thee I will hold this feast,
Feast and drain the goblet deep,
We will dance and wildly leap,
And if thou grant'st the grace which I require,
Then when the dance is wildest, all the lamps
Shall be extinguished and we'll freely love!

And thus shall it be done: all shall sit down to the supper all naked, men and women, and, the feast over, they shall dance, sing, make music, and then love in the darkness, with all the lights extinguished; for it is the spirit of *Diana* who extinguishes them, and so they will dance and make music in her praise.

While it is clear the *Aradia* is the source this part of *Leviter Veslis* was drawing upon, it is interesting to note that a similar sentence also occurs in Crowley's works, in the Editorial of *The Equinox* Volume III Number 1 (*The Blue Equinox*, Detroit, Michigan, 1919) pp. 9-10:

Celebrations must conform to the custom and nature of the people.

Christianity has destroyed the joyful celebrations, characterized by music, dancing, feasting, and making love; and has kept only the melancholy.

The Law of Thelems offers a religion which fulfils all necessary conditions.

Most of the rest of *Leviter Veslis* is ultimately (but, as I have indicated, not necessarily directly) derived Crowley's channeled work *The Book of the Law*, which (as mentioned above) was published in *The Equinox* in Volume I Number VII (London, 1912), in Vol. I Number X (London, 1913), and in Vol. III Number 3 (*The Equinox of the Gods*, London, 1936), and also in *Thelema (The Holy Books*, London, 1909) Volume 3, and as a booklet in Pasadena, California in 1938, and also in London in 1938. Here are the relevant sections from *The Book of the Law*. Again, I have altered the text by underlining the sections from which *Leviter Veslis* derives.

Chapter I, verses 52–62:

52. If this be not aright; if ye confound the space-marks, saying: They are one; or saying, They are many; if the ritual be not ever unto me: then expect the direful judgments of Ra Hoor Khuit!

53. This shall regenerate the world, the little world my sister, my heart & my tongue, unto whom I send this kiss. Also, o scribe and prophet, though thou be of the princes, it shall not assuage thee nor absolve thee. But ecstasy be thine and joy of earth: ever To me! To me!

54. Change not as much as the style of a letter; for behold! thou, o prophet, shalt not behold all these mysteries hidden therein.

55. The child of thy bowels, *he* shall behold them.

56. Expect him not from the East, nor from the West; for from no expected house cometh that child. Aum! All words are sacred and all prophets true; save only that they understand a little; solve the first half of the equation, leave the second unattacked. But thou hast all in the clear light, and some, though not all, in the dark.

57. Invoke me under my stars! Love is the law, love under will. Nor let the fools mistake love; for there are love and love. There is the dove, and there is the serpent. Choose ye well! He, my prophet, hath chosen, knowing the law of the fortress, and the great mystery of the House of God.

All these old letters of my Book are aright; but [Hebrew letter Tzaddi] is not the Star. This also is secret: my prophet shall reveal it to the wise.

58. I give unimaginable joys on earth: certainty, not faith, while in life, upon death; peace unutterable, rest, ecstasy; nor do I demand aught in sacrifice.

59. My incense is of resinous woods & gums; and there is no blood therein: because of my hair the trees of Eternity.

60. My number is 11, as all their numbers who are of us. The Five Pointed Star, with a Circle in the Middle, & the circle is Red. My colour is black to the blind, but the blue & gold are seen of the seeing. Also I have a secret glory for them that love me.

61. But to love me is better than all things: if under the night-stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine incense before me, invoking me with a pure heart, and the Serpent flame therein, thou shalt come a little to lie in my bosom. For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso gives one particle of dust shall lose all in that hour. Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in splendour & pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy. I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich headdress. I love you! I yearn to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desire you. Put on the wings, and arouse the coiled splendour within you: come unto me!

62. At all my meetings with you shall the priestess say — and her eyes shall burn with desire as she stands bare and rejoicing in my secret temple — To me! To me! calling forth the flame of the hearts of all in her love-chant.

Chapter II, verses 5–7:

5. Behold! the rituals of the old time are black. Let the evil ones be cast away; let the good ones be purged by the prophet! Then shall this Knowledge go aright.

6. I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star. I am Life, and the giver of Life, yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death.

7. I am the Magician and the Exorcist. I am the axle of the wheel, and the cube in the circle. "Come unto me" is a foolish word: for it is I that go.

Chapter II, verses 19–21:

19. Is a God to live in a dog? No! but the highest are of us. They shall rejoice, our chosen: who sorroweth is not of us.

20. Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us.

21. We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery. For they feel not. Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched & the weak: this is the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world. Think not, o king, upon that lie: That Thou Must Die: verily thou shalt not die, but live. Now let it be understood: If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever. Nuit! Hadit! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! The Sun, Strength & Sight, Light; these are for the servants of the Star & the Snake.

Chapter II, verses 34–36:

34. But ye, o my people, rise up & awake!

35. Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy & beauty!

36. There are rituals of the elements and feasts of the times.

Chapter III, verse 38:

38. So that thy light is in me; & its red flame is as a sword in my hand to push thy order. There is a secret door that I shall make to establish thy way in all the quarters, (these are the adorations, as thou hast written), as it is said:

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!

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 wingèd snake of light, Hadit!

Abide with me, Ra-Hoor-Khuit!

