

Introduction from my May 2022 version of this whole thing:

Names had great importance in ancient Egypt. They could provide a glimpse into who that person was, when and where they were from and what their priorities were (especially when it comes to what god they worshiped). These things can be discovered because all names had meanings, and those meanings were important. Whether this would be like naming one's child "Elsie" which *means* God is abundance, or if it would be like literally naming one's child "God is abundance", I don't actually know. But the different segments of the names mean different things, and I was able to match up the segments of real ancient Egyptians' names with the segments of Ahk and his family's names to figure out their meanings. After that, it was really easy to just look at the spelling of the real peoples' names in hieroglyphs and match them up with Ahk and his family. And I, dear reader, believe that this is a far better pursuit than sleep.

I definitely should mention that I am not in any way an expert. I've only been learning about ancient Egypt for around two years, and I don't really know all that much about names and hieroglyphs, nor do I have access to much academic material. So please take all of this with a grain of salt, these are not in any way definitive. In fact, I'd love to see other peoples' interpretations, like I was able to see Podtod's a few months ago! Looking at the differences in our results was very interesting.

Last thing, feel free to use any of this that you find interesting in anything (especially if you put some more Shepseheret and Merenkahre content on AO3!).

TLDR: names are important, I'm not an expert, use this however

April 2023:

I originally posted a link to a google doc about all of this in The King's Guardians, so I don't even know how many people saw it, but it was in dire need of an update so I tweaked my findings a bit based on updated research and tried to make the whole thing a bit more readable. Please enjoy :)

Sources/Resources:	1
Meanings	3
Spellings	4
Pronunciations	6
Possible Interpretations	7

Sources/Resources:

- *The Egyptology Handbook* by Emily Sands
- Pharaoh.se
- *How to Read Egyptian Hieroglyphs* by Mark Collier and Bill Manley
- Wikipedia (for meanings of a few real ancient Egyptian names)
- The unicodes are from Wikipedia (it has a [sign list](#) and it is WONDERFUL)
- [Ancient Egyptian conception of the soul Wikipedia and World History](#)
- While we're at it shout out to [The History of Egypt Podcast](#) for being cool
- The English/Hieroglyph Dictionary app is also extremely helpful

Meanings

Ahkmenrah

Akh	Men	Ra
Effective	Eternal	Ra (sun god)

Kahmunrah

Ka	Men	Ra
Soul	Eternal	Ra (sun god)

Merenkahre

Mery	En	Ka	Ra
Beloved	Of	Soul	Ra (sun god)

Shepseheret

Shepsut	Hat	Et
Noblewomen	Foremost	Woman/Feminine ending

Note on “ra”: Ra and Re are exactly the same and completely interchangeable, there’s just a difference of opinion on the spelling/pronunciation of this sun god.

Note on “men”: I’ve seen “mn” translated as either “established” or “enduring/lasting/eternal”. Additionally, I’ve seen it spelled as “mn” and “mn n” (this will make more sense in the pronunciation section, but I thought I’d bring it up here). I’ve decided to go with the “eternal” translation as it has a nice connection to the characters themselves, and I’ve gone with the “mn n” spelling as I’ve seen that been used with the “eternal” translation more. Additionally, the reason why I’ve turned the “mun” into “men” in Kahmunrah’s name is because the transliteration it came from would be “mn” either way. The ancient Egyptians didn’t include all of the vowels when they wrote phonetically, which means Egyptologists have to add them back in, usually “e” but sometimes “u”.

A note on Ahk and Kah: When using the mun=men interpretation, “Ahk” and “Kah” are the only parts of their names that are different from each other. First of all, I think that this is neat because Rami Malek has a brother whose name is very similar to his: Sami, and the Akh and the Ka are different parts of the soul in ancient Egyptian conception (“Akh” could also be translated as “spirit”. I decided not to translate it this way so that their name meanings would be different).

A note on Merenkahre: Merenkahre’s name is very close to the name of the builder of the third great pyramid at Giza, Menkaure, as well as two later Old Kingdom kings, Merenre I and II.

