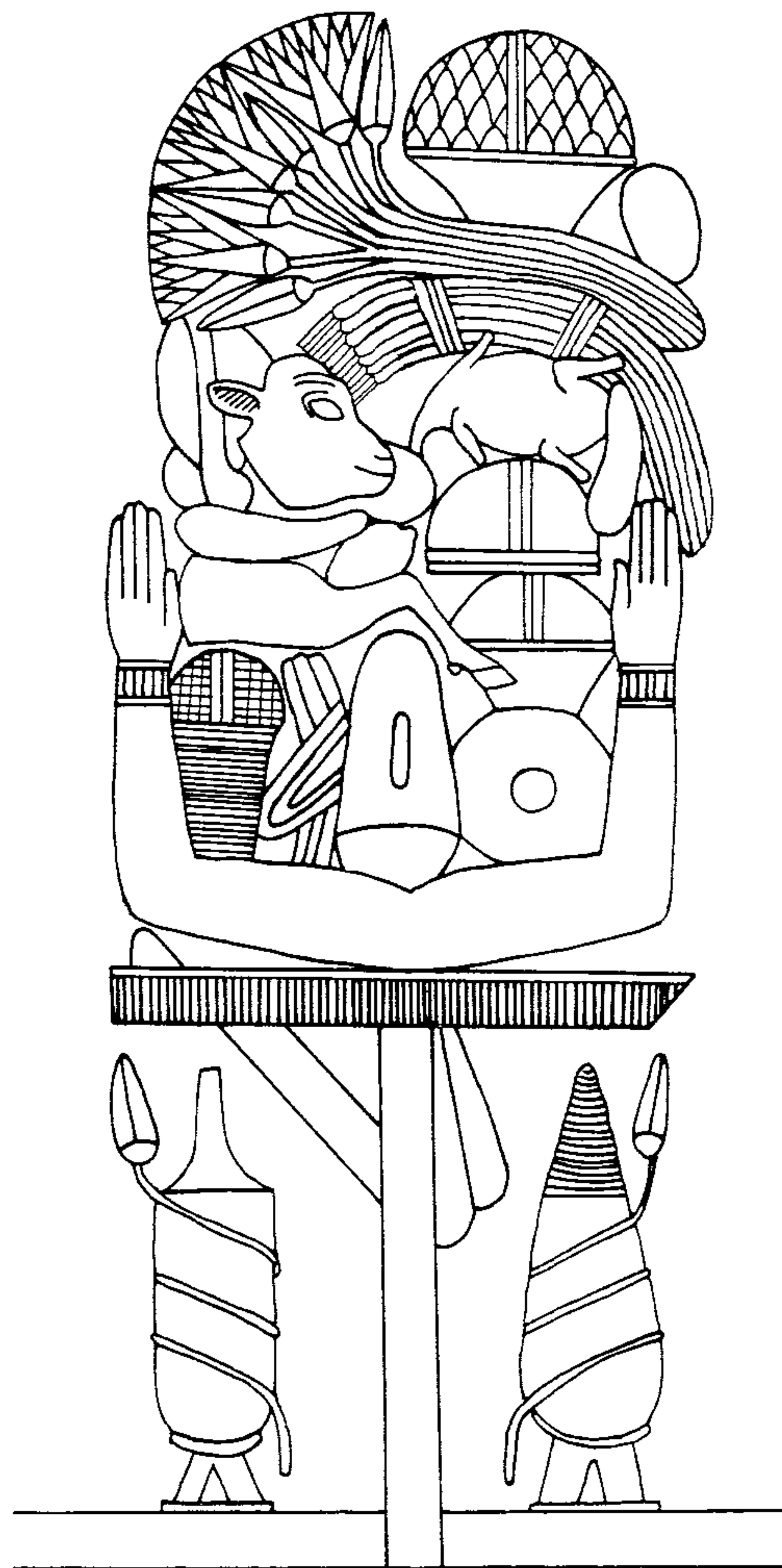


For His Ka

Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer

Edited by David P. Silverman



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Cover Illustration

The illustration by Jennifer Houser is based on the depiction of a table of offerings that appears in several Theban tombs of the New Kingdom: Tjanefer (TT 158); the two sculptors, Nebamun and Ipuky (TT 181); the vizier Ramose (TT 55); Kheruef (TT 192); Inherkha (TT 359); and the false door stela from the tomb of Puyemre (TT39).

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CHAPTER 11

JOSEPH SMITH AND EGYPTOLOGY: AN EARLY EPISODE IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN SPECULATION ABOUT ANCIENT EGYPT, 1835–1844

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Klaus Baer was an Egyptologist who was a specialist in such diverse subjects as Old Egyptian, Old Kingdom rank and title, and Coptic, as well as ancient Egyptian chronology, economics, epigraphy, philology, lexicography, and etymology. If his manner was sometimes gruff, it masked a generous nature, because Klaus was well known for sharing freely of his time and knowledge with students and colleagues alike. It is regrettable that this brilliant scholar did not publish more than he did; perhaps it was because he derived more personal satisfaction simply from *solving* Egyptological problems than he did from publishing the results of his countless and varied investigations.

Further evidence of Klaus Baer's generosity is the bequest of his substantial personal Egyptological library to the Department of Near Eastern Studies in the University of California at Berkeley, where he taught Egyptology from 1959 to 1965. Long before his untimely death from heart disease in 1987, Klaus had begun to invest more heavily in the acquisition of current Egyptological titles—in many of which he had no immediate personal interest—because he knew that they would be needed for the collection he intended to leave to Berkeley, now called the Klaus Baer Library in his memory. His professional papers and correspondence were bequeathed to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, where Klaus taught from 1965 until his death. The *Papers of Klaus Baer* join the other important collections of professional papers of Chicago Egyptologists in the Oriental Institute Archives, including those of James Henry Breasted, William F. Edgerton, Charles F. Nims, Keith C. Seele, and John A. Wilson.

One of Klaus Baer's abiding interests lay in the Joseph Smith Papyri and in the history of their provenance, acquisition, and study. The purpose of this article is to introduce to a wider Egyptological audience some of the earliest evidence for speculation about ancient Egypt by Americans, during the years 1835 to 1844, at a time when the pioneering work of Jean François Champollion (1790–1832) had attained very limited circulation in Europe and was completely unknown in the Western Hemisphere; it is offered in memory of Klaus Baer and in honor of Miriam Reitz Baer, his beloved wife.

Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805–1844), was the first native-born American who is known to have made an effort to translate writings and to interpret vignettes found on ancient Egyptian funerary papyri. Beginning in early July 1835, the Mormon prophet was engaged in the sporadic study of at least three ancient papyri, the surviving fragments of which are now known as the Joseph Smith Papyri (Baer 1968, pp. 111–12). Only one of these papyri was

subsequently translated by Smith, who identified it as *The Book of Abraham*; work on the interpretation of the others was incomplete at the time of the prophet's death in June 1844. Since 1842, when his translation was first published in a larger work entitled *The Pearl of Great Price* and became part of Mormon canonical scriptures, *The Book of Abraham* has been a focal point for attacks by anti-Mormons and rationalization by Mormon apologists.¹ When they are judged according to the standards of modern professional Egyptology, Joseph Smith's translations can, at best, be described as unorthodox.² Nevertheless, the position of the Mormon prophet is secure within the early history of American speculation about ancient Egypt. As a manifestation of American interest in the culture of ancient Egypt, the story of Joseph Smith and his ancient Egyptian mummies and papyri is one of the more curious chapters in the early history of American Egyptology.