Here is the relevant extract from Crowley's *Gnostic Mass*, which (as mentioned above) was published in *The International* (New York) in March 1918, in *The Equinox* Vol. III Number 1 (*The Blue Equinox*, Detroit, Michigan, 1919) pp. 247–270, and in *Magick in Theory and Practice* (Paris, 1929) Appendix VI pp. 345–361:

From "Of The Ceremony of the Opening of the Veil" (an interesting coincidence of titles):

[/During this speech the PRIESTESS must have divested herself completely of her robe. See CCXX. I. 62./During this speech the PRIESTESS must have divested herself completely of her robe, See CCXX. I. 62.]

[The PRIESTESS/THE PRIESTESS/The PRIESTESS]. But to love me is better than all things[;:/:] if under the night-stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine incense before me, invoking me with a pure heart, and the [s/s/S]erpent flame therein, thou shalt come a little to lie in my bosom. For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso gives one particle of dust shall lose all in that hour. Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in splendour and pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy. I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich head[-/-/]dress. I love you! I yearn to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desire you. Put on the wings, and arouse the coiled splendour within you[;:/:] come unto me! To me! To me! Sing the raptuous love-song unto me! Burn to me perfumes! [//Wear to me jewels!] Drink to me, for I love you! I love you[././!] I am the blue-lidded daughter of [s/s/S]unset[;:/.] I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky. To me! To me!

[The Priest mounts the second step./The PRIEST mounts the second step./The PRIEST mounts the second step.]

[The PRIEST/THE PRIEST/The PRIEST]. O secret of secrets that art hidden in the being of all that lives, not Thee do we adore, for that which adareth is also Thou. Thou art That, and That am I.

[There is no paragraph break here in *The International*.]

I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star. I am Life, and the giver of Life[;:/,] yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death. I am alone; there is no God where I am.

As above, the [square brackets] show differences between the version in *The International*, the version in *The Blue Equinox*, and the version in *Magick in Theory and Practice* respectively. Unfortunately none of these differences are in the portions relevant to *Leviter Veslis*, so they do not help us here.

Here is the relevant extract from Chapters II and III of Crowley's *The Law of Liberty*, which was published in *The Equinox* Volume III Number 1 (*The Blue Equinox*, Chicago, 1919), in *The International* (New York) January 1918, was privately printed as a pamphlet by the O.T.O. in London in about 1940, and nowhere else before the 1970's.:

This is the only point to bear in mind, that every act must be a ritual, an act of worship, a sacrament. Live as the kings and princes, crowned and uncrowned, of this world, have always lived, as masters always live; but let it not be self-indulgence; make your self-indulgence your religion.

When you drink and dance and take delight, you are not being "immoral," you are not "risking your immortal soul"; you are fulfilling the precepts of our holy religion—provided only that you remember to regard your actions in this light. Do not lower yourself and destroy and cheapen your pleasure by leaving out the supreme joy, the consciousness of the Peace that passeth understanding. Do not embrace mere Marian or Melusine; she is Nuit Herself, specially concentrated and incarnated in a human form to give you infinite love, to bid you taste even on earth the Elixir of Immortality. "But ecstasy be mine and joy on earth: ever To me! To me!"

Again She speaks: "Love is the law, love under will." Keep pure your highest ideal; strive ever toward it without allowing aught to stop you or turn you aside, even as a star sweeps upon its incalculable and infinite course of glory, and all is Love. The Law of your being becomes Light, Life, Love and Liberty. All is peace, all is harmony and beauty, all is joy.

For hear, how gracious is the Goddess: "I give unimaginable joys on earth: certainty, not faith, while in life, upon death; peace unutterable, rest, ecstasy; nor do I demand aught in sacrifice."

Is this not better than the death-in-life of the slaves of the Slave-Gods, as they go oppressed by consciousness of "sin," wearily seeking or simulating wearisome and tedious "virtues"?

With such, we who have accepted the Law of Thelema have nothing to do. We have heard the Voice of the Star-Goddess: "I love you! I yearn to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desire you. Put on the wings, and arouse the coiled splendour within you; come unto me!" And thus She ends:

“Sing the rapturous love-song unto me! Burn to me perfumes! Wear to me jewels! Drink to me, for I love you! I love you! I am the blue-lidded daughter of Sunset; I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky. To me! To me!” And with these words “The Manifestation of Nuit is at an end.”

III. In the next chapter of our book is given the word of Hadit, who is the complement of Nuit. He is eternal energy, the Infinite Motion of Things, the central core of all being. The manifested Universe comes from the marriage of Nuit and Hadit; without this could no thing be. This eternal, this perpetual marriage-feast is then the nature of things themselves; and therefore everything that is, is a crystallization of divine ecstasy.

Hadit tells us of Himself: “I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star.” He is then your own inmost divine self; it is you, and not another, who are lost in the constant rapture of the embraces of Infinite Beauty. A little further on He speaks of us:

“We are not for the poor and the sad: the lords of the earth are our kinsfolk.”

“Is a God to live in a dog? No! but the highest are of us. They shall rejoice, our chosen: who sorroweth is not of us.”

“Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us.”

Later, concerning death, He says: “Think not, O king, upon that lie: That Thou must Die: verily thou shalt not die, but live. Now let it be understood: if the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever.” When you know that, what is left but delight? And how are we to live meanwhile?

“It is a lie, this folly against self—Be strong, man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this.”

Again and again, in words like these, He sees the expansion and the development of the soul through joy.

