

We have had previous occasion to comment on the illustrations in Joseph Smith, "The Pearl of Great Price." Two or three documents are in question as the two oblong illustrations show pictures from the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Whether this is one papyrus or two is immaterial. In illustration No. 1, the god Anubis is preparing a mummified body on a bed. The head of the god has been miscopied as human and should be that of a jackal. Beside the head of the mummy there is a flying bird which represents the Egyptians soul. Under the bed there are four jars into which the soft inner parts of the body were placed by the ancient Egyptians. Figure 3 is even more common, showing the dead Egyptian led into the presence of the god Osiris for judgment as to his moral character in life. In these the hieroglyphics have been very sketchily copied, and probably could have been read on the original.

Figure 2 is a round disk made of cloth and jesso to be placed under the head of a mummy in the late period of Egyptian culture (after 900 B.C.). It shows the scene customarily on such magical protection for the dead. In this the hieroglyphics can in part be checked and do correspond to those on such pieces as known in various museums. In fact the name of the dead appears as the same as that of Shishak in the Bible.

From the standpoint of the Egyptologist the explanations given with these illustrations are incorrect. The Egyptian language on such documents is decipherable and has appeared in translation in various books. If these copies were more accurate, one could probably read connected texts from them.

John A. Wilson,  
Prof. of Egyptology,  
University of Chicago