Nearly thirty years ago, John A. Wilson devoted four short paragraphs to a summary of the role of Joseph Smith in his popular history of American Egyptology (Wilson 1964, pp. 37–38). As a result of his own personal involvement in the subsequent development of the story in the late 1960s, Wilson was motivated to expand upon his original treatment when he came to write about it in his autobiography (Wilson 1972, pp. 173–77). During the past twenty-five years, a great deal of interest in the Joseph Smith Papyri has been expressed in publications aimed primarily at members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (popularly known as the Mormons), but there has been little attention paid to the subject in the literature of mainstream professional Egyptology (see *Appendix 11.1: Select Bibliography*, below).

Joseph Smith, Jr., was born near Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, U.S.A., on December 23, 1805. He was the fourth of ten children of Joseph Smith (1771–1840) and Lucy Mack Smith (1776–1856). The families of both parents had been prosperously established in New England since the middle of the seventeenth century, but the Smiths themselves have been described as frontier-drifters; by the time Joseph was eleven years old, his parents had changed residence ten times (Malone 1935, vol. XVII, p. 310). As a consequence of his family's itinerant lifestyle and reduced circumstances, young Joseph had

1. Joseph Smith's translation of *The Book of Abraham* was originally serialized in the Mormon newspaper *Times & Seasons*, vol. III, no. 9 (March 1, 1842) and no. 10 (March 15, 1842); the wood-cut of Facsimile No. 3 (see fig. 11.3) appeared on May 16, 1842. The earliest attempt by a professional Egyptologist to produce a translation of the hieratic inscriptions that accompany the vignettes published as wood-cuts in *The Book of Abraham* was that of Théodule Devéria (1831–1871), which was published in 1861, p. 539. In 1912, the Right Reverend Franklin S. Spalding, Episcopal Bishop of Utah, collected negative opinions on Joseph Smith's translations in *The Book of Abraham* from Professor Archibald Henry Sayce (1845–1933) of Oxford University, Professor William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853–1942) of University College London, Professor James Henry Breasted (1865–1935) of the University of Chicago, Arthur C. Mace (1874–1928) of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Professor Eduard Meyer (1855–1930) of the University of Berlin, Professor Friedrich Wilhelm *Freiher* von Bissing (1873–1956) of the University of Munich, and others, which he published in a little pamphlet entitled *Joseph Smith, Jr., As A Translator* (1912). The principal Mormon apologist for *The Book of Abraham* has been Professor Hugh Nibley of Brigham Young University, a student and friend of the late Professor Klaus Baer; see the citations for Nibley's books and articles in *Appendix 11.1: Select Bibliography*.
2. For a comparison of Joseph Smith's translations with those of a modern professional Egyptologist, see Baer 1968, pp. 130–32.

little formal education. Joseph and his brothers had to hire themselves out as farmhands. At home with their mother Lucy, the Smith children learned to read and to do simple arithmetic. Mrs. Smith's English vocabulary—and, consequently, that of each of her children—was based on the King James Version of *The Bible*.³ The family moved to Palmyra, New York, in 1816, and they remained in upstate New York until Joseph reached adulthood. The frontier counties of western New England and upstate New York, where Joseph Smith spent his boyhood, served as the incubator for a great many of the alternative religious sects and experimental societies that were born in America during the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴ This was the environment from which the future prophet of Mormonism emerged.

Although this is not the place for a full discussion of the early career of Joseph Smith and the founding of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a brief outline of the principal relevant events leading up to 1835 will serve to set the stage.⁵ Joseph Smith had the first of a series of visions in the spring of 1820. The Church was formally organized at Fayette, New York on April 6, 1830. *The Book of Mormon* was published at Palmyra, New York in July 1830. In 1833, the Mormons began the construction of their first temple, located at Kirtland, Ohio near Lake Erie.

The earliest-known published description of the mummies with which the Joseph Smith Papyri were associated was printed in a Painesville, Ohio newspaper on March 27, 1835.⁶ At that time, four ancient Egyptian mummies were being exhibited to the public in the nearby city of Cleveland, Ohio. In a letter to the editor of *The Telegraph*, "A Gardner" (perhaps a pseudonym, in the American tradition of Benjamin Franklin's "Poor Richard")⁷ quoted a description of four human mummies—identified as three females and one male—that was written by "a friend in Cleveland," whose signature read simply "FARMER." All four mummies were described as being covered or partially covered in "linnen" [linen] wrappings, and *three* of them were said to be accompanied by rolls of papyrus. In this description, there is no mention whatsoever of sarcophagi, coffins, mummy cases or masks, jewelry, amulets, canopic jars, or any other burial equipment. As this text gives the only known detailed physical description of the mummies prior to their acquisition by the Mormons and it has not been reprinted elsewhere, it is reproduced here in its entirety.

3. Although the first edition of Noah Webster's two-volume *An American Dictionary of the English Language* had been published in 1828, Joseph Smith's spelling of many English words—and, indeed, that of nearly all of his "scribes"—remained supremely unaffected by the appearance of that standard reference work. [Ed. note: The many misspellings in the following passages are found in the originals and are faithfully reproduced herein.]
4. For a recent interpretation of the personality of Joseph Smith and his place in American history, see Bloom 1992, pp. 26–43. This reference was kindly pointed out to me by my colleague Robert K. Ritner. See also Hansen 1981, chap. 1, pp. 1–44; Andrew 1978, chap. 1, pp. [3]–10.
5. See the biographical entries for Joseph Smith in *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (1918, vol. XVI, pp. [1]–3) and *Dictionary of American Biography* (1935, vol. XVII, pp. 310–12).
6. An unattributed typescript of this text is preserved in the *Papers of Klaus Baer*, item 2344. I owe the identification of the source to Professor H. Donl Peterson, Brigham Young University.
7. As suggested by my colleague Robert K. Ritner.

THE TELEGRAPH
PAINESVILLE, MARCH 27, 1835
[FOR THE TELEGRAPH.

MUMMIES.

Mr. Editor,—The history of the ancients is replete with grandeur & curiosity; and who is there so callous, as not to be excited with sufficient curiosity, to traverse with interest, all the dark labyrinths of pagan lore and long gone by usages. History, indeed, calls to mind spirits which have long since been traversing the golden works of the celestial world: but, how much more are we neared to them, when we can commingle with bodies *spiritless*, who traversed this earth thousands of years ago, as we now do, possessing passions and wants, ambition, avarice and superstition like ourselves. Could we but look forward beyond the dark curtain of time and see the mighty changes, which will transpire for thousands of years to come, we should be lost in amazement. The past is wonderful although very incomplete; yet we are daily obtaining new light from the researches of scientific antiquarians. The discoveries in the long buried cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii which have been hidden from the world about 1800 years are truly interesting. The habits, manners and customs of those once inhabited cities are plainly inferred from the appearances of the charred dwellings and other edifices for public purposes—their amphitheatres [amphitheaters] and temples of Isis, holy utensils and baths &c. &c.

But the most interesting of all antique subjects, is the opening of the catacombs of Egypt where human bodies are found in a complete state of preservation or nearly so. How, or by what agency these bodies are preserved, or for what object is wholly an enigma. Many have conjectured that the doctrine of the resurrection was embodied in the Egyptian religious faith, and others again suppose that the practice of embalming their dead originated in their abhorrence to decay—but all is speculation. Curiosity has frequently prompted us to visit and critically examine mummies which were found in the catacombs near Thebes; and to realize that I was viewing one of my own species who had lived like myself and been a member of a community three [three] or four thousand years ago, produced a sensation like that of associating with people of another world.

I received a short description from a friend in Cleveland of four mummies that are now exhibiting in that place which may not be uninteresting to some of your readers.

A Gardner.

