

THE FACSIMILES OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM: A REAPPRAISAL

Pandora's box for the Book of Abraham was opened in 1912 when Reverend F. S. Spalding published the pamphlet *Joseph Smith, Jr., as a Translator*.¹ In it the Episcopalian Bishop of Utah printed letters which he had solicited from eight of the world's leading Egyptologists about the three facsimiles of the Book of Abraham and the correctness of Joseph Smith's interpretation of them. Without any apparent collaboration, each of the scholars affirmed that the prophet's interpretations were fraudulent. No one in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was prepared to make more than preliminary responses.²

Finally in 1936 it was a nonmember, J.C. Homans under the pseudonym Robert C. Webb, who penned a detailed apology for the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham.³ These matters stood for the next thirty years.

Then in 1967 another controversy about the Book of Abraham began to evolve when the Joseph Smith Papyri were presented to the Church. The Mormon apostate Jerald Tanner and his associates have raised relevant questions about them in their efforts to demonstrate that Joseph Smith was unable to translate ancient documents,⁴ while the Mormon apologist Hugh Nibley has concentrated on them in numerous articles and in his recent magnum opus⁵ as part of his efforts to defend Joseph Smith as a prophet and translator. In addition, three eminent Egyptologists, Klaus Baer, Richard A. Parker, and the late John A. Wilson have analyzed them from a strictly Egyptological viewpoint.⁶

The Tanner group has maintained that there is no connection between the Book of Abraham and a) its three facsimiles or b) the Joseph Smith Papyri, which contributes to their conclusion that Joseph Smith was an imposter, not a prophet.⁷ Nibley, on the other hand, has maintained that Joseph Smith indeed was a prophet and that he should not be condemned until one can account for all of the possibilities.⁸ Unfortunately many Latter-day Saints remain uninformed because they are naturally reluctant to read the material published by the apostate Tanners, while they have difficulty following the wide-ranging arguments of Nibley. The Egyptologists have avoided making statements about Joseph Smith's prophetic status, thus remaining free from the polemics of the Tanners and Nibley.

Part of the controversy involves the facsimiles of the Book of Abraham and the extent to which they were restored by the prophet Joseph Smith or under his supervision.⁹ This issue has become polarized into two viewpoints:

- a) If Joseph Smith is ultimately responsible for extensive restorations and alleged misinterpretations of Facsimiles 1, 2, and 3, he could not have been a prophet; or
- b) Since Joseph Smith was a prophet, the facsimiles as Reuben Hedlock made them faithfully represent the originals.

As a consequence, some Latter-day Saints have left the Church because they have discovered that restorations were made in the facsimiles and so were convinced of the veracity of the first position, while others have refused to recognize the validity of any evidence of substantial restoration so that their testimony of Joseph Smith as a prophet would not be threatened. The result in either case is unfortunate—on the one hand, those who have left the Church have thrown out the baby with the bathwater; on the other, those who are unwilling to openly confront the issues (and thus are unprepared to handle them) stand in danger of one day becoming convinced that the first viewpoint is the only reasonable one.

Very little exploration has been made into a third possibility, which is that Joseph Smith is ultimately responsible for the extensive restorations of Facsimiles 1 and 2 and can yet be a prophet.

The purpose of this paper is to lay foundation for a study of that possibility by introducing and analyzing certain areas of disputed restorations on Facsimiles 1 and 2 of the Book of Abraham and drawing what conclusions are possible from the evidence.

Facsimile Number One

In relation to the lion-couch scene of Facsimile 1 (Plate 1) it has been claimed that "no clear instances" of restoration "have been demonstrated."¹⁰ However, close examination of the evidence leads to the conclusion that such instances indeed are demonstrable.



A copy of a portrait of Lucy Mack Smith has been utilized as evidence for the assertion that Papyrus Joseph Smith I was intact, or very nearly so when the Prophet acquired it, but had deteriorated somewhat by the time Mother Smith's portrait was made. (Illustrations 1 and 2) Therefore it is contended that:

The [portrait] artist has drawn a jagged line right across the top of the facsimile, cutting off the top both of the priest's head, and of the bird's head but left the rest, including the knife in the priest's hand untouched. The area above the jagged line is of a slightly lighter shade than that below, and in the original may be of a different color. It seems to mark the limit of the papyrus, i.e., the damage to the thing sometime after the Mormons had acquired it.¹¹

However, it must be noted that the "jagged line" extends horizontally across both the left and right vertical sides of the frame and into the curtains, indicating that the artist did not draw that line, but that it is probably a water stain suffered by the entire upper portion of the portrait that left two large vertical ripples in the copy of the facsimile: one through the recumbent figure and the other on the right of the bird.¹² Further, the line intersects the black figure from the left at well below the shoulder and drops down beyond the buttocks, then ascends up again through the middle of his head, finally exiting above his eyes, but immediately dropping again at the front of his face and intersecting his forearm. It then proceeds up to the figure's shoulder level again, progressing to the right until it reaches the hands of the person on the lion couch where it makes another precipitous drop as a discolored ripple through the latter's forearms and body into the lion couch itself. Back at shoulder height, it continues to drop slightly to the right into the wing of the bird, passing through its body well below its head, and then again dropping precipitously in a discolored ripple through the bird's outer wing and ending in a drip at the base of the small offering table. If that line indeed indicates the damage which the papyrus had suffered since it was acquired in Kirtland until the time of the portrait of the prophet's mother, then in some instances there would have been less original than is extant today. For example, there would have been no left shoulder of the priest, another part of the lion couch would be missing, and there would have been no portion of the bird's head extant. (Illustration 3) Thus it seems to be quite clear that this "jagged line" has had nothing to do with marking the papyrus' limits. Furthermore, the area above the line definitely is not lighter than that below; it in fact is a noticeably darker brown and therefore cannot indicate where the edge of the papyrus meets the backing sheet, for the papyrus is

darker than its backing sheet. Thus it seems that this copy of Facsimile 1 is just that—a copy of Facsimile 1—complete with the numbers for the figures.

Another argument used to support the assumption that the prophet Joseph Smith did not restore or supervise the restoration of the lion couch scene is that the glue on the backing paper of Facsimile 1 indicates that there was more of the papyrus than the parts surviving today. (Illustration 4) That is, "the mere presence of those ugly patches, where the mounting was otherwise so neatly done, casts serious doubts on [the] theory that the surviving parts of the Facsimile 1 papyrus are all that the Mormons ever saw of it."¹³ However, it is known that "the process of minute and gradual flaking...leaves marks on the glue of the mounting paper..."¹⁴ Close examination of the glue above the head and to the right of the black standing figure reveals absolutely no trace of papyrus fragments. Furthermore, Papyrus Joseph Smith X and XI both have extensive patches of glue on which no papyrus fragment is visible (Illustration 5), pointing to the conclusion that the mounting process in general was not "so neatly done"; rather it was quite messy, with the papyrus being placed onto the pre-glued backing sheet. In places the glue has actually formed an edge around the papyrus which has since flaked away. (Illustration 6) All other glued areas from which papyrus has flaked have left fragments and traces.

Finally, the outline of the top edge of the papyrus is helpful in establishing how long ago the damage along the upper edge of Papyrus Joseph Smith I had occurred. It has been established that Papyrus Joseph Smith I and Papyrus Joseph Smith XI fit together as parts of a single document. That relationship has been made by examination of the right edge of Papyrus Joseph Smith XI with the left edge of Papyrus Joseph Smith I where it can be seen that the cut lines as well as the papyrus fibers match exactly.¹⁵ The outline along the top of both documents presents a recurring pattern common to papyrus rolls¹⁶ which are damaged before they are unrolled so that on the unrolled documents the damage will repeatedly appear.¹⁷ (Illustration 7) When the upper outline of Papyrus Joseph Smith XI is superimposed upon that of Papyrus Joseph Smith I it is readily apparent that they neatly correspond to each other as would be expected for a papyrus which was damaged before it was unrolled. (Illustration 8) Furthermore, it has been conclusively demonstrated that the upper edge of Papyrus Joseph Smith XI was already damaged in 1835 (and certainly by the time that they were mounted, according to the evidence of the glue edges on the backing sheet), in that conjectural signs were drawn into the *Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar* where the present lacunae exist.¹⁸ Thus it is apparent that the upper edge of Papyrus Joseph Smith I was virtually the

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Without any apparent collaboration, each of the scholars affirmed that the prophet's interpretations were fraudulent.