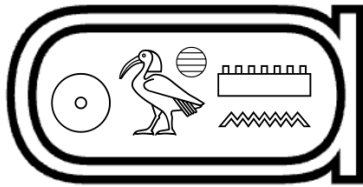
A note on Shepseheret: I admit that the translation I gave for Shepseheret’s name differs a lot more from her actual name than the rest of her family’s translations do, but I believe that her name was inspired by Hatsehepsut’s name. The two parts of Hatshepsut are “hat” and “shepsut”, and if you reverse these two parts and add the feminine “et” to the end you get Shepsut-hat-et, which sounds very close to Shepseheret. If this is actually how they created her name, I think it’s a very nice touch.

Spellings

According to Pharaoh.se the hieroglyph for Ra goes at the front of the name, no matter where it's actually said in the name.

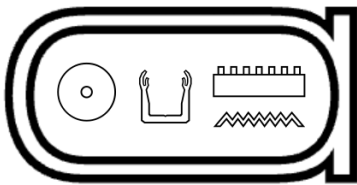
Ahkmenrah

Akh	Men	Ra
G25, Aa1	Y5, N35	N5
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



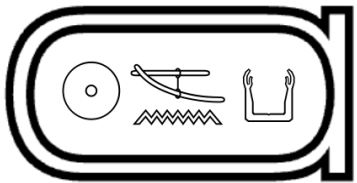
Kahmunrah

Ka	Men	Ra
D28	Y5, N35	N5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Merenkahre

Mery	En	Ka	Ra
U7	N35	D28	N5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Shepseheret

Shepsut

Hat

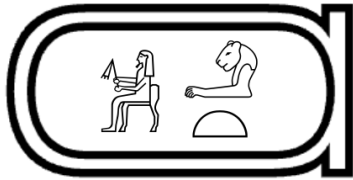
Et

(plus one or two more X1 depending on spelling)

A51

F4

X1



Pronunciations

Explanation courtesy of *How to Read Egyptian Hieroglyphs*. I don't fully understand all of them.

□: glottal stop, like in "uh-oh"

ḥ: the scottish "ch" sound like in "loch", like clearing your throat basically

□: "ah" while swallowing

š: "sh"

ḥ: "emphatic h, made in the throat"

Add some vowel sounds between the consonants

Also this [video](#) (starting at 8:12)

Ahkmenrah

□ḥmnr□

Kahmunrah

k□mnr□

Merenkahre

mrynk□r□

Shepseheret

špswḥ□tt

Possible Interpretations

There are a lot of references to the god Ra, which is pretty historically accurate, but doesn't make a lot of sense for this family in particular considering that the moon, rather than the sun, is really important to them. I would have expected more references to Khonsu, or at least Iah or maybe even Djehuty (Thoth). I mean, Ahhotep, whose name means "the moon is satisfied", is a really cool person historically so I think she would have been a great person to reference.

Ahkmenrah & Kahmunrah

The "eternal" parts of both of their names pretty obviously connect to how the tablet has allowed them to become immortal, and thus live eternally. They both have something to do with the god Ra, and then the only difference between their names are two parts of the soul. "Ka" is usually just translated as "soul", and as I previously mentioned, "Akh" can be translated as "spirit", but can also be translated as "effective". If we go with the "effective" translation, then Ahkmenrah's name could just mean that since he's immortal, he can continue doing things - being effective - for eternity, like Ra, or for Ra, or something else to do with Ra. On the other hand, "the eternal soul of Ra" for Kahmunrah makes less sense. I don't really see any clear connection between his character and it.

The Ka's role as a part of the soul doesn't have a very good connection either, as it is simply the "vital essence". It's just what keeps people alive; the living have it, the inanimate don't. The Akh's role, however, makes a little bit more sense. The Akh was the unification of the Ka and Ba (the personality) after a person dies. It could die but was effectively immortal. It's what went into the underworld to live after death, and could become a type of ghost that roamed the earth in certain circumstances. It also was described as being thought personified, not the process of thought, but intellect itself. I feel like this could connect to how Ahkmenrah is an immortal being wandering the earth, even after he has died.

Merenkahre

Being the "beloved soul of Ra" makes sense when you consider that whole "father to the son of the sun" and "descendant of Ra the sun god" thing into account, and considering that his epithet claims that he is the sun, maybe it means that he *is* the soul of Ra, or something like that.

Shepseheret

Again, the similarity to Hatshepsut is pretty cool. I think it's pretty self explanatory that as the great royal wife (the closest ancient Egyptian title to queen) she's the foremost of noblewomen.