Here is the Calendar of our Church: “But ye, O my people, rise up and awake! Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy and beauty!” Remember that all acts of love and pleasure are rituals, must be rituals. “There are rituals of the elements and feasts of the times. A feast for the first night of the Prophet and his Bride! A feast for the three days of the writing of the Book of the Law. A feast for Tahuti and the children of the Prophet—secret, O Prophet! A feast for the Supreme Ritual and a feast for the Equinox of the Gods. A feast for fire and a

feast for water; a feast for life and a greater feast for death! A feast every day in your hearts in the joy of my rapture! A feast every night unto Nu, and the pleasure of uttermost delight! Aye! Feast! Rejoice! There is no dread hereafter. There is the dissolution, and eternal ecstasy in the kisses of Nu." It all depends on your own acceptance of this new law, and you are not asked to believe anything, to accept a string of foolish fables beneath the intellectual level of a Bushman and the moral level of a drug-fiend. All you have to do is to be yourself, to do your will, and to rejoice.

The phrase "There is a Secret Door that I have made to establish the way" is evidently originally derived from "There is a secret door that I shall make to establish thy way..." from *The Book of the Law*, Chapter III Verse 38. This does not occur in either *The Law of Liberty* or the *Gnostic Mass*. However, it does occur in two other places in Crowley's published works: this verse is quoted in the text of the ritual given in *An Evocation of Bartzabel the Spirit of Mars*, which was published in *The Equinox* Volume I Number IX (London, 1913) pp. 117-136, and the verse also occurs, with added commentary, in *Khabs am Pekht*, which was published in *The Equinox* Vol. III Number 1 (*The Blue Equinox*, Detroit, Michigan, 1919) pp. 170-182.

The relevant portion of *An Evocation of Bartzabel the Spirit of Mars* is:

When the Chief Magus is satisfied with the Descent of the God, let all rise and let C.M. say:

So that Thy light is in me; and its red flame is as a sword in my hand to push thy order.
There is a secret door that I shall make to establish thy way in all the quarters ... as it is said:

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-f-n-Khonsu!

By Bes-na-Maut my breast I beat;

By wise Ta-Nech I weave my spell.

Show thy star-splendour, O Nuith!

Bid me within thine House to dwell,

O winged snake of light, Hadith!

Abide with me, Ra Hoor Khuit!

(*Magus faces* [triangular Fire symbol], *and others support him.*)

(It is interesting to note that this also contains the phrase "the Descent of the God".)

The relevant portion of *Khabs am Pekht* is:

Note, pray thee, the practical method of overcoming opposition given in CCXX. III 23–26. But this is not to Our immediate purpose in this epistle. Note, pray thee, the instruction in the 38th and 39th verses of the Third Chapter of The Book of the Law. It must be quoted in full.

"So that thy light is in me; and its red flame is as a sword in my hand to push thy order."

That is, the God himself is aflame with the Light of The Beast, and will himself push the order, through the fire (perhaps meaning the genius) of The Beast.

"There is a secret door that I shall make to establish thy way in all the quarters (there are the adorations, as thou hast written) as it is said:

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-f-na-khonsu!

By Bes-na-Maut my breast I beat;

By wise Ta-Nech I weave my spell.

Show thy star-splendour, O Nuith!

Bid me within thine House to dwell,

O winged snake of light, Hadith!

Abide with me, Ra-Hoor-Khuit!"

In the comment in EQUINOX I. VII. this passage is virtually ignored. It is possible that this "secret door" refers to the four men and four women spoken of later in "The Paris Working," or it may mean the child elsewhere predicted, or some secret preparation of the hearts of men. It is difficult to decide on such a point, but we may be sure that the Event will show that the exact wording was so shaded as to prove to us absolute foreknowledge on the part of That Most Holy Angel who uttered the Book.

Here are the relevant sections from *Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente*:

Chapter II verses 58–61:

58. The mountain stirred not. Therefore went the prophet unto the mountain, and spake unto it. But the feet of the prophet were weary, and the mountain heard not his voice.

59. But I have called unto Thee, and I have journeyed unto Thee, and it availed me not.

60. I waited patiently, and Thou wast with me from the beginning.

61. This now I know, O my beloved, and we are stretched at our ease among the vines.

Chapter III Verses 62–64:

62. But as Thou art the Last, Thou art also the Next, and as the Next do I reveal Thee to the multitude.

63. They that ever desired Thee shall obtain Thee, even at the End of their Desire.

64. Glorious, glorious, glorious art Thou, O my lover supernal, O Self of myself.

Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente Chapter II Verses 59–60 are also quoted in *Astarte vel Liber Berylli*, verse 25, but *Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente* Chapter III Verse 63 is quoted nowhere else, so it seems clear that *Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente* is the source from which this material in the BAM derives. *Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente* was published in the rare and privately printed *Thelema* (*The Holy Books*, London, 1909) Volume 1, in *The Equinox* Volume III Number 1 (*The Blue Equinox*, Detroit, Michigan, 1919) pp. 63–98, and (together with Crowley's commentary on it) in a small edition in Ontario in 1952.

From a careful examination of all of these passages, five things are clear:

1) The composer of *Leviter Veslis* had read *The Law of Liberty* (as has been pointed out by others, including Gareth Medway^[11]). There is material in *Leviter Veslis* that occurs in *The Law of Liberty* and nowhere else in Crowley's published works. *The Law of Liberty* was published in *The Equinox* Volume III Number 1 (*The Blue Equinox*) in 1919, in *The International* January 1918, was privately printed as a pamphlet by the O.T.O. in London in about 1940, and nowhere else before the 1970's.

2) The composer of this passage may or may not have also read the *Gnostic Mass*. If they had, this would be unsurprising, both since material from the *Gnostic Mass* occurs in other places in BAM, and since the *Gnostic Mass* was also in *The Blue Equinox*.

3) The composer of this passage had also read *Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente*, which was also published in *The Blue Equinox*.