“Dear Sir: I send you a description of *four Mummies*, now exhibiting in this place. They were found in June, 1832—three miles from Thebes, 236 feet deep in a catacomb [catacomb] or vault 94 by 18 feet in the clear. Some stone[s] described by the finder [were] 32 ft. long, 8 high and 5 feet wide, evidently belonging to Mount Lebyen, to which there are strong indications of a railroad. The stone[s] were put together with a cement and exhibited superior workmanship.

Some of the bodies stood in niches [niches] of the wall; a row of bodies, however, laid on the bottom 8 feet deep (reversed,) more or less decayed. This statement of the owner is accompanied by good authority.

No. 1—4 feet 11 inches, female—supposed age 60; arms extended, hands side by side in front; the head indicating motherly goodness. There was found with this person a roll or book, having a little resemblance to birch bark; language unknown. Some linguists however say they can decipher 13-36, in what they term an epitaph; ink black and red; many female figures.

No. 2.—Height 5 ft. 1 1-2 inch; female; supposed age 40. Arms suspended by the side; hands brought in contact; head damaged by accident; found with a roll as No. 1, filled with hieroglyphics, rudely executed.

No. 3.—Height 4 ft. 4 1-2.—Male, very old, say 80; arms crossing on the breast, each hand on its opposite shoulder; had a roll of writing as No. 1 & 2; superior head, it will compare in the region of the sentiments with any in our land; passions mild.

No. 4.—Height 4 ft. 9; female. I am inclined to put her age at about 20 or 25, others call her an old woman; arms extended, hands by her side; auburn hair, short as girls at present in their new fashion. Found with her a braid of hair, three strans [strands] of the color of that on her head and 18 inches long. The head approximates to the form of the Orang Outang. The occipital and bazillar

region very large; the head indicating a person of the lowest grade of human beings. Slander, fight, and devotion to the passions were undoubtedly peculiar traits in her character. They were enveloped in linnen [linen] saturated with gum, the qualities of which are not well understood. A thousand yards are supposed to be used on each body; 186 thicknesses have been counted on one of them. They are covered so as to preserve the exact form of the body and limbs. No. 3 and 4; the envelope is mostly stripped off; on 1 and 2 it is some broken. No. 1, fine linnen; No. 2, coarse; No. 3, very coarse; No. 4, very fine. The bodies evidently were reduced before winding. The man, No. 3, whose cerebral organization indicates a mind able to guide the destinies of a nation, is enveloped in the poorest and coarsest linnen, while the woman, No. 4, whose head indicates a disposition which may well be represented as the demon of society, was in the most careful manner enveloped in the finest of linnen and with a much greater proportion of gum. Is not this circumstance an intimation to us that rank was not according to merit—that superiority in station did not follow from superiority of mind, but from extraneous circumstances.

It is interesting to observe in these individuals the external indications of disposition which at this day build up and pull down society; that these relics of another and unknown age were once animated with life, and actuated by passions, hopes and fears, as we now are. How pleasing to contemplate that aged man, by rules that will not deceive, in the active exercise of those sentimental powers of the mind from which the hope of immortality springs. In such minds there is light—in such minds a nation will find prosperity, and society an anchor. But how sad to contemplate the history of that young female (No. 4)—revenge and hate indignant frown upon her brow.

The love of property is not indicated on either of their heads as being in any proportion as strong as with us. Did they not hold property in common? and is not this remark applicable to Indians?

Farmer.

Three months later, the Egyptian mummies and related papyri were brought to Kirtland, Ohio, where they were exhibited to the public by a showman named Michael H. Chandler.⁸ In the summer of 1835, the 29-year-old Mormon prophet Joseph Smith had his first encounter with the mysteries of ancient Egypt.

On the 3rd of July, Michael H. Chandler came to Kirtland to exhibit some Egyptian mummies. There were four human figures, together with some two or more rolls of papyrus covered with hieroglyphic figures and devices. As Mr. Chandler had been told I could translate them, he brought me some of the characters, and I gave him the interpretation, and like a gentleman, he gave me the following certificate:

Kirtland, July 6, 1835.

This is to make known to all who may be desirous, concerning the knowledge of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., in deciphering the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic characters in my possession, which I have, in many eminent cities, showed to the most learned; and, from the information that I could ever learn, or meet with, I find that of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., to correspond in the most minute matters.

Michael H. Chandler,
Traveling with, and proprietor of, Egyptian mummies.*

*Mr. Chandler is responsible for the English of the above certificate, and I do not feel at liberty to edit it (*History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 235).

Joseph Smith decided to try to buy the antiquities from Chandler. With the financial assistance of Church members (known as “Saints”) Joseph Coe, Simeon Andrews, and

8. Virtually nothing is known about the life and career of Michael H. Chandler, apart from the Mormon historical sources quoted below. He is mentioned in Roberts 1978, hereafter cited as *History of the Church*.

others, he purchased the mummies and papyri for \$2,400, an enormous sum at the time (Backman 1983, p. 218, n. 27).⁹ Within days, Joseph Smith began to apply himself to the problem of trying to interpret the inscriptions and figures on the ancient Egyptian papyri.

Soon after this, some of the Saints at Kirtland purchased the mummies and papyrus, a description of which will appear hereafter, and with W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes, I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc.,—a more full account of which will appear in its place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them. Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth (*History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 236).

Smith, assisted by his “scribes” Phelps and Cowdery, spent the last two weeks of July, 1835, working on the papyrus that had been identified as the *Book of Abraham*.

The remainder of this month, I was continually engaged in translating an alphabet to the Book of Abraham, and arranging a grammar of the Egyptian language as practiced by the ancients (*History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 238).

There is no further record of work on the translations of the papyri until October. The official *History of the Church* and Joseph Smith’s personal diaries mention sporadic activity in Kirtland, relating to the Egyptian papyri and mummies, throughout the autumn of 1835 and the winter of 1835/1836.¹⁰

[October 1, 1835] This afternoon I labored on the Egyptian alphabet, in company with Brothers Oliver Cowdery and W. W. Phelps, and during the research, the principles of astronomy as understood by Father Abraham and the ancients unfolded to our understanding, the particulars of which will appear hereafter.¹¹

[October 7, 1835] This afternoon I re-commenced translating the ancient records.¹²

[October 19, 1835] At home. Exhibited the records of antiquity to a number who called to see them.¹³

[October 24, 1835] Mr. Goodrich and wife called to see the ancient [Egyptian] records, and also Dr. Frederick G. Williams to see the mummies.¹⁴

9. Smith would later claim that his mother had purchased the mummies at a cost of \$6,000; see below.
10. Joseph Smith’s personal diaries, containing entries in his handwriting as well as the handwriting of several of his “scribes,” are now housed in the archives of the Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. The diaries supplement the information that was compiled for *History of the Church* and serve as a parallel source. They are now published in *An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Faulring 1989), hereafter cited as *Smith Diaries*. Regrettably, there is a gap in the diary entries from December 1834 to September 1835. All excerpts from *Smith Diaries* are transcribed exactly as published, including strike throughs, underlining, etc.
11. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 286. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 35, which reads: “October 1[st] 1835 This after noon labored on the Egyptian alphabet in company with Br[other]s O[liver] Cowdery and W[illiam] W. Phelps. The system of astronomy was unfolded [to us].”
12. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 289, at the end of the entry for Wednesday, October 7, 1835. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 38, which reads: “This afternoon recommenced translating the ancient records.”
13. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 290. The entry in *Smith Diaries*, p. 39, is identical.
14. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 291. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 40, which reads: “Saturday, 24th Mr. Goodrich and his lady called to see the antient [ancient] Records. [They] also called at Doct[or] F[rederick] G. Williams to see the mummies.” The diary entry suggests that the mummies were then in the care of Dr. Frederick G. Williams who was one of Joseph Smith’s “scribes.” However, Emma Hale Smith’s biographers have found entries in the unpublished *Journal of Caroline Barnes Crosby*, 1851–82,