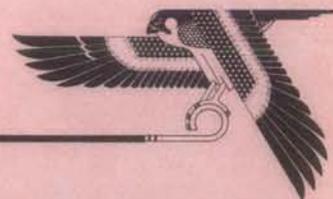


Illustration 1



Illustration 2

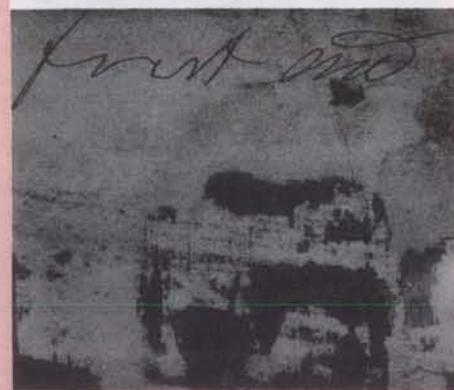
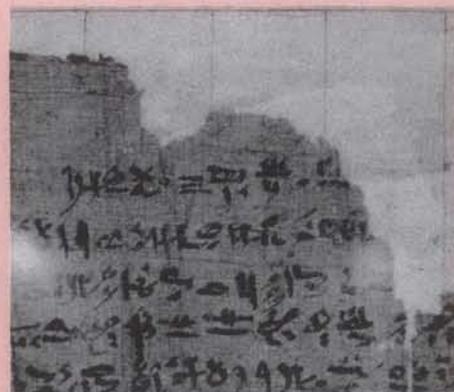


Illustration 5

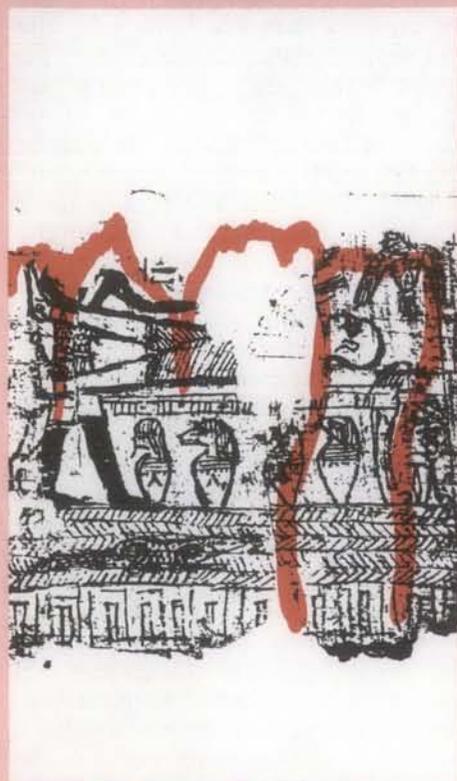


Illustration 3



Plate 1



same in 1835 as it is today, indicating that any material above it constitutes restoration. (See Plate 1)

It is just that material which has been controversial.¹⁹ Parenthetically, it is significant that those are the very items that should be expected to differ from the usual lion couch motifs if the restoring artist(s) had no knowledge of ancient Egyptian religious art. At the points where they intersect the top edge of the papyrus, four items of Facsimile 1 are disputed: the type of head which the standing figure (Fig. 3) has—that of a man or that of a jackal; whether or not that figure has a knife in his hand; whether the upper “hand” of the recumbent figure (Fig. 4) is really a hand or the edge of a bird’s wing; and whether the head of the bird is the head of a man. (See Plate 2) There are indications still left on the damaged edge of Papyrus Joseph Smith I that can help establish what material originally existed above it—indications minute enough to have been insignificant or even unnoticed by Hedlock or the prophet.

For instance, upon close examination of the upper torso of the black standing figure (Illustration 9) two important differences appear between the original and Hedlock’s woodcut: the angle of ascent of the Hedlock shoulder is not nearly as vertical as that on the original,²⁰ and on the original, parts of the shoulder consist of narrow vertical stripes which again do not appear in the Hedlock version. The second difference is small but very important. In the Hedlock copy a white line proceeds up the trunk of the standing figure to his shoulder and then turns sharply to the left. However on the original, where the entire top third of the line is intact, there is no sharp turn to the left, indicating that Hedlock utilized artistic license there.

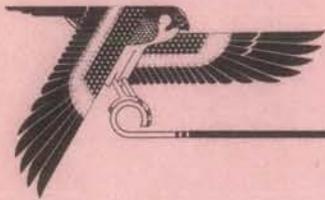
Those traces are significant in that they are a clear indication of the god Anubis who is closely associated with the Osiris mysteries.²¹ The narrow stripes clearly are the bottom edge of Anubis’ headdress. (Illustration 10) The white line represents part of Anubis’ clothing, as does the rest of the black figure’s clothing such as the vest and kilt. (Illustration 11) In addition, the very color of the figure—black—is another indication of Anubis, as is the arm band which Hedlock failed to include in his woodcut. With high probability, Fig. 3 should be restored as Anubis²² and not as a human-headed individual. (Illustration 12)

There is no direct evidence about whether or not the standing figure has a knife in his hand, because that part of the papyrus is completely missing. (That it was missing when the prophet first saw the papyrus may be concluded on the basis of the evidence about the upper limits of Papyrus Joseph Smith I and Papyrus Joseph Smith XI noted above.) Therefore scholars are reluctant to state that Anubis has a knife in this instance,²³ in that he is not known to have been represented wielding one, at least while in this aspect.

The direct evidence is meager about whether the upper “hand” of the recumbent figure is really a hand or the tip of a bird’s wing.²⁴ Except for some slight indications, it could be seen to be either one. (Illustration 13) The lower hand betrays a characteristic very common to Egyptian art canon concerning hands, namely that the fingers are all represented as being nearly the same length²⁵ with the thumb pointing away from the hand. (Illustration 14) At first glance the upper “hand” does not resemble the lower hand in that the fingers appear to be tapered. But under close examination it can be seen that the extra length of the upper “fingers” may be due to preliminary sketching or to later additions (the lines are a lighter color than the rest which are of the same length). Without those lines the upper “hand” closely resembles the lower hand. Furthermore, if the upper “hand” was a wing it is most logical to assume that the Egyptian artist (who seemed to be in a big hurry as evidenced by his sloppy workmanship and crabbed penmanship) would have outlined this wing in the same way that he did those of the bird on the right. Thus, given its general resemblance to the lower hand and the fact that it is not drawn in a manner similar to the wing of the bird on its right it is plausible to consider the upper “hand” as a hand. However, the two little blotches within the “hand” present a problem, in that they resemble the mottling technique used to portray feathers on the bird on the right. The blotches appear to be intentional and not remnants of a solid line, in that no damage to the papyrus has occurred immediately around them. This indicates that the upper “hand” may have been something other than a hand—such as the tip of one of the wings of Isis hovering over Osiris,²⁶ just as she does in other scenes depicting the same event. (Illustration 15)