4) The composer of this passage had also read *Khabs am Pekht* or *An Evocation of Bartzabel the Spirit of Mars* or *The Book of the Law*. Since *Khabs am Pekht* was also in *The Blue Equinox*, this is also unsurprising.

5) In fact, given access just to a copy of *The Blue Equinox*, the composer of *Leviter Veslis* would not have needed access to any other of Crowley's published works. In particular, they would not have needed to have read *The Book of the Law* (which was not contained in *The Blue Equinox*, though it was in both the previous and the next published issues of *The Equinox* [there was no Volume II, nor a Volume III Number 2]).

Furthermore, I think it is quite unlikely that the composer had access to *The Book of the Law*. There is a lot of good poetry in this, some of which would have been very suitable for inclusion in *Leviter Veslis*, yet none of it was used; the composer of *Leviter Veslis* sticks resolutely to material which can be found in *The Blue Equinox*, ignoring all the rest of *The Book of the Law*. (Examples of passages from *The Book of the Law* that could have been suitable for use in *Leviter Veslis*, were not used in it, and were not in *The Blue Equinox* include: "Invoke me under my stars!", and "Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.") Indeed, the impression one gets is that the composer could have been deliberately combing *The Blue Equinox* for quotes from *The Book of the Law*, and using all of the those they found that they felt were suitable for their purpose. If so, this suggests that they did not have access to a copy of *The Book of the Law*: why go to the trouble of dredging through a bunch of other articles for quotes from it if you have a copy of the complete text?

I also think it is very unlikely that the composer was Crowley, or indeed any O.T.O. member. Firstly, *The Book of the Law* is the foundation of the philosophy/religion of the O.T.O., and no O.T.O. initiate should be without a copy — one is presented to the candidate on their 0° (Minerval) initiation,^[12] and we know that Gardner bought four copies when he was initiated, and tried to buy more.

Secondly, Chapter I Verse 54 of *The Book of the Law*, speaking about itself, says:

Change not as much as the style of a letter; for behold! thou, o prophet, shalt not behold all these mysteries hidden therein.

(the "prophet" is Crowley), while Chapter II Verse 54 elaborates:

The stops as thou wilt; the letters? change them not in style or value!

(i.e. the case of the letters is divinely inspired, but the punctuation is up to Crowley), Chapter III Verse 47 specifies:

This book shall be translated into all tongues: but always with the original in the writing of the Beast; for in the chance shape of the letters and their position to one another: in these are mysteries that no Beast shall divine.

(the "Beast" is Crowley, and in the hand-written original this verse has a curious diagram overlaid upon it), and Chapter III Verse 36 reiterates:

My scribe Ankh-af-na-khonsu, the priest of the princes, shall not in one letter change this book; but lest there be folly, he shall comment thereupon by the wisdom of Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

(the "scribe Ankh-af-na-khonsu" is Crowley again). There is a tradition in the O.T.O. (indeed I have been told that in at least one modern branch of the O.T.O. it is an oathbound requirement on all initiates^[13]) of following these instructions with scrupulous care: reproducing *The Book of the Law* exactly, letter for letter. This seems to apply (perhaps less stringently) not only when making complete copies of *The Book of the Law*, but also when quoting from *The Book of the Law*: one must do so exactly, down to the case of the letters. As can be seen from the quotations from *The Book of the Law* in the extracts given above from his other works, Crowley usually obeyed this rule: he quotes *The Book of the Law* exactly, word for word and down to the capitalisation of letters, and usually quotes at least a complete sentence. It is true that when he is using material from *The Book of the Law* in the context of a ritual, in few places he does alter the punctuation slightly (as would seem justified by "The stops as thou wilt;", and in his commentary in *The Temple of Solomon the King* in *The Equinox* Volume I Number VII he notes that the punctuation is his own, performed after the text was dictated to him, so presumably he does not feel it to be divinely inspired), on occasion seems to feel free to change between using "&" and "and", and in *An Evocation of Bartzabel the Spirit of Mars* he even went so far as to omit a parenthetical remark that would have made no sense in the context (though he does indicate the place where it is omitted in the quotation by an ellipsis), and in a few places he makes minor errors that could well be typos (in the *Gnostic Mass*, for example, he corrected

these in the later version), nevertheless, even when using quotes from it as part of a ritual, he still treats material from *The Book of the Law* with great care and respect.

The composer of *Leviter Veslis*, however, took far greater liberties with the material derived from *The Book of the Law* that they were using. Not only did they change the punctuation and the case of letters, they edited, paraphrased, changed tenses and persons, rephrased, combined parts of sentences from different places, and otherwise altered the material, on occasion altering its meaning (sometimes in ways suggesting that they did not fully understand it), and even going so far as to put Hadit's words into Nuit's mouth — something completely inappropriate to O.T.O. theology. Neither Crowley nor any true O.T.O. initiate would have taken such liberties with the text or its meaning: it would be about as close to blasphemy as it is possible to come in the O.T.O.

I thus think we can say with certainty that Crowley did not compose *Leviter Veslis* or the Wiccan rituals, and that it seems implausible that whoever did so was an O.T.O. initiate (at the time), or was even particularly familiar with Crowley's printed works. Rather I think they simply had access to a copy of *The Blue Equinox*.

It must be admitted that, even after his O.T.O. initiation, Gardner was not punctilious about quoting from *The Book of the Law*. In *The Meaning of Witchcraft* chapter VII p. 102 he misquotes "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the law, love under will." as "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the Law, Love under Will." However, this is a relatively minor mistake, and it was published in 1959, over a decade after Gardner's flirtation with the O.T.O., at a time when he was trying to downplay his connection with Crowley, and long after the last possible date for the composition of *Leviter Veslis* of early 1953.