[October 29, 1835] While at the doctor's, Bishop Edward Partridge came in in company with President Phelps. I was much rejoiced to see him. We examined the mummies, returned home, and my scribe commenced writing in my journal a history of my life; concluded President Cowdery's second letter to W. W. Phelps, which President Williams had begun.¹⁵

[November 17, 1835] Exhibited the alphabet of the ancient records, to Mr. Holmes, and some others. Went with him to Fredrick G. Williams', to see the mummies.¹⁶

[November 19, 1835] I returned home and spent the day in translating the Egyptian records.¹⁷

[November 20, 1835] We spent the day in translating, and made rapid progress.¹⁸

[November 26, 1835] Spent the day in translating Egyptian characters from the papyrus, though severely afflicted with a cold.¹⁹

[November 30, 1835] Henry Capron, an old acquaintance from Manchester, New York, called on me. I showed him the Egyptian records.²⁰

[December 7, 1835] Spent the day in reading Hebrew. Mr. John Hollister called to take the parting hand with me, and remarked that he had been in darkness all his days, but had now found the truth and intended to obey it.

This evening a number of brethren called to see the records, which I exhibited and explained. Fine sleighing.²¹

[December 10, 1835] This morning a number of brethren called to see the records, [Egyptian] which I exhibited to their satisfaction.²²

[December 12, 1835] Spent the forenoon in reading. About twelve o'clock a number of young persons called to see the Egyptian records. My scribe exhibited them. One of the young ladies who

now in the Utah State Historical Society, which suggest that the mummies were also exhibited for a time in the Smith's home. "Church members at Kirtland purchase them, but the mummies ended up on display in Emma's home, drawing a steady stream of visitors. Emma conducted tours, explaining the characters on them, as she had heard Joseph do." See Newell and Avery 1984, p. 54, n. 4.

15. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 293. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 42, which reads: "While at the Doct[or's], Bishop E[dward] Partri[d]ge came in in company with President Phelps. I was much rejoiced to see him. We examined the mum[m]ies, returned home, and my scribe commenced writing in/my/Journal a history of my life, concluding President [Oliver] Cowdery[']s 2d letter to W[illiam] W. Phelps, which President Williams had begun." The publication of the church history and the Prophet's life was begun in the Mormon periodical *Times & Seasons*, vol. III, no. 9, March 1, 1842.
16. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 316. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 65, which reads: "Tuesday, 17th Ex[h]ibited some/the Alphabet/ of the ancient records to Mr. Holmes and some others. Went with him to F[rederick] G. Williams to see the Mum[m]ies."
17. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 318. The text of *Smith Diaries*, p. 66, is identical.
18. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 318. The text of *Smith Diaries*, p. 66, is identical.
19. *History of the Church*, vol. II, pp. 320–21. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 68, which reads: "Thursday, 26th At home. We spent the day in transcribing Egyptian characters from the papyrus. I am severely afflicted with a cold."
20. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 322. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 69, which reads: "This afternoon Henry Capron called to see me. He is an old a[c]quaintance of mine from Manchester, New York. [I] shewed him the Egyptian records."
21. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 326. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 72, which reads: "Spent the day in reading Hebrew. Mr. John Hollister called to take the parting hand with me and remarked that he had been in darkness all his days, but had now found the light and intended to obey it; also a number of brethren called this Evening to see the records. I ex[h]ibited and explained them to their satisfaction. We have fine sleighing."
22. *History of the Church*, vol. II, pp. 327–28. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 75, which reads: "This evening I spent at hom[e]. A number of brethren called to see the [Egyptian] records which I ex[h]ibited to them. They were much pleased with their interview."

had been examining them, was asked if they had the appearance of antiquity. She observed, with an air of contempt, that they had not. On hearing this, I was surprised at the ignorance she displayed, and I observed to her, that she was an anomaly in creation, for all the wise and learned that had examined them, without hesitation pronounced them ancient. I further remarked, that it was downright wickedness, ignorance, bigotry and superstition had caused her to make the remark; and that I would put it on record. And I have done so, because it is a fair sample of the prevailing spirit of the times, showing that the victims of priestcraft and superstition would not believe though one should rise from the dead.²³

[December 14, 1835] A number of brethren from New York called to visit me and see the Egyptian records.²⁴

[December 16, 1835] Returned home.

Elders William E. McLellen, Brigham Young, and Jared Carter, called and paid me a visit with which I was much gratified. I exhibited and explained the Egyptian records to them, and explained many things concerning the dealing of God with the ancients, and the formation of the planetary system.²⁵

[December 23, 1835] In the forenoon, at home, studying the Greek language. And also waited upon the brethren who came in, and exhibited to them the papyrus.²⁶

[December 31, 1835] In the afternoon I attended at the chapel to give directions concerning the upper rooms, and more especially the west room, which I intend occupying for a translating room, which will be prepared this week.²⁷

The public mind has been excited of late, by reports which have been circulated concerning certain Egyptian mummies and ancient records, which were purchased by certain gentlemen of Kirtland, last July. It has been said that the purchasers of these antiquities pretend they have the bodies of Abraham, Abimelech, (the king of the Philistines,) Joseph, who was sold into Egypt, &c., &c., for the purpose of attracting the attention of the multitude, and gulling the unwary; which is utterly false. Who these ancient inhabitants of Egypt were, I do not at present say. Abraham was

23. *History of the Church*, vol. II, pp. 329–30. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 75, which reads: “Saturday morning, 12th At home. Spent the fore noon in reading. At about 12 o’clock a number of young person[s] called to see the Egyptian records. I requested my Scribe [Warren Parrish] to ex[h]ibit them. He did so. One of the young ladies who had been examining them was asked if they had the appearance of Antiquity. She observed with an air of contempt that they did not. On hearing this I was surprised at the ignorance she displayed and I observed to her that she was an anomaly in creation for all the wise and learned that had ever examined them without hesitation pronounced them antient [ancient]. I further remarked that it was downright wickedness, ignorance, bigotry, and superstition that caused her to make the remark and that I would put it on record. I have done so because it is a fair sample of the prevailing spirit of the times showing that the victims of priestcraft and superstition would not believe though one should rise from the dead.”
24. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 331. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 77, which reads: “Monday, 14th This morning a number of brethren from New York call[ed] to visit me and see the Egyptian records.”
25. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 334. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 78, which reads: “Returned home, Elder McLellen, Elder B[righam] Young and Elder J[ared] Carter called and paid me a visit with which I was much gratified. I ex[h]ibited and explained the Egyptian Records to them and explained many things to them concerning the dealings of God with the ancients and the formation of the planetary system. They seemed much pleased with the interview.”
26. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 344. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 91, which reads: “Wednesday, 23d In the forenoon at home stud[y]ing the Greek Language. Also waited upon the brethren who came in and exhibiting to them the papyrus.”
27. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 347. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 94, which reads: “In the after noon I attended at the Chapel [Kirtland temple] to give directions concerning the upper rooms and more especially the western room which I intend oc[c]upying for a translating room which will be prepared this week.”