The final controversial item from Facsimile 1 to be considered here is what type of a head should be on the bird (Facsimile 1 Fig. 3; Illustration 16). That it could have been a human head has been resisted by such observations as “of the thousands of people who have looked at it, it took a shrewd and determined observer to detect” traces of a human head, and that those who have maintained that the bird did have a human head are making an assertion that can only “tax the imagination.”²⁷ Also, presuming that the original head still was intact when Hedlock made his copy from it, it has been argued that since Hedlock was “an expert draftsman” he would have done a much better job if he were trying to invent a bird’s head.²⁸ Finally, because the bird lacks feet it has been contended that it could not have had a human head.²⁹

It has been correctly observed that human-headed birds (called *b3* birds) have “claws”³⁰ (Illustration 17) whereas this example, if it is a *b3* bird, is without feet. But the importance of that problem seems to have been overrated,³¹ in that sloppiness or haste appear to be the most adequate explanation for the omission of the bird’s



feet, for the artist was not doing a good job on this vignette. Both the offering table and the outer wing of the bird intersect the vertical frame line on the right; the lion's mane is executed with speedy strokes; too many fingers are on the lower hand; the crocodile is messy, as well as the recumbent figure's legs and the canopic urns of *'Imsti and Hpy*; and there are "erasures" of the lion couch where it intersects Anubis and of Anubis' arm where it intersects the upper leg of the recumbent figure. (See plate 1.) Thus, if the bird was intended to have had feet, it is not at all inconceivable that the scribe forgot to include them.

As with the representation of Anubis, there are small but important clues where the bird intersects the upper edge of the papyrus which tend to support the conclusion that it originally had a man's head,³² thus representing a *b3*. It is very fortunate that the artist had drawn another bird's head and another human head in his vignette so that his style for the two forms is observable. The bird's head on *Kbh-snw.f* is of a falcon and is the same type of head that would most likely be on the bird, if the bird had a bird's head (Illustration 18), and *'Imsti* bears a human head, the type of which would most likely be on the bird if the bird had a human head. (Illustration 19) The lines of the falcon head do not match the traces left on the bird. (Illustrations 20 and 21) The lines from *'Imsti* however provide a close parallel (Illustration 22), for his head shares with the bird's head the same basic face profile, chin-line, beard, bottom edge of the eye, and hairline with the result that the traces of the bird's head at the broken edge of the papyrus represent clear indications of a human head. (Illustration 23)

It is apparent that Reuben Hedlock's Facsimile 1 is a conjecturally-restored copy of Papyrus Joseph Smith I. Two primary pieces of evidence have led to that conclusion: a) the upper edge of Papyrus Joseph Smith I is virtually identical with the upper edge of Papyrus Joseph Smith XI which is proven to have already been damaged by 1835, making it evident that the damage had occurred while the two pieces were still connected in a roll; consequently, no more of the upper edge of Papyrus Joseph Smith I existed in 1835 than exists today; and b) small but significant traces at the upper edge of Papyrus Joseph Smith I where the standing black figure and the bird intersect it definitely indicate a jackal-headed Anubis for one, and a human-headed *b3* bird for the other. From direct evidence, nothing can be said about whether or not Anubis may be holding a knife. (Plate 3) As for the upper "hand" there are parallels for having a bird hovering over the recumbent figure, but there are no parallels for a recumbent figure with two arms raised,³³ so taking into account the otherwise inexplicable blotches it seems that the upper "hand" may be a wing, although direct evidence from the papyrus cannot strongly support that conclusion.

Facsimile Number Two

Any study of the second facsimile of the Book of Abraham is hampered because the original document is not available. In spite of that, a reasonably good copy of the original, before it was restored by Hedlock, has been preserved and is in the Church Historian's collection of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers in Book of Abraham folder 5. (Plate 4) Moreover, there are many other hypocephali available for comparison.

The Church Historian's (CH) facsimile is different from the Hedlock version (Plate 5) in one very important way: it reveals that the original papyrus was damaged in the very areas in which Hedlock's version radically differs from other Egyptian hypocephali—in other words, the same phenomenon that has occurred with the first facsimile apparently recurs with the second.

The integrity of the CH facsimile has been challenged, however, in an effort to defend the Hedlock version. One claim is that the artist of the CH facsimile "was at sea" (i.e., was lost) because "the base-line that runs beneath the two ships and Figure 2 does not run straight across..."³⁴ But that does not necessarily mean that he "was not at all sure how the original looked."³⁵ Instead, it seems to be more indicative of poor spacing on a somewhat hastily-produced sketch with the result that some items were missed or misplaced. The missing serpent on the right of Fig. 1³⁶ was probably left out due to oversight; it is quite obvious that the head-dress of Fig. 2 has been misplaced³⁷ because the artist wanted to align it with the reed leaf that begins the inscription around the rim, just as it does in the Hedlock version; and the projections coming from each shoulder of Fig. 2³⁸ merely are variants of the same figures, only they are drawn much better than those on the Hedlock version when compared to two other very similar hypocephali (BM 8445a and BM 8445c).

Additional problems are apparent on the CH facsimile. For example, all of the vignettes are drawn hastily: the right (facing) arm of Fig. 2 is badly squeezed; the bird, Fig. 4 is hastily sketched, with the lines on the bow of the boat sloppily intersecting each other; the baboons are very quickly sketched with the crown of the sun and moon entirely missing from the left one and not squarely on the head of the one on the right;³⁹ the four sons of Horus (Fig. 6) are leaning backwards, two of whom do not have feet; the cow is sketched very hastily, as well as the female figure behind it; and the feet of Fig. 7 are two lines instead of one, just as with the first two sons of Horus. The "missing" hieroglyphs at the left of Fig. 1⁴⁰ are discussed below.

There are places, on the other hand, where the CH

In 1936 it was a non-member who penned a detailed apology for the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham.

Orig.
 1. Vertical Stroke
 2. narrow stroke



Illustration 6

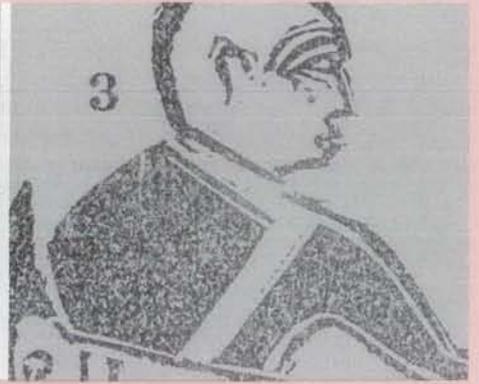
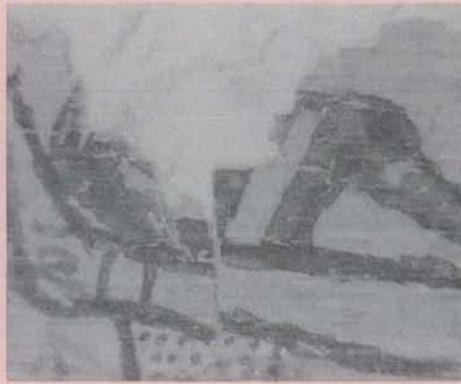


Illustration 9



Illustration 7

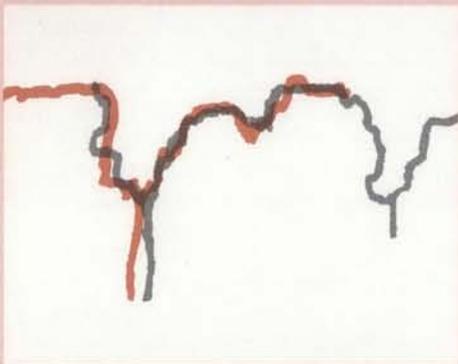


Illustration 8

TIMES AND SEASONS.

"Truth will prevail."

Vol. III. No. 9.] CITY OF NAUVOO, ILL. MARCH, 1, 1842. [Whole No. 45.

A FAC-SIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM.
 NO. 1.