Historical Implications

So, what does this tell us? Let us start with what we know about Gardner's and the Crotona Fellowship's access to Crowley's works.

1) The library of the Crotona Fellowship, at least as donated to Southampton University, does not contain any of Crowley's works (nor indeed any of Charles Godfrey Leland's). However, it does contain a copy of Israel Regardie's *A Garden of Pomegranates: An outline of the Qabalah* (London, 1932) and a copy of S.L. "MacGregor" Mathers' translation of *The Key of Solomon the King* (London, 1889, 1909), and there is a lot of material derived from the latter work in *Ye Bok of ye Art Magical*.^[14] (It also contains Mathers' translation of *The*

Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage, but I have not located any material in the BAM that derives from this.)

2) Gerald Gardner's library, at least as sold by Ripley's to the Wiccan Church of Canada, contains:^[15]

By Aleister Crowley:

- *Amrita: The Elixir of Life. Our Magical Medicine. A Lecture delivered before the National Psychological Institute* Typed manuscript, 36 pages 8"x10" (O.T.O.)
- *Book Four* (Wieland & Co., London, c. 1911) — It is unclear whether this is both volumes or just one, and if so which one.
- *Hail Mary* (Wieland & Co., London, 1919)
- *In Residence: The Don's Guide to Cambridge* (Elijah Johnson, Cambridge, 1904)
- *Jephthah and Other Mysteries Lyrical and Dramatic* < London, Ltd., Co. and Trubner Trench, Paul,>
- *Magick in Theory & Practice* (Printers: Lecram Press, Paris, 1929)
- *Olla: An Anthology of Sixty Years of Song* (O.T.O., London, 1946) — It would be very interesting to know if this has any inscription, since Patricia Crowther claimed in *The Day I Met Aleister Crowley* (1970) that Crowley has presented her with copy of *Olla* when she visited him with Arnold Crowther (and, given the evidence of Crowley's diary, presumably also with Gerald Gardner).
- *Oracles* (Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, Inverness, 1905)
- *Songs of the Spirit* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, London, 1898)
- *The Book of the Law* (The Church of Thelema, Pasadena, California, 1938)
- *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley, Vol. 2* (The Mandrake Press, London, 1929)
- *The Equinox*, Volume III Number 1 (The Universal Publishing Company, Detroit, Mich., 1919) — Here it is, *The Blue Equinox*, quite possibly the very copy from which *Leviter Veslis* was composed. It would be fascinating to know if this copy has any marginalia or underlining.
- *The Last Ritual* (1948)
- *777 vel Prolegomena Symbolica ad Systems Sceptico-Mysticae viae Explicanaae, Fundamentum Heiroglyphicum Sanctissimorum Scientiae Summae* (The Walter Scott Publishing Co. Ltd., London & Felling-on-Tyne, 1909)

Oddly, it does not seem to contain a copy of *The Equinox* Volume III Number 3, *The Equinox of the Gods*, despite the fact that (as I describe below) we know Gardner bought at least four copies of this. It should also be remembered that Gardner may have had an opportunity to pick up spare copies of Crowley's books after his death in December 1947, at which point he seems to have been still interested in the O.T.O., and was one of very few people in Britain still actively interested in it.

By Charles Godfrey Leland:

- *The Breitmann Ballads* (Trubner & Co., London, 1890)

Oddly, the collection does not contain a copy of *Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches*.

By S. Liddell "MacGregor" Mathers:

- *The Key of Solomon the King* (George Redway, London, 1888) — Presumably this was acquired at some time after he borrowed Gerald Yorke's copy. (Oddly, the title page of the copy of this edition in Cambridge University library clearly gives its publication date as 1889, not 1888: possibly the 1888 date is simply a typo in the list of the contents of Gardner's library.)

By Israel Regardie:

- *The Golden Dawn*, Vol. I (The Aries Press, Chicago, 1937)
- *The Golden Dawn*, Vol. II (The Aries Press, Chicago, 1938)
- *The Golden Dawn*, Vol. III (The Aries Press, Chicago, 1939)

The list does not contain any other works by Crowley, Leland, Mathers, or Regardie.

3) Some time during the Second World War (1939–1945), Arnold Crowther, who was by then already a friend of Gardner's,^[8] by chance came upon a copy of *Magick in Theory and Practice*.^[7] He may well have allowed Gardner to borrow it. This is likely the source of the theoretical material in the BAM derived from *Magick in Theory and Practice* and of the ritual material derived from the *Magick in Theory and Practice* version of the *Gnostic Mass*. It is difficult to explain why Gardner would have bothered to copy material from a borrowed *Magick in Theory and Practice* version of the *Gnostic Mass* if he already owned *The Blue Equinox* version of it, which suggests that this occurred before Gardner obtained *The Blue Equinox*.