buried on his own possession “in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohah, the Hittite, which is before Mamre,” which he purchased of the sons of Heth. Abimelech lived in the same country, and for aught we know, died there; and the children of Israel carried Joseph’s bones from Egypt, when they went out under Moses; consequently, these could not have been found in Egypt, in the nineteenth century. The record of Abraham and Joseph, found with the mummies, is beautifully written on papyrus, with black, and a small part red, ink or paint, in perfect preservation. The characters are such as you find upon the coffins of mummies—hieroglyphics, etc.; with many characters of letters like the present (though probably not quite so square) form of the Hebrew without points. The records were obtained from one of the catacombs in Egypt, near the place where once stood the renowned city of Thebes, by the celebrated French traveler, Antonio Sebolo, in the year 1831. He procured license from Mehemet Ali, then Viceroy of Egypt, under the protection of Chevalier Drovetti, the French Consul, in the year 1828, and employed four hundred and thirty-three men, four months and two days (if I understand correctly)—Egyptian or Turkish soldie[r]s, at from four to six cents per diem, each man. He entered the catacomb June 7, 1831, and obtained eleven mummies. There were several hundred mummies in the same catacomb; about one hundred embalmed after the first order, and placed in niches, and two or three hundred after the second and third orders, and laid upon the floor or bottom of the grand cavity. The two last orders of embalmed were so decayed, that they could not be removed, and only eleven of the first, found in the niches. On his way from Alexandria to Paris, he put in at Trieste, and, after ten days’ illness, expired. This was in the year 1832. Previous to his decease, he made a will of the whole, to Mr. Michael H. Chandler, (then in Philadelphia, Pa.,) his nephew, whom he supposed to be in Ireland. Accordingly, the whole were sent to Dublin, and Mr. Chandler’s friends ordered them to New York, where they were received at the Custom House, in the winter or spring of 1833. In April, of the same year, Mr. Chandler paid the duties and took possession of his mummies. Up to this time, they had not been taken out of the coffins, nor the coffins opened. On opening the coffins, he discovered that in connection with two of the bodies, was something rolled up with the same kind of linen, saturated with the same bitumen, which, when examined, proved to be two rolls of papyrus, previously mentioned. Two or three other small pieces of papyrus, with astronomical calculations, epitaphs, &c., were found with others of the mummies. When Mr. Chandler discovered that there was something with the mummies, he supposed or hoped it might be some diamonds or valuable metal, and was no little chagrined when he saw his disappointment. “He was immediately told, while yet in the custom house, that there was no man in that city who could translate his roll: but was referred, by the same gentleman, (a stranger,) to Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., who, continued he, possesses some kind of power or gifts, by which he had previously translated similar characters.” I was then unknown to Mr. Chandler, neither did he know that such a book or work as the record of the Nephites, had been brought before the public. From New York, he took his collection on to Philadelphia, where he obtained the certificate of the learned,* and from thence came on to Kirtland, as before related, in July. Thus I have given a brief history of the manner in which the writings of the fathers, Abraham and Joseph, have been preserved, and how I came in possession of the same—a correct translation of which I shall give in its proper place.²⁸

28. *History of the Church*, vol. II, pp. 348–51. The spelling of the name “Sebolo” is an obvious misreading of “Lebolo,” which probably occurred when the original handwritten records were being transcribed, typed, or typeset for publication. The internal footnote, marked by an asterisk, contains the following additional information:

* The account here given of how the Prophet came into possession of the writings of Abraham, and of Joseph, the son of Jacob, was adapted from an article in the *Messenger and Advocate*, (Volume II, Number 3, pages 233, 236, bearing the date of December, 1835) signed by Oliver Cowdery. The article is addressed to William Frye, Esq., of Gilead, Calhoun County, Ill. The certificate of the “learned” referred to, is in the body of the article. It seems that Michael H. Chandler, the owner of the Egyptian mummies and the papyrus, exhibited his treasures in Philadelphia, and, while there, obtained the following opinion of several prominent doctors:

[January 12, 1836] This afternoon, a young man called to see the Egyptian manuscripts, which I exhibited.²⁹

[January 30, 1836] Attended school, as usual, and waited upon several visitors, and showed them the record of Abraham. Mr. Seixas, our Hebrew teacher, examined it with deep interest, and pronounced it to be original beyond all doubt. He is a man of excellent understanding, and has a knowledge of many languages which were spoken by the ancients, and he is an honorable man, so far as I can judge yet.³⁰

“Having examined with attention and deep interest, a number of mummies from the Catacombs, near Thebes, in Egypt, and now exhibiting in the Arcade, we beg leave to recommend them to the observation of the curious inquirer on subjects of a period so long elapsed; probably not less than three thousand years ago. The features of some of these mummies are in perfect expression. The papyrus covered with black or red ink, or paint, in excellent preservation, are very interesting. The undersigned, unsolicited by any person connected by interest with this exhibition, have voluntarily set their names hereunto, for the simple purpose of calling the attention of the public to an interesting collection, not sufficiently known in this city.”

John Redman Coxe, M.D.,
Richard Harlan, M.D.,
J. Pancoast, M.D.,
William P. C. Barton, M.D.,
E. F. Rivinus, M.D.,
Samuel G. Morgan, M.D.

“I concur in the above sentiments, concerning the collection of mummies in the Philadelphia Arcade, and consider them highly deserving the attention of the curious.

“W. E. Horner, M.D.”

Another paragraph in the article explains how it came about that Mr. Chandler gave the Prophet a certificate, concerning his belief in the Prophet’s ability to decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphics of the papyrus—which certificate will be found on page 235 of this volume, under the date of the purchase of the mummies and papyrus by certain persons in Kirtland. From the paragraph referred to, it appears that on the morning that Mr. Chandler first presented his papyrus to the Prophet Joseph Smith, he was shown by the latter, a number of characters which had been copied from the Nephite plates, and found that there were some points of resemblance between some of the Nephite characters and some of the characters on the Egyptian papyrus. Mr. Chandler then asked the Prophet’s opinion concerning the antiquity of the Egyptian papyrus, and also requested him to give a translation of the characters. The Prophet gave Mr. Chandler a translation of some few of the Egyptian characters, which agreed with the interpretation given by learned men in other cities, where the mummies and papyrus had been exhibited, whereupon Mr. Chandler gave the Prophet a certificate, stating that fact.

There is no parallel account of this material in *Smith Diaries*. For a different use of the same doctors’ affidavit, see below.

29. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 364. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 99, which reads: “This after noon a young man called to see the Egyptian manuscripts and I ex[h]ibited them to him. He expressed great satisfaction and appeared verry anxious to obtain a knowledge of the translation.”
30. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 388. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 127, which reads: “Saturday, 30[th] Attended school as usual, and waited upon several visitors and showed them the record of Abraham. Mr. Seixas our Hebrew teacher examined them with deep interest, and pronounced them to be original beyond all doubt. He is a man of excellent understanding and has a knowledge of many languages which were spoken by the Antints [ancients]. He is an honorable man so far as I can judge as yet.”

[February 3, 1836] Morning, attended our Hebrew lecture. Afternoon, studied with Oliver Cowdery and Sylvester Smith. Received many visitors, and showed them the Records of Abraham.³¹

[February 11, 1836] Attended school, and read Hebrew with the morning class.

Spent the afternoon in reading, and in exhibiting the Egyptian records to those who called to see me, and heaven's blessings have attended me.³²

[February 17, 1836] Elder Coe called to make some arrangements about the Egyptian mummies and records. He proposes to hire a room at John Johnson's Inn, and exhibit them there from day to day, at certain hours, that some benefit may be derived from them. I complied with his request, and only observed that they must be managed with prudence and care, especially the manuscripts.³³

In 1837, William S. West, a non-Mormon, visited Kirtland and later published a report of his visit in a sixteen page pamphlet. Regarding the Egyptian antiquities, West observed:

The Mormons have four mummies, and a quantity of records, written on papyrus, in Egyptian hieroglyphics, which were brought from the Catacombs near Thebes, in Egypt. They say that the mummies were Egyptian, but the records are those of Abraham and Joseph, and contain important information respecting the creation, the fall of man, the deluge, the patriarchs, the Book of Mormon, the lost tribes, the gathering, the end of the world, the judgement, &c., &c. ... These records were torn by being taken from the roll of embalming salve which contained them, and some parts entirely lost. ...³⁴

Many Americans suffered catastrophic financial reverses as a result of the Bank Panic of 1837, and the community of Latter-day Saints at Kirtland was no exception. Years later, Joseph Smith's mother Lucy recorded her recollections of how the mummies and papyri were regarded by the Ohio neighbors to whom the Mormons and their leader were deeply in debt:

Their first movement was to sue Joseph for debt, and, with this pretense, seize upon every piece of property belonging to any of the family. Joseph then had in his possession four Egyptian mummies, with some ancient records that accompanied them. These the mob swore they would take, and then burn every one of them. Accordingly, they obtained an execution upon them for an unjust debt of fifty dollars; but, by various stratagems, we succeeded in keeping them out of their hands (Smith 1979, p. 247).

