

The Ankh of Chephren Campaign Log

Session 3: 4:3:08

Missing Pieces

Edward Cholmondley – John

Dr. Karl Gustav Magnus – Gord

Damon Toyler – Karl

London, Autumn, Morning

13/10/36

You woke up refreshed. You had already made plans to research the ankh and then visit Malvern Hedges at the club. Edward and Damon saw to Magnus's gunshot wounds and they seemed to be doing fine. Magnus took a look through his books but could not find a single reference to the ankh. Magnus wanted to look at the ankh some more but Damon was reticent to hand it over. He also wanted to make a rubbing of the thing, but Damon insisted that he do that.

So you went off to the British museum and Magnus made sure you all got 'go anywhere' passes. You spent some solid hours in studious research except Damon who browsed some of the exhibits. Strangely, you could find next to no record of the ankh anywhere. Theories of conspiracies were mooted.

You did manage to find the missing page from *Secrets of the Pharaohs* by Eric Hammond:

The Ankh of Chephren

The Ankh of Chephren is an enigmatic artifact. It was found as part of a treasure hoard connected to the fourth dynasty pharaoh, Chephren (or Khafra). The object was found amongst the burial goods of an ancient figure, thought to be one of Chephren's high priests.

It is a golden circle about 6 inches across, and about a quarter inch thick, inlaid with lapis lazuli, and decorated with pictograms. There is a kind of handle, which forms an ankh shape with the larger round head.

The pictograms are odd and have been interpreted as meaning something like 'This will guide me in the afterlife,' or perhaps 'With this shall I find the underworld.' This caused some academic debate because they did not strictly match the standard hieroglyphs of the era. There was even some controversy as to whether they were too early or too late to match the fourth dynasty. The glyphs have been said, in now discredited theories, to be related to the runes found on early Mayan grave goods.

There is an amethyst set within the circular area and there are clearly places for three more gemstones (at the cardinal points) to be set. These have been lost through time.

Its intended function is not known and thought to be ornamental. However, the stones would be interesting in themselves as they are said to represent (together with the Ankh itself) the five elements of life in the ancient Egyptian world.

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You also wondered about the five elements of ancient Egypt and found out the following:

Egyptian mythology

The human soul is made up of five parts: the Ka, the Ba, the Akh, the Sheut, and the Ren. During life, the soul, including those of animals, and of gods, was thought to inhabit a body (named the Ha, meaning flesh).

Ren (name)

A person's name (rn in Egyptian) was given to them at birth and would live for as long as that name was spoken, which explains why efforts were made to protect it, placing it in large amounts of writings. For example, part of the Graeco-Roman Book of Breathings, a descendant of the Book of the Dead, was for ensuring the survival of the name. A cartouche (magical rope) was often used to surround the name and protect it for eternity. Conversely, the names of deceased enemies of the state, such as Akhenaten, were studiously hacked out of monuments.

Sheut (shadow)

A person's shadow (shwt in Egyptian) was always present. A person could not exist without a shadow, nor the shadow without the person. The shadow was represented as a small human figure painted completely black.

Ka (corporal presence/life force)

The Ka (k3) was the concept of life force, the difference between a living and a dead person, death occurring when the ka left the body. The Ka was thought to be created by on a potter's wheel, or passed on to children via their father's semen.

The Egyptians also believed that the ka was sustained through food and drink. For this reason food and drink offerings were presented to the dead, though it was the kau (k3w) within the offerings (also known as kau) that was consumed, not the physical aspect. The ka was often represented in Egyptian iconography as a second image of the individual, leading earlier works to attempt to translate ka as double.

Ba (soul/personality)

The Ba (b3) is in some regards the closest to the Western notion of the soul, but it also was everything that makes an individual unique, similar to the notion of personality. (In this sense, inanimate objects could also have a ba, a unique character, and indeed Old Kingdom pyramids were often called the ba of their owner). Like a soul, the ba is a part of a person that lives after the body dies, and it is sometimes depicted as a human-headed bird flying out of the tomb to join with the ka in the afterlife.

As with humans, deities could also have bau (plural of Ba), but in the case of divine beings, it was even more associated with their impressiveness, power, and reputation. When a god intervened in human affairs, it was said that the bau of the god were at work. In this regard, the king was regarded as a ba of a god, or one god was believed to be the ba of another.

Akh (Alternative: Khu)

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The Akh (meaning shiner), was a concept that varied over the long history of Egyptian belief. It was, at first, the unchanging unification of Ka and Ba, which united after the death of the physical body. In this sense, it was a sort of ghost. The Akh was then a part of the Akh-Akh, the panoply of Akhs from other people, gods and animals. In this system, it was the aspect of a person that would join the gods in the underworld being immortal and unchangeable.

In later belief, the Ka was considered to change into the Akh and Ba after death, rather than uniting with the Ba to become the Akh. At this stage, it was believed that the Akh spent some time dwelling in the underworld before returning and being reincarnated as a Ka, gaining a new Ba.

The separation of Akh / unification of Ka and Ba was created after death, by having the proper offerings made and knowing the proper efficacious spell, but there was an attendant risk of dying again. Egyptian funerary literature (such as the Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead) were intended to aid the deceased in 'not dying a second time' and becoming an akh.