Plate 2

Very little exploration has been made into the possibility that Joseph is ultimately responsible for restorations of the facsimiles and can yet be a prophet.

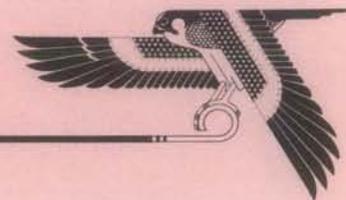


Illustration 10



Plate 3

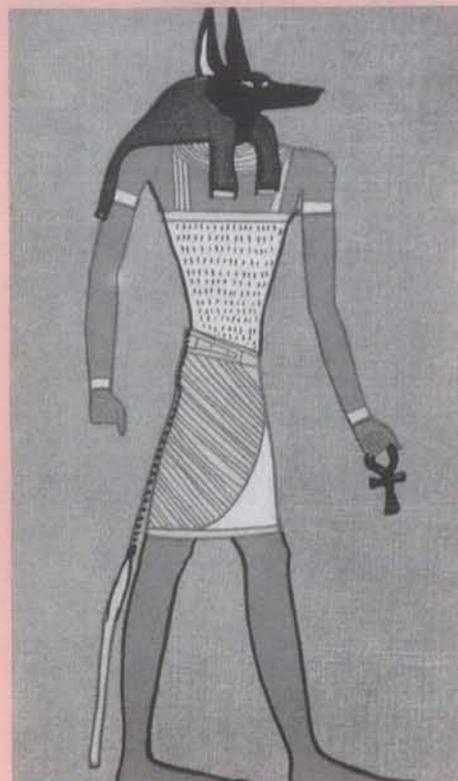


Illustration 11

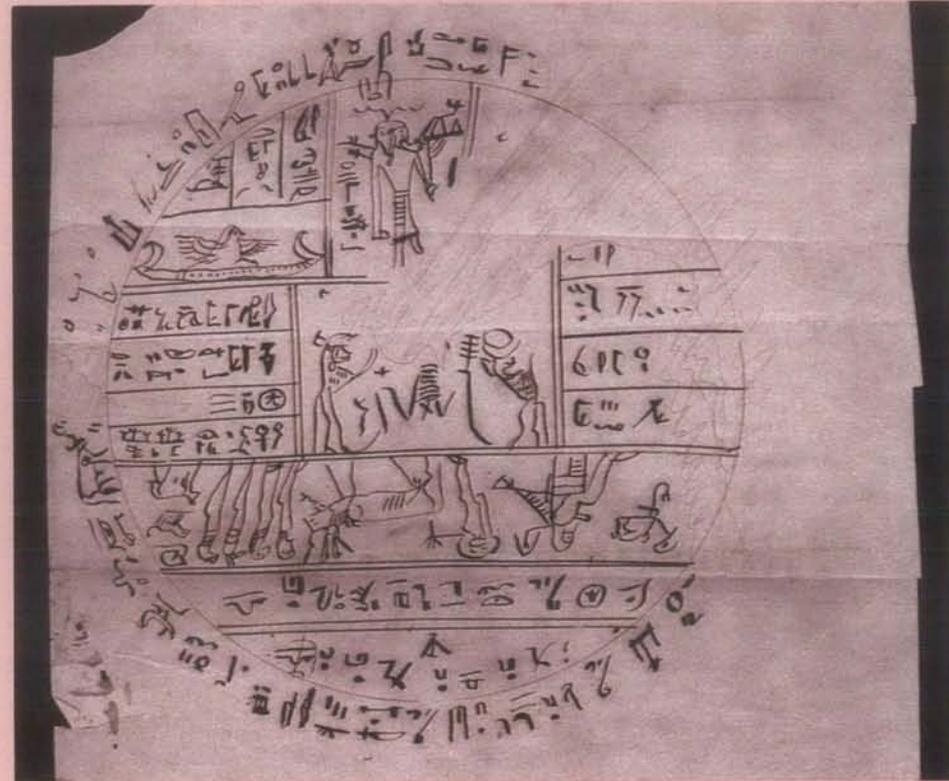
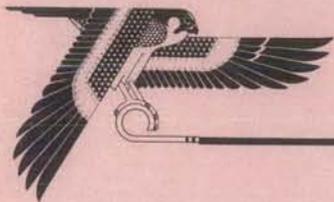


Plate 4



copy has more accurate features than the Hedlock version. When compared with other Egyptian hypocephali (Illustration 24), the CH cow (Fig. 5) properly has the udders, which in the Hedlock version are not clear, its horns are drawn more accurately than on the Hedlock version, and its collar has what correctly resembles an amulet, unlike the Hedlock copy. Moreover, the CH seated figure (Fig. 7) properly has a hand at the end of his upraised arm (the serpent's arm does also), and it portrays the wing accurately, which the Hedlock copy does not. Finally, it has been claimed that the Hedlock version "clearly shows" a serpent presenting a *wd3t* eye to Fig. 7 just as in "the other hypocephali."⁴¹ But comparison does not support that assertion; his "serpent" definitely does not resemble those on other hypocephali. (Illustration 25) Instead its body clearly is a conjectural restoration, adding elements that do not exist on the serpents of other hypocephali. That the serpent may have a bird's head as in other examples⁴² is possible, although the CH copy shows a clear distinction between the head of the bird (Fig. 4) and of the serpent. (Illustration 26)

Concerning the layout of the CH facsimile, the artist evidently began by outlining in pencil the damaged areas of the hypocephalus onto his compass-drawn circle, and then copied the inscription around the rim, in that he tried to match the headdress of the later-drawn Fig. 2 with it, putting the latter out of alignment. Most probably he then drew the boundary lines for the uppermost panels, because they were obviously executed without the benefit of a straight-edge which he used for the rest of his boundary lines. Probably one of the last areas to be copied included the right panels of text (Figures 12-15) in which there was extensive damage; since he had already established the border of the damage, he drew the vertical boundary line of that panel up to the damage line. Neat vignettes obviously were not his intention, and he is not to be faulted for their sloppiness.

For without a doubt the overriding purpose of the artist of the CH facsimile was to correctly copy the inscriptions, judging from the number of times he restroked lines on the glyphs compared to virtually no restroking on the vignette figures. That was not the apparent purpose of Hedlock however, for the glyphs on his copy are much less legible. In addition, the former was careful to include the lines which were extant next to the damage line, such as the blotch next to Fig. 1, the curve in the upper left-hand corner of Fig. 3, and the broken lines on the right side of panels 12 through 15.

Thus, it seems that the artist of the CH document was not "at sea"; nor does it seem that he was "not at all sure how the original looked," or that he was not able to "make heads or tails" of some of the figures.⁴³ Instead, it is quite apparent that he was not concen-

trating on perfectly executing the vignettes as much as he was trying to correctly copy the hieroglyphic texts. Furthermore, while he did leave out or misplace some items which were correctly drawn in the Hedlock version, he properly included others which were omitted or poorly executed in the latter. Therefore, although the vignettes of the Hedlock copy are neater, the CH document has to be considered as quite valuable in that its glyphs are much more accurately drawn, and in that it precisely demarcates the damaged portions of the papyrus—the very portions which are disputable in the Hedlock copy.

One of the most obvious differences between the Hedlock woodcut and ancient hypocephali concerns Fig. 1. Instead of the usual two- or four-headed ram (Illustration 27) the Hedlock version has a double head which very closely resembles the head of Fig. 2, including the shoulder protrusions but excluding the top part of the crown. (Illustration 28) The CH copy indicates that no head was extant for Fig. 1. In addition, the clear remnants of the combined *w3s-nh-dd* sceptres on each knee of the figure in the HC copy (which are paralleled in other hypocephali—see Illustration 29), have been combined into an entirely unique trunk and arm assembly in the Hedlock woodcut, with the arm extending from one of the protrusions which resembles those which extend from the shoulders of Fig. 2. Moreover, the angle of the ink trace next to the damage-line of the CH document is appropriate for the beard of a two- or four-headed ram (Illustration 30), while it does not match any of the lines on the Hedlock copy.