There seems to be no published record of the westward movement of the mummies and papyri with the Mormons from Kirtland, Ohio into Missouri, and then back across the

31. *History of the Church*, vol. II, pp. 390–91. See also *Smith Diaries*, p. 128, which reads: "Wednesday, 3[rd] Attended our Hebrew lecture A.M. and studied with O[liver] Cowdery and Sylvester Smith. P.M. received many visitors and showed the records of Abraham."

32. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 394. See also *Smith Diaries*, pp. 131–32, which reads: "Thursday mornin[g], 11th Feb[ruar]y 1836 At home. Attended the School and read Hebrew with the morning Class. Spent the afternoon in reading and ex[h]ibiting the Egy[p]tian records to those who called to see me. Heaven's blessings have attended me."

33. *History of the Church*, vol. II, p. 396. See also *Smith Diaries*, pp. 133–34, which reads: "This evening Elder [Joseph] Coe called to make some ar[r]angements about the Egyptian records and the mummies. He proposes to hire a room at J[ohn] Johnson's Inn and ex[h]ibit them there from day to day at certain hours, that some benefit may be derived from them. I complied with his request and only observed that they must be managed with prudence and care, especially the manuscripts." Joseph Coe was one of the Saints who contributed funds toward the purchase price of Chandler's mummies and papyri. See n. 13 above.

34. West (1837) quoted by Clark (1968, p. 200).

Mississippi River to Nauvoo, Illinois.³⁵ One can only imagine how much damage the fragile antiquities may have suffered as they bounced over hundreds of miles of rough road in carts or wagons.

After the Mormons had established themselves in the city of Nauvoo, Illinois, a non-Mormon neighbor published this account of his visit with Joseph Smith and the Egyptian antiquities:

It was a beautiful morning towards the close of April last, when the writer ... accompanied by a friend, crossed the Mississippi river, from Montrose (Iowa), to pay a visit to the prophet. ...

After he had shown us the fine grounds around his dwelling; he conducted us, at our request, to an upper room, where he drew aside the curtains of a case; and showed us several Egyptian mummies, which we were told that the Church had purchased, at his suggestion, some time before, for a large sum of money.

The embalmed body that stands near the centre of the case, said he, is one of the Pharaohs, who sat upon the throne of Egypt; and the female figure by it is probably one of the daughters. ...

He then walked to a secretary, on the opposite side of the room, and drew out several frames, covered with glass, under which were numerous fragments of Egyptian papyrus, on which, as usual, a great variety of hieroglyphical characters had been imprinted.

These ancient records, said he, throw great light upon the subject of Christianity. They have been unrolled and preserved with great labor and care. My time has been hitherto too much taken up to translate the whole of them, but I will show you how I interpret certain parts. There, said he, pointing to a particular character, that is the signature of the patriarch Abraham.³⁶

The Book of Abraham was first serialized in the Mormon newspaper *Times & Seasons* in March 1842. This follow-up article appeared in May:

EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES.

These Mummies, with seven others, were taken from the Catacombs of Egypt, near where the Ancient, and we may say, almost unparalleled City of Thebes once stood, by the celebrated French traveler, Antonio Lebolo, at great expense, under the protection of the French Consul, by consent of Mehemet Ali, the Viceroy of Egypt. It is to be noticed that several hundred mummies, differently embalmed were found in the same catacomb, but only eleven in a state to be removed. The seven have been sold to a gentleman for private museums, and in consequence are kept from the eye of the public. They have been exhibited in Philadelphia and Baltimore to crowded audiences; in the latter place, although only engaged for two weeks, the exhibition was prolonged to five weeks, with attraction. Of all the relics of the ancient world that time has left, the Mummy is the most interesting. It is a well known fact, recorded in both sacred and profane history that men were embalmed, which science has attracted the learned for ages. All other antiquities are but the work of man, but mummies present us with the men themselves—they are the personages, preserved in human form, for the gaze and attraction of people who are occupying down the stream of time centuries from those—they have certainly been conspicuous actors in those mighty scenes of which the history of Egypt is full—An hundred generations have passed away and new Empires have begun since this flesh was animated—since those eyes were bright and the tongue was eloquent and the heart beat within this breast. These strangers—illustrious for their antiquity,

35. However, James R. Clark mentions an unpublished diary of one Samuel Woolley, in the possession of the Woolley family in Cardston, Alberta, Canada, which contains a diary entry for 1838, in which Woolley “claims the distinction of helping to transport the mummies and papyrus from Kirtland, Ohio, to Far West, Missouri, when Joseph Smith moved Church headquarters there.” See Clark 1968, p. 200, n. 11.
36. Quoted, without a specific citation or date, by James R. Clark as a report by an anonymous author who is stated to have written it for the *Quincy Whig*, a newspaper published in Quincy, Illinois near Nauvoo. See Clark 1968, pp. 200–01.

may have lived in the days of Jacob, Moses or David, and of course some thousand years have elapsed since their bodies were animated with the breath of life! History records the fact, that the higher class concealed their knowledge from the lower in figures and hieroglyphic character. A few of those, upon papyrus, used by the Egyptians for writing, will be exhibited with the Mummies.

“Having examined with considerable interest, a number of mummies from the Catacombs, near Thebes in Egypt and now exhibited in the Arcade, we beg leave to recommend them to the observation of the curious inquirer on subjects of a period so long elapsed: probably not less than three thousand years ago. The features of some of these mummies are in perfect expression. The papyrus, covered with black or red ink, or paint, in excellent preservation, are very interesting. The undersigned unsolicited by any person connected by interest with the exhibition, have voluntarily set their names hereunto for the simple purpose of calling the attention of the public to an interesting collection, not sufficiently known in this city.”

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“I concur in the above sentiments, concerning the collection of Mummies in the Philadelphia Arcade, and consider them highly deserving the attention of the Curious.”

W. E. Horner, M.D.

We have in our possession the four mummies referred to. They, together with the records, were purchased of a Mr. Chandler who exhibited them in different parts of the Union, and sold them to us in Kirtland, Ohio. The above is a copy of the original placard published by Mr. Chandler, whilst they were yet in his possession (*Times & Seasons*, May 2, 1842, p. 774).

In the same issue of *Times & Seasons*, May 2, 1842, is an account of a “catacomb of mummies found in Kentucky.” A Mr. Ash, who had reflected on them, is referred to *The Book of Mormon* for the connection between the Hebrews and Egyptians, etc.

Two weeks later, *Times & Seasons* reprinted the following note from *The Dollar Weekly Bostonian*, without editorial comment:

The chapter from the recently recovered Book of Abraham, and the unique cut which illustrated it, on the outside, has occasioned us some expense; but we care not for that so long as we please our patrons, which we mean to do at all hazards, trusting to the good sense of the most enlightened public in this, or any other universe, for suitable remuneration.