You also looked into the life of Howard Wilkes and came up with this:

Wilkes was a successful soldier and explorer in northern Africa in the 1860s. However, after one ill-fated trip through Egypt he lost most of his men under very mysterious circumstances. He soon resigned his commission and returned to England and settled down in Oakham. He then began to turn to politics and was successful at that. He became foreign secretary for a short time in the 1880s and gathered a reputation as a ruthless and egomaniacal operator. He then resigned, again in mysterious circumstances. He shot himself in the head a few months later, a broken man.

Edward did wonder whether Wilkes could have been able to suppress all references to the ankh, at least in the museum, while he had been foreign secretary. You went through the records of the museum's library but were pretty sure by the end that the library had not been manipulated in this way. It was curious that the only record of the ankh you could find was in a crappy guide book.

Damon checked out stuff about amethysts, and tried to find if someone had recently been looking at the same sort of stuff you had been looking at, but did not come up with anything.

So you decided it was time to ring Malvern Hedges and arrange a meeting. You went outside to find a public call box. On your way there, Damon got the feeling that you were being watched and he caught a fleeting glimpse of a small shadowy figure looking at you from one of the roofs of the museum, but the form was soon gone.

You arranged to meet Malvern Hedges straight away, and on the way to the club in the taxi you had a free and frank exchange of views of how to play it. Magnus and Edward were all for being open and honest, but Damon thought that you should not trust him and give him the ankh.

As you entered his office Edward looked into Malvern Hedges' mind and read that he was anxious to get hold of the object, but that he doubted this would be the end of the matter. He immediately asked if you had found anything at Cleverley, to which Magnus quickly wanted to know how he knew you had even been there. Malvern Hedges explained that he 'knows many things.'

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You began to explain roughly what had happened, but he interrupted you, and demanded the object. Damon told him he had it outside, somewhere and made his excuses and left. He went down to the hall, then got the ankh out and proceeded to prise out the last gem, without damaging the ankh. He then hid the gem and returned to the suite and handed over the ankh. He was surprised at how easy it was to give up, but realised that he really did not want to give up the gem.

Malvern Hedges thanked you on behalf of the king and British intelligence but was clearly disappointed to see that the gems were missing. Edward read the man's mind again and came to the conclusion that Malvern Hedges had nothing to do with British intelligence or anything in the British government. Edward asked him about this, bluffing that he had done research on him. But Malvern Hedges explained that he held such a top-secret position that officially he did not exist. Edward wondered if Malvern Hedges was in the same line of business as Lord Brockhyrst, which Malvern Hedges took offense at and insisted that he was nothing like Lord Brockhyrst.

Malvern Hedges then went on to ask you to look for the rest of the pieces of the ankh. You agreed you would but asked him how you were to find them. He asked you how Lord Brockhyrst went about finding them. You said he had a witch, so Malvern Hedges told you to get a witch, too, and looked meaningfully at Edward.

So you took the ankh and went back to Dr. Magnus' place. You spent the evening talking about ancient Egypt and tried to make some sort of sense between the elements of the ankh and the ancient Egyptian elements of the body.

Edward tried to concentrate on the gem and used an old Tibetan meditation technique, but all he could see was blackness and power and death. As he looked harder he did manage to see images of dessicated dead people, including Sally Dark.

Then Edward concentrated on the ankh. He saw confused images of several locations. One was a typical English countryside, one was a windswept coast, and one was a busy city. He decided to focus on the city and as he saw more of it decided it must be somewhere in central London. He tried to work out where in London he was seeing, but became exhausted and had to stop. It only seemed like a short time to him, but he was in the trance for over an hour. Edward worked out it was the left gem which seemed to be tied to London.

You were a bit insecure about going to sleep, concerned that you might be being watched or someone might break in to steal your treasure. Damon kept the gem on his person, and Magnus hid the ankh in a clever hiding place in his study. As he was putting the house to bed, Magnus noticed a strange black truck outside in the street.

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Breakfast and tea seemed to refresh Edward and he tried again to do his strange trance-like staring at the ankh. At great physical risk he pushed himself to search for where he thought the gem might be. He recognised bits of Soho and eventually managed to focus upon the neon sign displaying the garish logo 'The Ritzy Klub' and he heard the strains of Billie Holiday's 'What a little moonlight can do.'

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Edward was clearly exhausted and a bit dazed. You took him to a Lyon's tea house to revive him, and a nice drop of English breakfast tea did seem to do the trick. Then you headed off to the Ritzy Klub.

The headline act upon a poster outside the Ritzy Klub was Loretta Appleby. She seemed to be adorned in the poster with a tiara with a large gem in the centre of it. You all agreed it was the perfect size to fit the ankh. You tried the door but it was locked and you noticed the club opened at eight. You decided to wander off around town looking at more places, just in case your investigation at the Ritzy had given anything away to someone who might be watching you. And you seemed to get the feeling rather a lot lately that you were being watched.

You decided to go back to Magnus' to recuperate and think of a decent way to approach Loretta that evening. Recovering from his exertions of earlier, Edward sensed some sort of presence in his head. He saw a vision of a young woman being sacrificed upon the altar below Claverley House. Then he saw a woman in a bath chair wearing what looked like a gas-mask, surrounded by weird contraptions: pumps and glass tubes, brass pipes, bellows and bottles of strange liquids. And the voice in his head said that she would not rest until she had got her revenge upon you; for it was (the late) Gloria Travers.