Thus it appears that the head of Fig. 1 on Hedlock's copy is a product of conjectural restoration.⁴⁴ The hieroglyphic text on the left of Fig. 1 is also restored, obviously coming from the bottom four characters of the text on the left of Fig. 2. (Illustration 31) It is not due to oversight that that text is "entirely missing" from the CH document;⁴⁵ it is because it was not there in the first place.

Another difference between the Hedlock woodcut and ancient examples of Egyptian hypocephali is found in the lower right-hand corner of the panel containing Fig. 2—the very area shown to be missing in the CH copy. The Hedlock version is unique because the feet of Fig. 2 are facing the wrong direction and because a small offering table is included—neither of those features occurs in ancient examples. (Illustration 32) The dark vertical line which Hedlock slightly elaborated may represent a portion of a hieroglyphic text.

Fig. 3 is almost entirely missing in the CH copy, the small trace possibly indicating the prow of a boat.⁴⁶ At any rate, a falcon-headed figure in a boat was apparently copied from Papyrus Joseph Smith IV and inserted into this spot (Illustration 33), with the text behind the seated figure closely resembling rubrics from

Thoughtful reexamination of the evidence leads to the conclusion that the prophet was connected with the entire project.

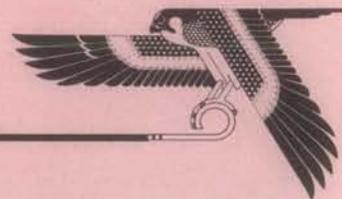


Illustration 12



Illustration 16



Illustration 18



Illustration 13

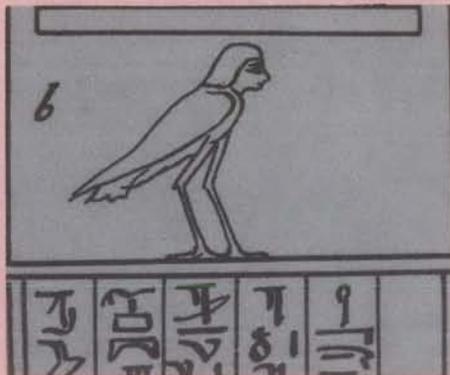


Illustration 17



Illustration 19



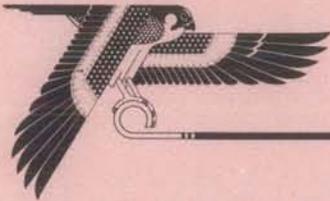
Illustration 14



Illustration 15



Plate 5



BD 104 and 106 (Illustration 34) on the same papyrus⁴⁷—the same deity appears in that spot in other Egyptian hypocephali, but in none of them is he seated on a throne with an offering table in front of him. (Illustration 35)

Although the serpent opposite Fig. 7 has already been discussed, it is significant to note that the small stick figure at its feet in the CH document has an exact parallel in Hypocephalus BM 8445 F, whereas in the Hedlock version it has been elaborated onto a staff with another limb extending out at its right (Illustration 36)—further evidence of apparent hypothetical reconstruction in the Hedlock copy, and another instance of the basic integrity of the CH document.

Finally, attention must be given to the hieroglyphic texts of Facsimile 2 even though they “are not a subject of inspired commentary” and have been considered as not being “too important.”⁴⁸ On the contrary, they are very important in that they help to conclusively identify the damaged areas in the Hedlock woodcut (which are already outlined in the CH copy), as well as to provide information about the “instruction [Joseph Smith gave to Reuben Hedlock] concerning the arrangement of the writing on the large cut, illustrating the principles of astronomy [i.e., Facsimile 2].”⁴⁹

It comes as no surprise then, that the areas in which the Prophet conceivably could have given “instruction” to Reuben Hedlock “concerning the arrangement of the writing” are those where lacunae exist in the CH document but in which the Hedlock version has material, mostly written upside down and backwards in a different script, the subject matter of which radically differs from that of the rest of the texts on the hypocephalus. (Plates 5 and 6) Otherwise the CH copy and the Hedlock version are virtually the same, with the exception that the writing is much clearer on the former.

The basic document with all of the conjecturally restored material reveals, in addition to the vignettes already discussed, many signs that have come from the small *snsn* text (or Papyrus Joseph Smith XI, which was originally attached to Papyrus Joseph Smith I—see Plate 8); they appear along the right side of the rim panel and are interspersed on the right side of panels 12-15. As already noted, these texts are part of a different contextual unit, written upside down and backwards in the hypocephalus, and are in a different script from the rest of its texts. Why those characters were chosen, apparently by the prophet, to fill in the lacunae is not exactly known, for other signs written in hieroglyphic instead of hieratic were available and their style would have more closely approximated that of the hypocephalus. One possibility may be that those particular signs may have been well-known to the prophet in relation to the Book of Abraham manuscripts (Plate 9), with the result that he “gave instruction” to Hed-

lock to arrange them within the hypocephalus.⁵⁰ Consequently, the fact that the prophet “gave instruction concerning the writing on the large cut,”⁵¹ together with the fact that that same writing is connected with the Book of Abraham manuscripts, implies that the prophet had some positive connection with the production of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers. Therefore, even though involvement with them on his part has been disputed,⁵² thoughtful reexamination of the evidence leads to the conclusion that the prophet was connected with the entire project.⁵³

In another location where the CH copy shows a lacuna, signs appear out of context in the Hedlock version. On the left side of the rim text of the latter, a group of signs appears which is virtually the same as a group in Fig. 22 from the CH copy (Illustration 38), and in the lacuna on the left side of Fig. 9 another group appears which is virtually identical to parts of a group on the left of Fig. 2 of the CH copy—the same group of signs (minus a stroke) that has been added at the left of Fig. 1. (Illustration 39) All of these represent apparent conjectural restorations.

The basic document with Egyptologically-proper restorations (Plate 7) would include a completion of the *w3s-nh-dd* sceptres on the knees of Fig. 1 along with two or four ram’s heads on its shoulders; these would be in agreement both with the traces on the CH copy and with parallel Egyptian hypocephali. Fig. 2 would have its feet pointing in the other direction according to parallels in other hypocephali. Fig. 3 would not be on a throne or have the offering table in front of him, while the *Hpri* beetle would probably be drawn above him. The written sections would merely include the rest of the spells provided from parallel Egyptian documents.

Conclusions

It can be clearly ascertained that portions of Reuben Hedlock’s Facsimiles 1 and 2 were conjecturally restored. Moreover, according to the diary entry for Friday, March 4, 1842, in the *History of the Church*, it is apparent that the prophet was connected with their production. But these two facts are not compelling reasons to assume that Joseph Smith was a fraud and not a prophet; nor can they be considered to contribute to such a proposition.

For one thing, the prophet never made any attempts to hide the incomplete papyri even after apparent conjectural restorations of them were published in the *Times and Seasons* and had made national headlines. If he were trying to perpetrate a hoax, he certainly would have tried to destroy the damning evidence.

The fact is that he probably was not as concerned with having historically accurate restorations of Facsimiles 1 and 2 as he was with having complete pictures to publish in the *Times and Seasons*. Neither he nor

If he were trying to perpetrate a hoax, he certainly would have tried to destroy the damning evidence.