4) As Ronald Hutton has shown, Gardner and Arnold Crowther visited Crowley in Hastings on May 1st, 1947, possibly accompanied by a young woman who gave her name as "Eva Collins".^[16] By her own account, which she has subsequently repeatedly disavowed, Patricia Crowther accompanied them, and was presented by Crowley with a copy of his recently published anthology of poems *Olla*.^[17] (Since there is some historical evidence corroborating various other details of the version of her life history that Patricia Crowther has subsequently given, in which she did not meet either Gardner or Arnold Crowther until well after 1947, it seems possible that Patricia Crowther was not the mysterious "Eva Collins" - if "Eva Collins" had anything to do with Gardner and Arnold Crowther's visit, and was not simply another visitor on the same day. One possible alternative explanation is that "Eva Collins" was in fact Edith Grimes, who seems to have been Gardner's High Priestess at the time, and who (as a married woman visiting an occultist of ill repute in the company of a man not her husband), could have felt a particular need to use a pseudonym; it is also noticeable that "Eva Collins" is close enough to "Edith Grimes" to make carrying off such a pseudonym relatively easy.) Gardner visited Crowley three more times that month, on the 7th, 14th, and 27th of May, and apparently never again.^[18] While there, probably on May

7th, Gardner bought from Crowley his entire personal stock of four copies of *The Equinox of the Gods* (*The Equinox* Volume III Number 3), which contains *The Book of the Law* and a lengthy treatise on how it was channeled and why it is important to change not as much as the style of a letter in it. Gardner apparently wished to obtain more than four copies, since on May 9th Crowley wrote to Gerald Yorke introducing Gardner and asking Yorke if he could let Gardner have another copy.^[19] Gardner was apparently made a 4th degree (IV°) O.T.O. initiate (out of eleven degrees) on the spot (probably on the basis that this is considered to be the equivalent O.T.O. rank to Gardner's Masonic Royal Arch initiation — Crowley had been known to do this), and was granted a license to start an O.T.O. encampment (smallest size of O.T.O. group) and to initiate others to 0th degree (0°).^[20] Gardner, for the rest of 1947, seems to have attempted to do just this, apparently without much success.^[21]

5) As Ronald Hutton has pointed out,^[22] Gerald Yorke's copy of Gardner's novel *High Magic's Aid* has a note in Yorke's handwriting in it stating that Gerald Gardner borrowed Yorke's copy of Mathers' *The Key of Solomon the King* for use in the writing of *High Magic's Aid*. This must presumably have occurred after the two were introduced by Crowley in a letter written on May 9th 1947. *High Magic's Aid* was published in 1949, and seems to have been written over a period from about 1946 to 1948.^[23] Since *High Magic's Aid* contains a lot of material from Mathers' version of *The Key of Solomon the King*, most or all apparently taken directly from *The Key of Solomon the King* rather than via the extracts from that in *Ye Book of ye Art Magical*, this all seems very plausible. Presumably, Gardner needed to consult a copy the original text, rather than the heavily edited down (and possibly oathbound) version he had in the BAM, and presumably at least by this date, he did not have sufficient access to the library of the Crotona Fellowship (which was by then moribund) to copy large quantities of material from their copy of *The Key of Solomon the King*.

6) By the time of the writing of *High Magic's Aid*, Gardner seems to have read *The Equinox* Vol. I Number III since ritual material apparently from the version of the Golden Dawn Z.2 papers given there appears in two places in *High Magic's Aid* (details of the wording suggests that it was taken from this source rather than from the version of the Golden Dawn Z.2 papers given in Israel Regardie's *The Golden Dawn* Volume 3).

As I have argued above, I think it is extremely unlikely that *Leviter Veslis* was composed by an O.T.O. initiate who was familiar with or had access to a copy of *The Book of the Law*. I thus conclude that if it was composed by Gardner, it was presumably composed before May 7th 1947. Since Gardner was evidently eager during 1947 to pass on Crowley's ideas, I find it equally implausible that it was written in or after May 1947 by a close friend and magical co-worker of Gardner's (such as Edith Woodford Grimes or any other member of the New Forest coven — if the New Forest Coven did indeed exist). Indeed, had it been written only

shortly before May 1947, I think it likely that Gardner would have rewritten it on coming to understand more of Crowley's ideas. It thus seems more likely to me that it was composed sufficiently before 1947 to have become well-known and well-liked by that time, say in 1946 at the latest. Since *The Equinox* Volume III Number 1 was published in 1919, it thus seems likely to me that *Leviter Veslis* was composed at some time during the period between 1919 and about 1946. If, as suggested above, *The Blue Equinox* was not obtained until after Arnold Crowther had come upon *Magick in Theory and Practice* during the War, that would constrain the date further to the period between about 1940 and about 1946.

Was Gardner the composer of *Leviter Veslis*? It seems quite plausible to me that he was, possibly together with Mrs. Edith Woodford-Grimes. Firstly, we know that Dorothy Clutterbuck was good at writing poetry, since several books of her poetry have survived.^[24] While she often quotes from other poets, her normal pattern is to quote a couple of lines and to then write the rest of a poem based on the quotation. Thus it seems likely to me that Dorothy Clutterbuck was not involved in the composition of *Leviter Veslis*, since taking material wholesale and bolting it together does not seem to be her style — on the evidence, she would be more likely to compose some original poetry, perhaps using a short quotation as inspiration. This leaves Gerald Gardner and Edith Woodford-Grimes as the obvious suspects. Gardner, on the other hand, does exactly this sort of bolting together quite skillfully in several of the Solomonic magic scenes from *High Magic's Aid*, combining ritual material from several disparate sources (principally Crowley and *The Key of Solomon the King*) into an organic whole. Secondly, Gardner quotes part of *Leviter Veslis* (or by then, *The Charge of the Goddess*, though the parts quoted have not been appreciably changed by Doreen Valiente's reworking) in *Witchcraft Today*. There seems to be a pattern in *Witchcraft Today* that Gardner is happy to quote ritual material that was recently composed by someone Gardner knew, as if he felt that his oath of secrecy only applied to genuinely old material — for example, he quotes a chunk of the Yule ritual that Doreen Valiente composed for Yule 1953. His willingness to quote a portion of *The Charge of the Goddess* that is pretty much unchanged from *Leviter Veslis* thus suggests that *Leviter Veslis* was also material that he knew not to be genuinely old, which in turn suggests to me that it was composed after 1939. Thirdly, it is evident from a careful reading of *Witchcraft Today* that Gardner was aware of the sources that the material in *Leviter Veslis* had come from — see for example the passage on pp. 47–48 of *Witchcraft Today* from which the quote given at the beginning of this essay comes. Lastly, the best evidence available for whether Gardner was in fact the composer of *Leviter Veslis* would seem to be the fact that Doreen Valiente, who had evidently discussed the matter of Crowley material in the Book of Shadows with him at length, clearly states that Gardner said he was the one who added it. In *Witchcraft for Tomorrow* (1978) she writes:

... That these rituals contain phrases from Crowley's published works is however undoubtedly true. Gerald told me that the rituals he recorded were fragmentary. He had to augment them in order to make them workable; and he used some quotations from Crowley's works because he recognized the magical power and beauty inherent in Crowley's writings, though he had no great admiration for Crowley as a man.

Unless Doreen Valiente had misinterpreted something Gardner said, or was leaping to conclusions, this would seem to clearly imply that Gardner was instrumental in composing *Leviter Veslis*. Alas, Doreen Valiente is no longer with us; a more detailed account of her recollection of her conversations with Gardner on this subject might well have cast a clearer light on the subject.

It thus seems very plausible to me, though not completely proven, that *Leviter Veslis* was composed by Gerald Gardner and/or Edith Woodford-Grimes, using a copy of Crowley's *The Blue Equinox* and a copy of Leland's *Aradia*, probably some time between about 1940 and about 1946.

A Suggestion

I would therefore like to propose the following as a possible explanation of the origins of the Crowley-derived material in *Ye Bok of ye Art Magical*. It is by no means the only explanation fitting the available evidence, but it is my personal favourite.

1) Some time in the 1920's or 1930's, a group of occultists, who may or may not have lived near the New Forest at the time, are working with a combination of two different magical traditions (possibly a compromise produced by the merging of two previous groups): Solomonic ceremonial magic taken from *The Key of Solomon the King* and other sources, and also a (perhaps rather basic) form of witchcraft, possibly with little in the way of set ritual scripts. As is traditional in Solomonic magic, they copy out much of *The Key of Solomon* by hand and use that as their working book. Over time, they begin to develop some more formalised witch rituals, borrowing some elements from their ceremonial magic practices, including the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram, of which they obtain a text from Israel Regardie's *The Tree of Life* (London, 1932), and possibly also few minor Crowley-derived elements originally from old issues of *The Equinox*.

2) In 1938, Gardner meets this group in Christchurch/Highcliffe near the New Forest, and in 1939 he is initiated into it. He joins in both styles of magic, and begins to copy out first the Solomonic material, and later also adds some witch rituals, into a handwritten book which he titles *Ye Bok of ye Art Magical*.

3) At some point during the War, Gardner's friend Arnold Crowther by chance obtains a copy of *Magick in Theory and Practice*. At some later point, probably before 1947, he lends this to Gardner, who copies out parts of two or three chapters from it (possibly at different times, since one section uses "/" in place of all punctuation and the rest don't), and extracts from the *Gnostic Mass* from one of the appendices.

4) At some point between 1919 and about 1946, probably after Gardner's initiation in 1939, and possibly after 3) above (i.e. after about 1940), one or more members of the group get hold of a copy of *The Equinox* Volume III Number 1 (*The Blue Equinox*) and read it. They are particularly struck by *The Law of Liberty*, which is an explanation in simple and often beautiful language of a philosophy which seems highly compatible with their own. One or more of them, very likely including Gardner (and quite possibly Gardner acting alone), edit(s) it down, together with a little material from Leland's *Aradia* and some of Crowley's other material from *The Equinox* Volume III Number 1, to form *Leviter Veslis*. Gardner copies this into his *Ye Bok of ye Art Magical*.

5) In 1947, Arnold Crowther discovers the whereabouts of Aleister Crowley, and he, Gerald Gardner, and possibly also a young woman who may or may not have been Patricia Crowther (or possibly Edith Grimes) under the assumed name 'Eva Collins', visit Crowley on May 1st 1947. Gardner revisits Crowley three more times over the course of the month. During this time he discusses witchcraft and magic(k) with Crowley, and decides that Wicca and the O.T.O. are highly compatible. He is initiated IV° O.T.O., and licensed to start an encampment and initiate people himself. Over the rest of 1947 he tries to do so, with little or no success, and eventually, at some point after Crowley's death and Gardner's meetings with O.T.O. people in the USA, Gardner decides to concentrate upon Wicca.

6) At some point, possibly around 1946–1949 (the likely period of the writing of *High Magic's Aid*), Gardner ceases using *Ye Bok of ye Art Magical* in ritual, and (possibly with the help of Edith Woodford-Grimes) copies the Wiccan material from it (plus some other material) into another handwritten book, the one now known as "Text A" of the Gardnerian Book of Shadows. By midsummer 1953, he has reworked and recopied this material again, producing "Text B".

7) At midsummer 1953, Gardner initiates Doreen Valiente into Wicca. During her initiation, Doreen notices several pieces of material from Crowley's published works. Since Gardner's previous working partner, Edith Woodford-Grimes, had by this point retired from witchcraft (possibly due to some Press publicity during 1952 about Gardner's coven near the Bricket Wood nudist camp^[25]), Doreen rapidly becomes Gardner's new High Priestess. She persuades Gardner to allow her to rewrite much of the rituals, removing or rephrasing

material from Crowley (whose bad reputation is at this point rapidly burgeoning due to the recent publication of *The Great Beast*, John Symond's sensationalist biography of Crowley) and also some of the more blatantly Judeo-Christian ceremonial magic material. The result is "Text C" of the Gardnerian Book of Shadows.

