

I have been greatly interested in the documents you have sent me regarding the connection of Joseph Smith with the Egyptian materials purchased by his people in 1835, and concerning the whole situation I should like to make the following statement:

In 1822 Champollion published the first successful steps in the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics. It was only very gradually after this that he gained the ability to read the simpler and clearer sentences in hieroglyphic records. Little of the language, comparatively speaking, was understood when he died in 1832. He left in manuscript an elementary grammar, which was published by the government, beginning in 1836, and reaching completion in 1841. It would have been impossible for any American scholar to know enough about Egyptian inscriptions to read them before the publication of Champollion's grammar. I may add at this point that American Universities have never until recently given such studies any attention, and there is still only one professorship of the science in the United States, though it is now taught in the leading American Universities.

It will be seen, then, that if Joseph Smith could read ancient Egyptian writing, his ability to do so had no connection with the decipherment of hieroglyphics by European scholars. Now, according to the statements of Joseph Smith himself, the three Egyptian documents which he publishes in connection with the 'Book of Abraham' in 'The Pearl of Great Price,' were secured by some of his followers, together with some mummies, purchased at Kirtland in 1835. The point I wish to bring out is that the three fac-similes from the 'Book of Abraham' were associated with mummies. This fact is in complete harmony with the further fact that the three fac-similes are part of the usual equipment of the dead in the later period of Egyptian civilization before the Christian era. The three fac-similes in question represent equipment which will be and has been found in unnumbered thousands of Egyptian graves. In accepting them, then, as parts of the 'Book of Abraham,' let it be understood that they were in universal use among the pagan Egyptians, and that for some reason the

doctrines of Joseph Smith's monotheistic Abraham were universally accepted and used among the polytheistic Egyptians. In accepting these fac-similes as part of the 'Book of Abraham' it remains then for any one who so accepts them to explain why they were thus universally employed by a people who knew nothing of Abraham's God or Abraham's religion. The point, then, is that in publishing these fac-similes of Egyptian documents as part of an unique revelation to Abraham, Joseph Smith was attributing to Abraham not three unique documents of which no other copies exist, but was attributing to Abraham a series of documents which were the common property of a whole nation of people who employed them in every human burial, which they prepared, This was, of course, unknown to Smith, but it is a fact not only of my own knowledge, but also a commonplace of the knowledge of every orientalist who works in the Egyptian field.

Taking up these fac-similes now, let us discuss them in order. Number 1 depicts a figure reclining on a couch, with a priest officiating and four jars beneath the couch. The reclining figure lifts one foot and both arms. This figure represents Osiris rising from the dead. Over his head is a bird, in which form Isis is represented. The jars below, closed with lids carved in the forms of animal's heads, were used by the Egyptians to contain the viscera taken from the body of the dead man. This scene is depicted on Egyptian funeral papyri, on coffins and on late temple walls, unnumbered thousands of times. If desired, publications of fac-similes of this resurrection scene from papyri, coffins, tomb and temple walls could be furnished in indefinite numbers.

Fac-simile Number 2 represents a little disc, sometimes made of metal, sometimes of papyrus, sometimes of woven goods with a smooth stucco surface. It is commonly called among Egyptologists a hypocephalus. It was placed under the head of the mummy and the various representations upon it were of a magical power designed to assist the deceased in various ways, especially to prevent the loss of his head. These did not come into use until the late centuries just before the Christian era. They did not

appear in any Egyptian burials until over a thousand years after the time of Abraham. They were unknown in Egypt in Abraham's day.

Fac-simile Number 3: This scene depicts the god Osiris enthroned at the left, with a goddess, probably Isis, behind him and before him three figures. The middle one, a man, led into the presence of Osiris by the goddess Truth, who grasps his hand, accompanied by a figure represented in black, the head of which probably should be that of a wolf or a jackal, but which is here badly drawn. A lotus-crowned standard (numbered 3) bearing food, stands as usual before Osiris. This is the judgment scene, in which the dead man, led in by Truth, is to be judged by Osiris. This scene again is depicted innumerable times in the funeral papyri, coffins and tomb and temple walls of Egypt. No representation of it thus far found in Egypt, though we have thousands of them, dates earlier than 500 years after Abraham's age; and it may be stated as certain that the scene was unknown until about 500 years after Abraham's day.

To sum up, then, these three fac-similes of Egyptian documents in the 'Pearl of Great Price' depict the most common objects in the mortuary religion of Egypt. Joseph Smith's interpretation of them as part of a unique revelation through Abraham, therefore, very clearly demonstrates that he was totally unacquainted with the significance of these documents and absolutely ignorant of the simplest facts of Egyptian writing and civilization. Not to repeat it too often, the point I wish to make is that Joseph Smith represents as portions of a unique revelation through Abraham things which were commonplaces and to be found by many thousands in the every-day life of the Egyptians. We orientalist could publish scores of these 'fac-similes from the Book of Abraham' taken from other sources.

For example, any visitor in a modern museum with an Egyptian collection can find for himself plenty of examples of the four jars with animal heads—the jars depicted under the couch in fac-simile number one. It should be noted further that the hieroglyphics in the two fac-similes from

the 'Book of Abraham' (Nos. 2 and 3), though they belong to a very degenerate and debased age in Egyptian civilization, and have been much corrupted in copying, contain the usual explanatory inscriptions regularly found in such funerary documents.

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