Illustration 20



Illustration 21



Illustration 22



Illustration 23



Plate 6

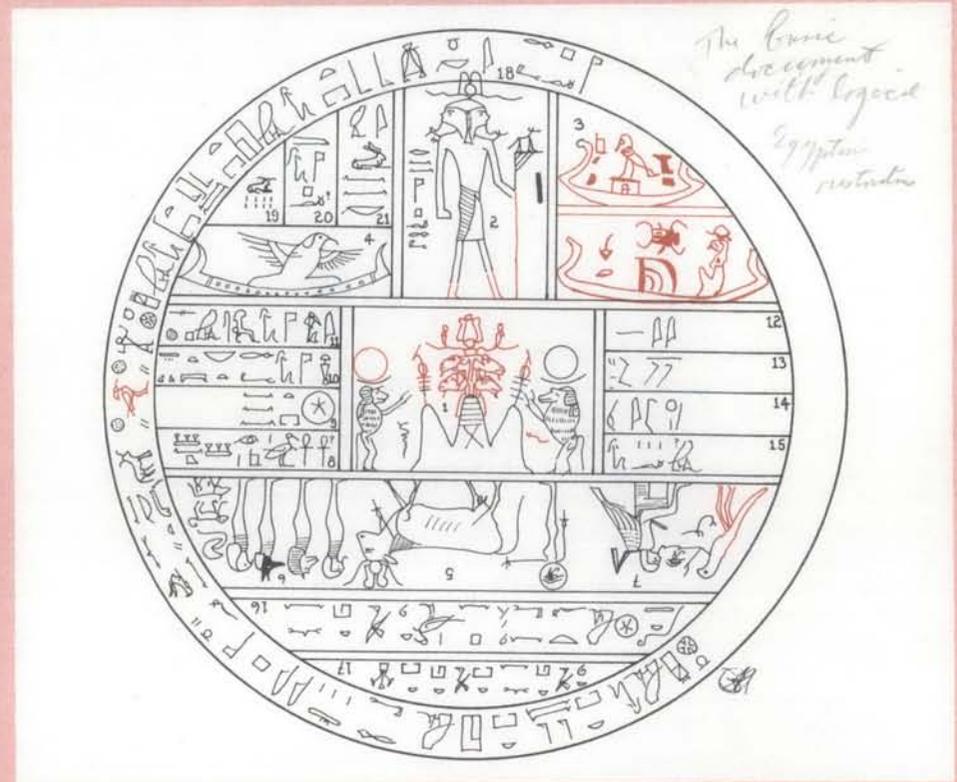


Plate 7



Reuben Hedlock would have known that a standing human body would have had a dog's head (Facsimile 1, Fig. 3), nor that a bird would have a human head (Facsimile 1, Fig. 1). They would have had no way of knowing what kind of a head belonged on Facsimile 2, Fig. 1, that they were looking at a serpent facing Facsimile 2, Fig. 7, or that the feet of Facsimile 2, Fig. 1 should face to the right and not to the left. As for all of the areas of missing text, they would not have known what should have been in them. It seems that they completed each damaged section with what was to them logical or important for whatever reason: a man's head on a man's body in Facsimile 1, Fig. 3; a bird's head on a bird's body in Facsimile 1, Fig. 1; the strange double-headed head of Facsimile 2, Fig. 2 on the strange body of Facsimile 2, Fig. 1; an Egyptian text with which the prophet was already apparently familiar, and so forth. Indeed, it seems that in Joseph's mind the restorations

were not made with an eye to supporting [his] interpretations, e.g., two heads do not express the idea of a universal god better than four heads; a clothed sacrificial victim is not more convincing than an unclothed one; a priest with a mask is no more authentic than one without a mask, etc.⁵⁴

Secondly, it is significant to realize that the prophet's connection with the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers does not necessarily mean that the latter constituted the material from which he produced the Book of Abraham. The Egyptian Papers may well represent his initial efforts at studying out the problem of the contents of the papyri in his own mind before approaching the Lord according to the translation methodology described in D & C 9:8-9. Perhaps after he received a revelation comprising the Book of Abraham, he tried to match his revealed text with that of the *snsn* text in an effort to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics. Even a year after he published the Book of Abraham, he was still thinking about "preparing a grammar of the Egyptian Language."⁵⁵ It seems that he still felt challenged by the papyri to decipher ancient Egyptian.

There is a possibility that the prophet may not have felt that he had translated the Book of Abraham from any of the Joseph Smith Papyri. For example, the caption for the Book of Abraham manuscript of ca. 1835 stated "Translation of the Book of Abraham written by his own hand upon papyrus and found in the catacombs of Egypt." (Illustration 40) In the 1841 manuscript the caption was enlarged to "A Translation of some ancient records that have fallen into our hands, from the catacombs of Egypt, purporting to be the writings of Abraham..." (Illustration 41) Those are the same words used when Joseph published the first installment of the Book of Abraham in the *Times and Seasons* of which he was the editor. (Illustration 42) If he had been more completely confident about the re-

lationship of the papyri to the Book of Abraham, it seems certain that the three important words "purporting to be" would not have been printed, for he both authored and edited them.

Moreover, he only "translated" the vignettes of Facsimile 2, oddly not rendering the meaning of any of the hieroglyphic texts. (Illustration 43) When he challenged the world to "find out these numbers," he may have been admitting that as yet he could not. Therefore the prophet cannot be held responsible for establishing a relationship between the Joseph Smith Papyri and the Book of Abraham when he may not have been sure about it himself.

Finally, although he was uneducated, he was a very dynamic man concerned with the big picture and not small details. Concerning his revelations, he wrote: "We did not think so much of the orthography [spelling] and manner, as we did the subject matter..."⁵⁶ Moreover, it seems that scholastic accuracy was not one of the prophet's goals, while one of his overriding concerns was an "urgency to disseminate important ideas, even before obvious grammar and spelling errors had been corrected..."⁵⁷ Indeed, to him the processes of translation had very "limited relationships to manuscripts and dictionary meanings. They [had] much to do with basic ideas and doctrinal relevance to a modern world."⁵⁸ Those who are trying to destroy his reputation by criticizing him about details concerning which he was not especially anxious are in effect erecting a straw man and then knocking it down. It is his message, not his method which concerned the prophet. If he is to be judged, therefore, it should not be for his methodology; it is the value of his work which should be determined.

Footnotes

¹For an earlier serious attack on the Book of Abraham, see Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, *A Journey to Great Salt Lake City*, 2 vols. (London: W. Jeffs. 1861) 2:536ff.

²See for example the articles cited in H. Nibley, "As Things Stand at the Moment," *B.Y.U. Studies*, 9:1 (Aut. 1968), p. 73 notes 3 and 4; see also J. C. Homans [R. C. Webb] in the *Deseret News*, 15 Nov. 1913, later reprinted in the *Improvement Era*, 19 (Feb. 1914), 313f.; in his book *The Case Against Mormonism* (New York: L. L. Walton, 1915), p. 28, Homans briefly referred to the Spalding pamphlet.

³J. C. Homans [R. C. Webb], *Joseph Smith as a Translator* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1936).

⁴Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1972), pp. 294ff.

⁵See Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1975), pp. xiff., 47ff. For a bibliography of his articles, see Louis C. Midgley, comp., "Bibliography," in *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless*, The Religious Studies Monograph Series, vol. 1 (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1978), pp. 307ff.

⁶Klaus Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hor," *Dialogue* 3:3 (Aut, 1968), pp. 109ff; Richard A. Parker, "The Joseph Smith Papyri: A Preliminary Report," *Dialogue* 3:2 (Summer, 1968), pp. 86ff, 98f.; John A.

There is a possibility that the prophet may not have felt that he had translated the Book of Abraham from any of the Joseph Smith Papyri.