Postscript

Since writing the bulk of this essay, it has come to my attention that Gareth Medway has written an article entitled *Gardner, Crowley, and Lugh*, published in *Aisling* Issue 8, part of which which covers some of the same ground as this essay, and in which he reaches similar conclusions about the sources from which *The Charge of the Goddess* derives. The most significant difference in our conclusions is that he seems to have overlooked the material from *Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente*, and proposes that the source from which the material was taken was not a copy of *The Blue Equinox* but a collection of issues of *The International*. Since, as mentioned above, this would have been hard to come by in England (being a pro-German literary magazine published in America during the First World War; the only library in Britain to own a set is the British Library itself, and even its collection is incomplete), he proposes that the source of this was Louis Wilkinson, who was also a contributor to *The International* (August, September, and November 1917) and may thus have owned copies of it, and who in about 1953 claimed to Francis King to have known the New Forest coven during the late 1930's or early 1940's.^[26] This is an intriguing suggestion, but in view of the facts that *Liber Cordis Cincte Serpente* did not appear in *The International* and would have been hard to obtain from any source other than *The Blue Equinox*, and that we have good reason to believe that Gardner owned a copy of *The Blue Equinox*, I suspect that it may be incorrect. The possibility remains, however, that Louis Wilkinson may have been instrumental in introducing Gardner and/or the New Forest coven to the works of Aleister Crowley.

Footnotes

[1] See for example Gerald Suster, *The Legacy of the Beast* pp. 201, 218, and E.W. Liddell and Michael Howard, *The Pickingill Papers*, pp. 91–94. The latter contains a great many claims, some of them quite astonishing, for which not a shred of hard evidence is presented or has ever been found by others.

[2] Amado Crowley, *Secrets of Aleister Crowley* pp. 142–146. Since Amado Crowley makes lengthy and elaborate claims about being Aleister Crowley's illegitimate son and having had a close relationship with him, but there is absolutely no trace of him in Aleister Crowley's extremely detailed personal diaries, he cannot be considered a reliable source.

[3] Doreen Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, pp. 61–62.

[4] Donald H. Frew, private communication, 1999. Don Frew and his collaborators have been making a very detailed study of *Ye Bok of ye Art Magical* and various other early Gardnerian and related Wiccan texts for many years, and they are apparently planning to publish a book on the subject at some point.

[5] Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon* (Oxford, 1999) p. 227.

[6] Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon* (Oxford, 1999) pp. 227–237, 448–449.

[7] Patricia Crowther, *The Day I Met Aleister Crowley in Prediction* November 1970, pp. 12–13.

[8] Patricia Crowther, *One Witch's World* (London, 1998) p. 18; Patricia Crowther, *Lid Off the Cauldron* (London, 1981) p. 27.

[9] Steve Jones, *Masonic Wicca*, talk given at the 1999 Pagan Federation Annual Conference.

[10] Prof. Ronald Hutton, private communication, 2000.

[11] Gareth Medway, private communication, 1999.

[12] Francis King, *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.* (London, 1973) p. 44; A.R. Naylor, *O.T.O. Rituals and Sex Magick* (Thame, 1999) p. 185.

[13] Deborah Bender (a.k.a. Soror Facilis), communication on BA . P A G A N mailing list, 1999.

[14] Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon* (Oxford, 1999) pp. 227, 231.

[15] See <http://www.angelfire.com/ca/redgarters/gbglbibdx.html> for a complete listing of Gardner's library as sold to The Wiccan Church of Canada.

[16] Aleister Crowley's personal diaries, entry for May 1st 1947. These are at O.T.O. headquarters in Texas, and a transcript of them is at the Warburg Institute in London (Gerald Yorke Collection, MS 23). The full text of the entry reads:

Thur 1 Miss Eva Collins. Dr G.B.Gardner Ph.D Singapore. Arnold Crowther prof.G. a Magician to tea. Dr.G.R.Arch.

[17] Patricia Crowther, *The Day I Met Aleister Crowley in Prediction* November 1970, p. 14.

[18] Aleister Crowley's personal diaries, entries for May 7th, 14th, and 27th, and passim. These are at O.T.O. headquarters in Texas, and a transcript of them is at the Warburg Institute in London (Gerald Yorke Collection, MS 23). The full text of these entries reads:

Wed 7 Dr Gardner about 12. Tell him phone Wel 6709.

Wed.14 G.B.G.

Tues 27 Gardner here

"Wel. 6709" is Gerald Yorke's telephone number.

[19] The letter is in the Gerald Yorke Collection at the Warburg Institute in London, where it is MS D5.

[20] Doreen Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, p. 57; Allen Greenfield *A True History of Witchcraft* (1992), which can be found on the Web in various places, including <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bos/bos352.htm> and <http://www.monmouth.com/~equinoxbook/true.html>.

[21] Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon* (Oxford, 1999) pp. 222–223.

[22] Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon* (Oxford, 1999) pp. 217, 226.

[23] "J.L. Bracelin" (actually believed to have been Idries Shah) *Gerald Gardner: Witch* p. 166; Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon* (Oxford, 1999) p. 226.

[24] Philip Heselton, *A Look Inside Dorothy Clutterbuck's Diaries* in *The Cauldron* No. 95 (February 2000).

[25] Doreen Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, pp. 38, 66; Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon* (Oxford, 1999) pp. 214, 243.

[26] Francis King, *Ritual Magic in England: 1887 to the Present Day* (London, 1970), pp. 176–181.