On June 1, 1842, *Times & Seasons* noted the following item from *New York Mechanics*:

“The Times and Seasons” the Mormon newspaper, published at Nauvoo by Joseph Smith, has commenced the translation of a book written by Abraham, and discovered in the catacombs of Egypt! These people, from a handful of persecuted outcasts have become a numerous sect, and are able to protect themselves against insult and oppression, in fact it is said that they have revolutionized the State of Illinois (*Times & Seasons*, June 1, 1842, p. 805).

In November 1843, Smith was evidently thinking again about his work on the papyri, as indicated by this entry in his personal diary:

Wednesday, Nov[ember] 15[th] 1843 At home. 10 A.M. Held court in the office. Erskine vs Pullen. Nonsuit. [several lines left blank] P.M. at the office. Suggested the idea of preparing a grammar of the Egyptian Language (*Smith Diaries*, p. 427).

Toward the end of April 1844, a scant two months before the Prophet's death, Josiah Quincy (1802–1882) and his cousin Charles Francis Adams (1807–1886) visited Nauvoo and met with Joseph Smith. Quincy later published his account of their visit to see the mummies.

... Ten closely written pages of my journal describe my impressions of Nauvoo, and of its prophet, mayor, general, and judge; but details, necessarily omitted in the diary, went into letters addressed to friends at home, and I shall use both these sources to make my narrative as complete as possible. I happened to visit Joseph Smith in company with a distinguished gentleman, who, if rumor may be trusted, has been as conscientious a journal writer as was his father. It is not impossible that my record may one day be supplemented by that of my fellow traveler, the Hon. Charles Francis Adams.

... The prophet referred to his miraculous gift of understanding all languages, and took down a Bible in various tongues, for the purpose of exhibiting his accomplishments in this particular. Our position as guests prevented our testing his powers by a rigid examination, and the rendering of a few familiar texts seemed to be accepted by his followers as a triumphant demonstration of his abilities. It may have been an accident, but I observed that the bulk of his translations were from the Hebrew, which, presumably, his visitors did not understand, rather than from the classical languages, in which they might more easily have caught him tripping.

"And now come with me," said the prophet, "and I will show you the curiosities." So saying, he led the way to a lower room, where sat a venerable and respectable-looking lady. "This is my mother, gentlemen. The curiosities we shall see belong to her. They were purchased with her own money, at a cost of six thousand dollars"; and then, with deep feeling, were added the words, "And that woman was turned out upon the prairie in the dead of night by a mob." There were some pine presses fixed against the wall of the room. These receptacles Smith opened, and disclosed four human bodies, shrunken and black with age. "These are mummies," said the exhibitor. "I want you to look at that little runt of a fellow over there. He was a great man in his day. Why, that was Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt!" Some parchments inscribed with hieroglyphics were then offered us. They were preserved under glass and handled with great respect. "That is the handwriting of Abraham, the Father of the Faithful," said the prophet. "This is the autograph of Moses, and these lines were written by his brother Aaron. Here we have the earliest account of the Creation, from which Moses composed the First Book of Genesis." The parchment last referred to showed a rude drawing of a man and woman, and a serpent walking upon a pair of legs. I ventured to doubt the propriety of providing the reptile in question with this unusual means of locomotion. "Why, that's as plain as a pikestaff," was the rejoinder. "Before the Fall snakes always went about on legs, just like chickens. They were deprived of them, in punishment for their agency in the ruin of man." We were further assured that the prophet was the only mortal who could translate these mysterious writings, and that his power was given by direct inspiration.

It is well known that Joseph Smith was accustomed to make his revelations point to those sturdy business habits which lead to prosperity in this present life. He had little enough of that unmixt spiritual power which flashed out from the spare, neurasthenic body of Andrew Jackson. The prophet's hold upon you seemed to come from the balance and harmony of temperament which reposes upon a large physical basis. No association with the sacred phrases of Scripture could keep the inspirations of this man from getting down upon the hard pan of practical affairs. "Verily I say unto you, let my servant, Sidney Gilbert, plant himself in this place and establish a store." So had run one of his revelations, in which no holier spirit than that of commerce is discernible. The exhibition of these august relics concluded with a similar descent into the hard modern world of fact. Monarchs, patriarchs, and parchments were very well in their way; but this was clearly the nineteenth century, when prophets must get a living and provide for their relations. "*Gentleman*," said this *bourgeois* Mohammed, as he closed the cabinets, "*those who see these curiosities generally pay my mother a quarter of a dollar*" (Quincy 1926, pp. 317–37, "Joseph Smith at Nauvoo").

The diaries of Charles Francis Adams have been published only for the entries through the year 1840 (*Diary of Charles Francis Adams* [1964–Present]). One of Adams' biographers described the encounter this way:

When the pair reached Nauvoo, Illinois, they had an extraordinary interview with Joseph Smith, the Mormon leader. Smith, described by Adams as a man “of frank but not coarse vulgarity,” held a long talk with the two New Englanders about his ideas and experiences. He also conducted them on a tour of his house, where he showed them four Egyptian mummies and explained (for a fee of twenty-five cents) the contents of a manuscript—“written by the hand of Abraham”—which had been found in one of them. “The cool impudence of this imposter” amused Adams but he was too polite, he noted sardonically, “to prove the negative against a man fortified by revelation” (Duberman 1961, pp. 92–93).

Josiah Quincy confirms that the mummies then in the possession of the Smith family were four in number. According to Quincy, one male was identified by Joseph Smith as the Pharaoh Necho. Quincy's reference to “pine presses,” with no remarks on their antiquity or unusual decoration suggests that the mummies were then stored in modern upright cases, such as large cupboards or armoires. Years later, Jerusha Walker, a grandniece of Joseph Smith, recalled: “What fun we had with Aunt Emma's boys, Joseph, Frederick, Alexander and David. My favorite hiding place was in an old wardrobe which contained the mummies, and it was in here that I would creep while the others searched the house.”³⁷ The only time that coffins are mentioned in the contemporary accounts occurs in the entry for December 31, 1835 in *History of the Church*. If the original coffins were still in the possession of Michael H. Chandler when he sold his mummies to the Mormons in July 1835, there seems to be no record of them by 1844. Perhaps Chandler had retained the coffins and disposed of them by other means.

A complete account of the sequel to the story of Joseph Smith and the Egyptian mummies and papyri after 1844 is beyond the space limitations of this article. It seems unlikely that Chandler conjured up the name of Antonio Lebolo, but a family connection between the two men remains unproved and seems unlikely. Perhaps Chandler and Lebolo were simply business partners. Two of the four mummies have been traced through a private museum in St. Louis to the Woods Museum in Chicago, where they are believed by most (but not all) researchers to have been destroyed in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, together with some of the Joseph Smith Papyri.³⁸ No records pertaining to the disposition of the other two mummies have been found. In 1967, eleven fragments of Joseph Smith's Egyptian papyri that had been purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1947 were given to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah, where they re-joined a twelfth piece known as the “Church Historian's Fragment.” The fate of the hypocephalus of Shoshenq, a woodcut of which was first published in 1842 as Facsimile No. 2 (see fig. 11.2) from *The Book of Abraham*, remains a mystery.