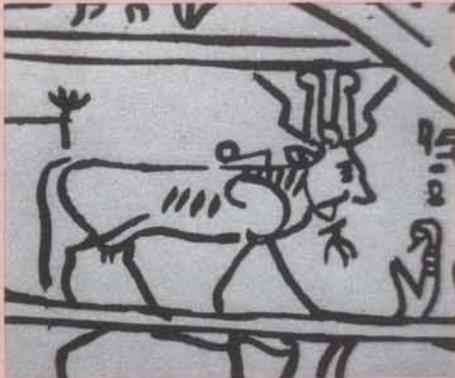
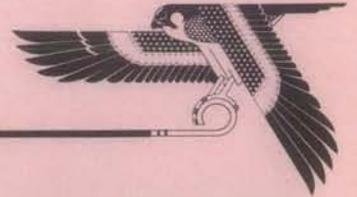


Illustration 24

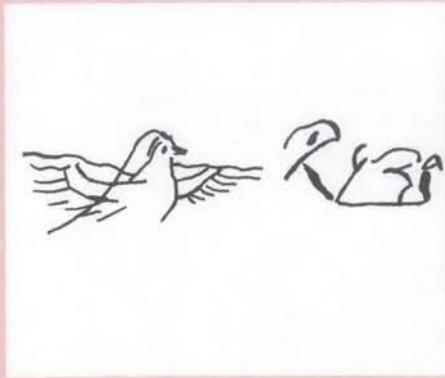


Illustration 26

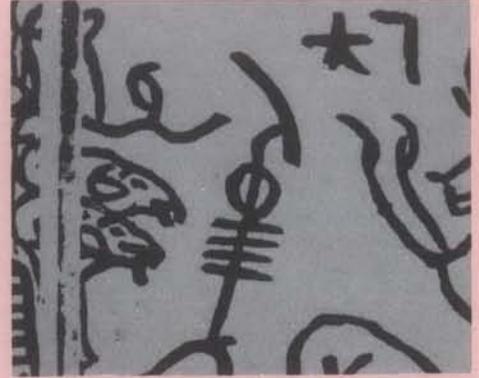


Illustration 29

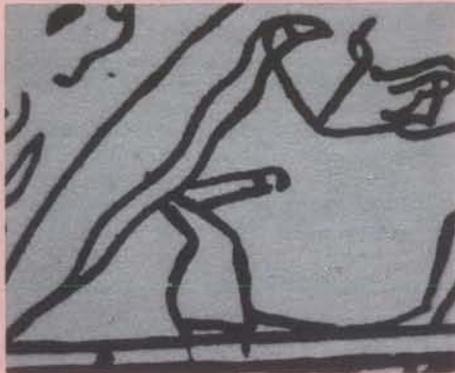


Illustration 25

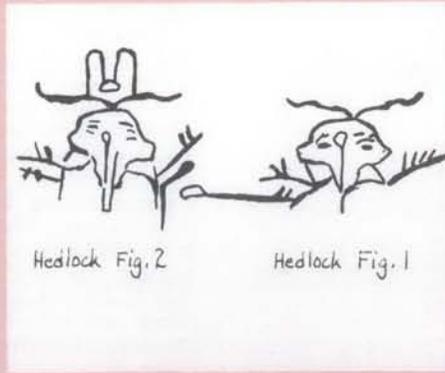


Illustration 28

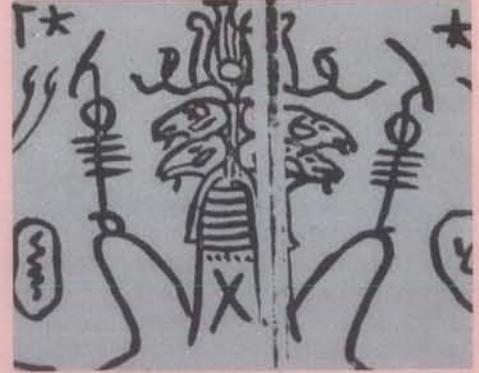


Illustration 30

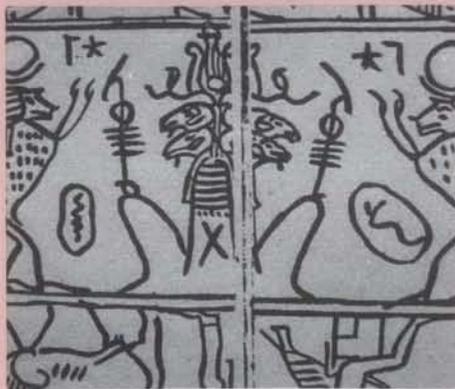


Illustration 27

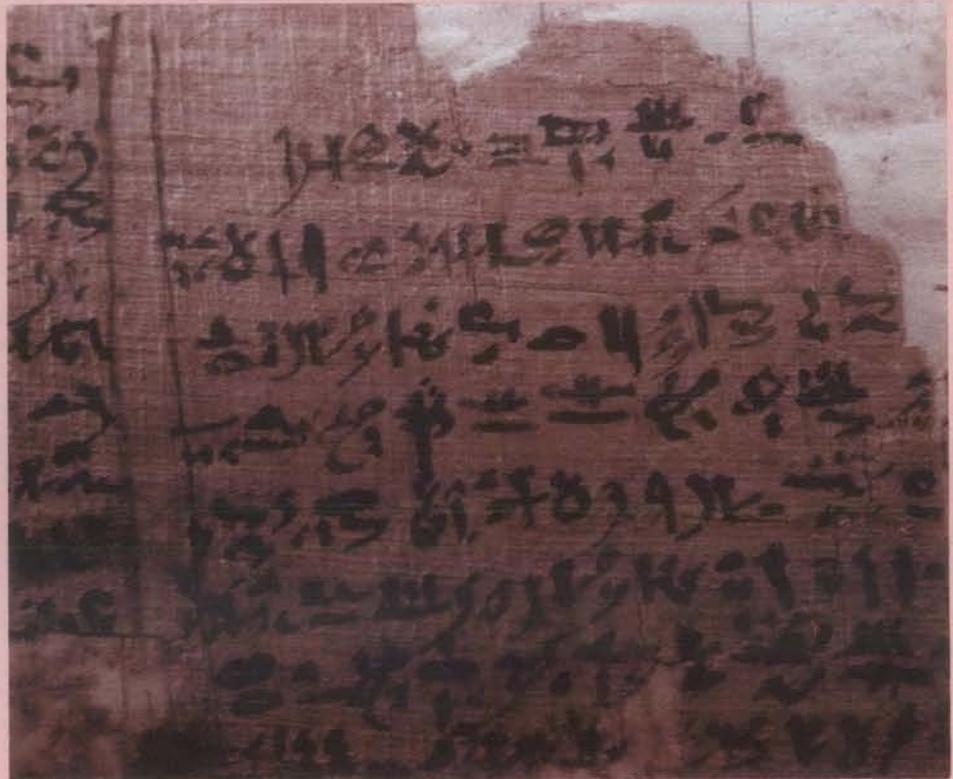


Plate 8



Wilson, "A Summary Report," *Dialogue*, 3:2 (Summer, 1968); pp. 67ff.

⁷Cf. Tanners, *Shadow or Reality*, pp. 294ff.

⁸Hugh Nibley, "Phase I," *Dialogue* 3:2 (Summer 1968), pp. 99ff.

⁹That the prophet Joseph Smith was involved with Hedlock is indicated from the following entries in the prophet's official diary: "During the forenoon I was at my office and the printing office, correcting the first plate or cut of the records of Father Abraham, prepared by Reuben Hedlock, for the *Times and Seasons* . . ." (HC 4:519) "At my office exhibiting the Book o Abraham in the original to Brother Reuben Hedlock, so that he might take the size of the several plates or cuts, and prepare the blocks for the *Times and Seasons*; and also gave instruction concerning the arrangement of the writing on the large cut, illustrating the principles of astronomy [i.e., Facsimile 2] . . ." (HC 4:543).

¹⁰Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 95

¹¹Ibid.