37. Quoted by Newell and Avery (1984, pp. 265–66, n. 44).

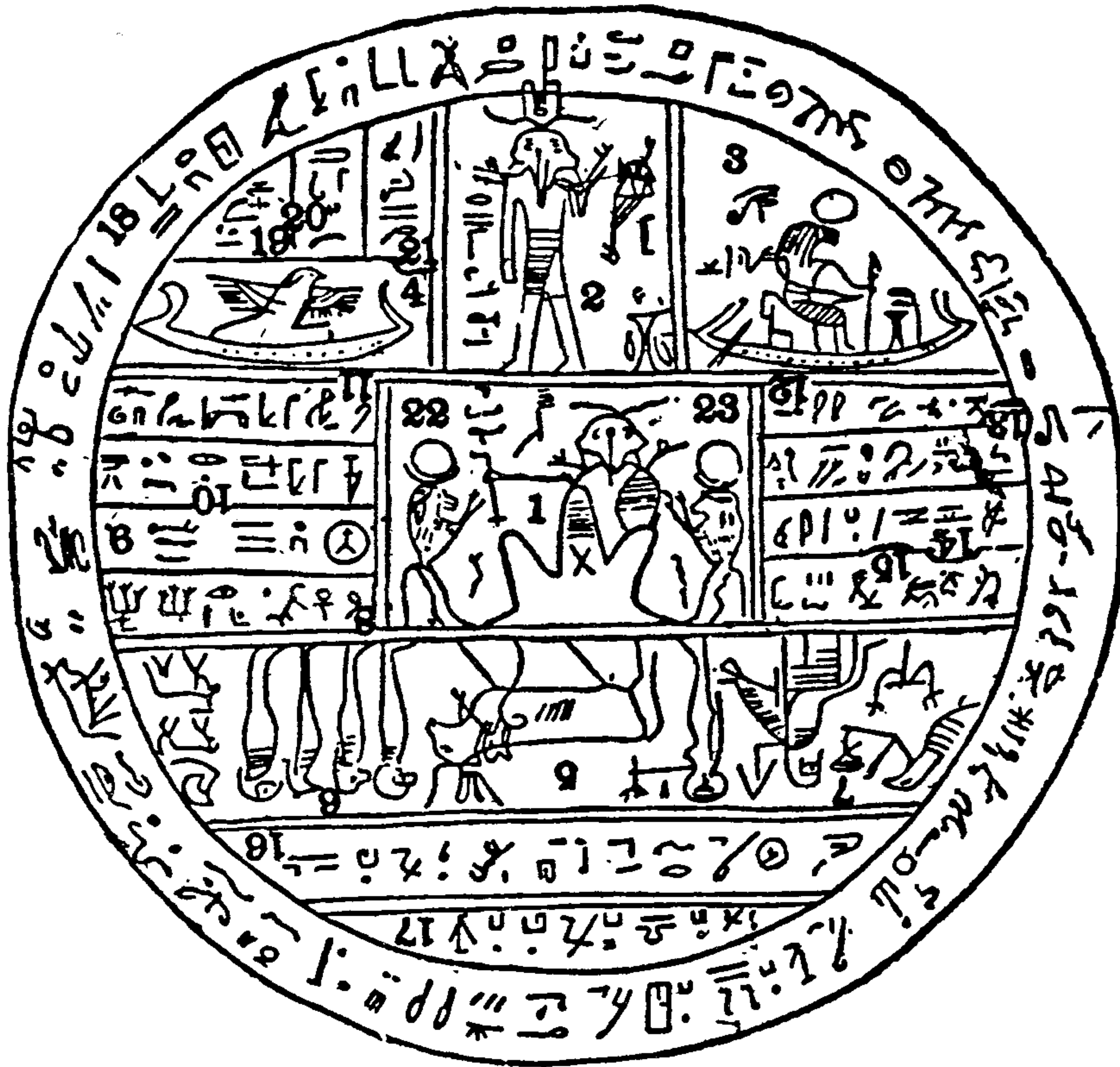
38. Personal communication to the author from Professor H. Donl Peterson, Brigham Young University, letter of May 22, 1985: “I am not persuaded that the Joseph Smith papyri was [*sic*] destroyed in the Chicago Fire in 1871. Some of the LDS church leaders were confident that some of the papyri was [*sic*] still in existence in the rebuilt Woods Museum in 1878. I feel that Chicago still contains some answers in this puzzling history.”



EXPLANATION OF THE ABOVE CUT

Fig. 1. The Angel of the Lord. 2. Abraham fastened upon the altar. 3. The idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice. 4. The altar for sacrifice by the idolatrous priests, standing before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and Pharaoh. 5. The idolatrous god of Elkenah. 6. The idolatrous god of Libnah. 7. The idolatrous god of Mahmackrah. 8. The idolatrous god of Korash. 9. The idolatrous god of Pharaoh. 10. Abraham in Egypt. 11. Designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians. 12. Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant to signify Shaumau, to be high, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word Shaumahyeem.

Figure 11.1. Facsimile No. 1 and Its Accompanying Explanation from *The Book of Abraham* (from Spalding 1912)



EXPLANATION OF THE ABOVE CUT

Fig. 1. Kolob, signifying the first creation, nearest to the celestial, or residence of god. First in government, the last pertaining to the measurement of time. The measurement according to celestial time which celestial time signifies one day to a cubit. One day in Kolob is equal to a thousand years, according to the measurement of this earth, which is called by the Egyptians Jah-oh-eh.

Fig. 2. Stands next to Kolob, called by the Egyptians Oliblish, which is the next grand governing creation near to the celestial or the place where God resides; holding the key of power also, pertaining to other planets; as revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered sacrifice upon an altar, which he had built unto the Lord.

Fig. 3. Is made to represent God, sitting upon his throne, clothed with power and authority; with a crown of eternal light upon his head; representing also the grand Key-Words of the Holy Priesthood, as revealed to Adam in the Garden of Eden, as also to Seth, Noah, Melchisedeck, Abraham, and all to whom the Priesthood was revealed.

Fig. 4. Answers to the Hebrew word Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament of the heavens; also a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand; answering to the measuring of the time of Oliblish, which is equal with Kolob in its revolution and in its measuring of time.

Fig. 5. Is called in Egyptian Enish-go-on-dosh; this is one of the governing planets also, and is said by the Egyptians to be the Sun, and to borrow its light from Kolob through the medium of Kae-e-vanrash, which is the grand Key, or, in other words, the governing power, which governs fifteen other fixed planets or stars, as also Floese or the Moon, the Earth and the Sun in their annual revolutions. This planet receives its power through the medium of Kli-flos-is-es, or Hah-ko-kau-beam, the stars represented by numbers 22 and 23, receiving light from the revolutions of Kolob.

Fig. 6. Represents the earth in its four quarters.

Fig. 7. Represents God sitting upon his throne, revealing through the heavens, the grand Key-Words of the Priesthood; as also, the sign of the Holy Ghost unto Abraham, in the form of a dove.

Fig. 8. Contains writing that cannot be revealed unto the world; but is to be had in the Holy Temple of God.

Fig. 9. Ought not to be revealed at the present time.

Fig. 10. Also.

Fig. 11. Also. If the world can find out these numbers, so let it be. Amen.

Figs. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20, will be given in their own due time of the Lord.

The above translation is given as far as we have any right to give at the present time.



EXPLANATION OF THE ABOVE CUT

1. Abraham sitting upon Pharaoh's throne, by the politeness of the king, with a crown upon his head, representing the Priesthood, as emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven; with the sceptre of justice and judgment in his hand.

2. King Pharaoh, whose name is given in the characters above his head.

3. Signifies Abraham in Egypt; referring to Abraham, as given in the ninth number of the *Times and Seasons*. (also as given in the first fac-simile of this book.)

4. Prince of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, as written above the hand.

5. Shulem, one of the king's principal waiters, as represented by the characters above his hand.

6. Olimlah, a slave belonging to the prince.

Abraham is reasoning upon the principles of astronomy, in the king's court.

Figure 11.3. Facsimile No. 3 and Its Accompanying Explanation from *The Book of Abraham* (from Spalding 1912)

APPENDIX 11.1: SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPYRI

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