¹²The ripples are confirmed in Jay M. Todd, *The Saga of the BOOK OF ABRAHAM* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1969), pp. 214ff.

¹³Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 82.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Cf. Baer, "Breathing Permit of Hor," p. 112 n. 15; pp. 133f.

¹⁶In HC 2:349 it is recorded that "two rolls of papyrus" were sold to the L.D.S. Church in 1835.

¹⁷Cf. similar examples in A. H. Gardiner, ed., *The Ramesseum Papyri: Plates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956).

¹⁸Cf. Baer, "Breathing Permit of Hor," pp. 129f.

¹⁹H. Nibley, "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price: Facsimile No. I, A Unique Document," Part 5, *Improvement Era* 71 (Sep 1968), 74f.

²⁰Cf. Baer, "Breathing Permit of Hor," p. 132.

²¹W. Helck and E. Otto, eds., *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, 2 vols. to date (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), 1:328; H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1952), pp. 43f.

²²Cf. Baer, "Breathing Permit of Hor," p. 118 n. 34.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Parker, "A Preliminary Report," p. 86.

²⁵E. Iversen, "the Canonical Tradition," in *The Legacy of Egypt*, ed. J. F. Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 59ff.

²⁶Parker, "A Preliminary Report," p. 86.

²⁷Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 85.

²⁸Ibid., p. 86.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid. Nibley has tried to demonstrate that Papyrus Joseph Smith I is a unique document, taxing the "poor Egyptian artist" who produced it, because he was "out of his depth with this strange assignment." Indeed, a unique item for the hapless artist would have been a character wearing Anubis' clothes, whose body is the colour of Anubis, standing where Anubis stands with his arms raised in a position traditional for Anubis with a man's head and a knife in his hand—a singular character in Egyptian art; indeed, such a combination is questionable here due to the evidence presented above. In this instance statistics are meaningless for Nibley. But, when it comes to a b3 bird without feet he states that one has "never" been so depicted, "which makes this one of the rarest objects in all of Egyptian funerary art." A footless b3 bird cannot be much rarer than a human-headed Anubis.

³²Cf. Baer, "Breathing Permit of Hor," p. 118 n. 34.

³³Ibid.; cf. Parker, "A Preliminary Report," p. 86.

³⁴Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 93.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., p. 94.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 93.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., p. 94.

⁴³Ibid., p. 93.

⁴⁴Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 92, 95.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 93.

⁴⁶Cf. *ibid.*, p. 90. Because the Hedlock version has a boat with Re in it, whereas the Church Historian's copy has only a trace of something, Nibley believes that "the latter cannot be used as a measure of the extent of reconstruction of the former." In this instance that conclusion may be true; however, everywhere else the CH document may well be used as a "measure." Given the fact that the lower right corner of the Fig. 2 panel is missing in the CH copy as well as the upper portion of panel 12, both of which were conjecturally restored in the Hedlock woodcut, it is not implausible to assume that no more of the document was available to Hedlock than was to the artist of the Church Historian's copy. In other words, perhaps seeing a tip of a ship's prow, he located an impressive example from a vignette in the other Joseph Smith Papyri and copied it into the third panel.

⁴⁷Given Hedlock's poor reproduction of the glyphs, the BD 106 rubric (which is in a column of text directly behind the seated figure in the original) seems to be a very likely candidate for the original of this text. Nibley believes that the inscription behind the seated figure can "not be found in the Papyrus IV version." (Nibley, *Joseph Smith Papyri*, p. 136.

⁴⁸Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 87.

⁴⁹HC 4:543.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Cf. Nibley, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," *BYU Studies* 11:4 (Summer 1961), pp. 350ff.

⁵³The writer is currently preparing a study of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers in which is presented evidence supporting this conclusion.

⁵⁴Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 96.

⁵⁵*Journal History*, 15 November 1843, penned by W. Richards.

⁵⁶Dean C. Jesse, "The Reliability of Joseph Smith's History," *Journal of Mormon History*, 3 (1976), pp. 28f.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Richard L. Anderson, "Joseph Smith's Insights into the Olivet Prophecy," *Pearl of Great Price Symposium*, (22 Nov. 1975), pp. 50f.; Cf. R. Matthews, *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), p. 39.

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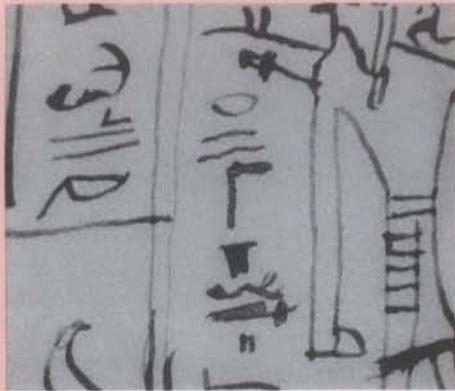


Illustration 33

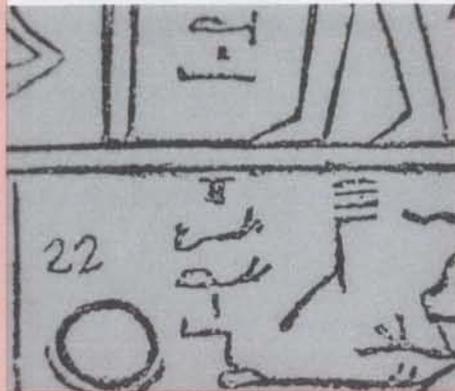


Illustration 31

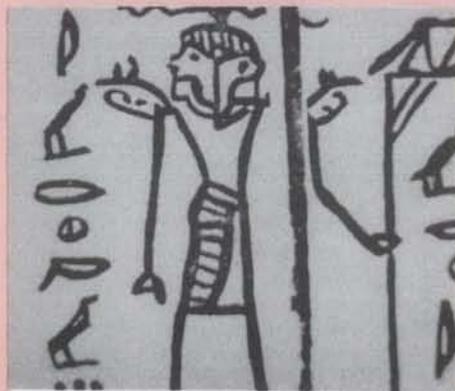


Illustration 32

into my words which I read unto
 this present time.
 2962 Now after the print of El-Kemur was
 smitten that he died there came a
 fulfillment of those things which were
 spoken unto me, concerning the land
 of Chaldea that there should be a
 famine in the land, and according
 a famine prevailed throughout all
 the land of Chaldea, and my father
 was sorely tormented, because of
 the famine, and he repented of
 the evil which he had determined
 against me, to take away my life,
 but the words of the fathers, even
 the patriarchs concerning the right
 of priesthood, the Lord my God
 preserved in mine own hands.
 Therefore a knowledge of the be-
 ginning of creation, and also of the
 planets and of the stars, as it was
 made known unto the fathers, have
 I kept even unto this day.
 And I shall endeavour to write so
 me of these things upon this scroll,
 for the benefit of my posterity, that
 shall come after me.
 2963 Now the Lord God caused the fan-
 ine to

Plate 9

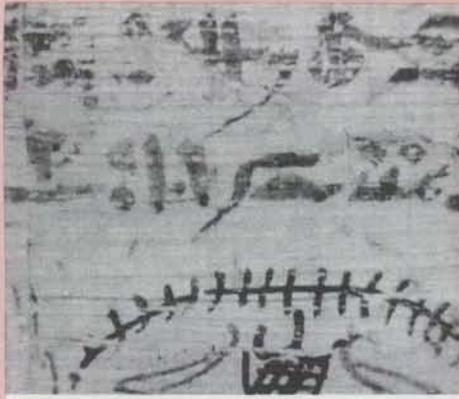
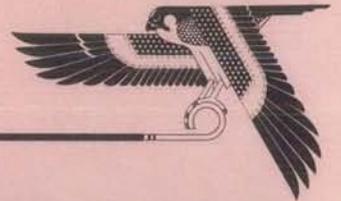


Illustration 34



Illustration 36

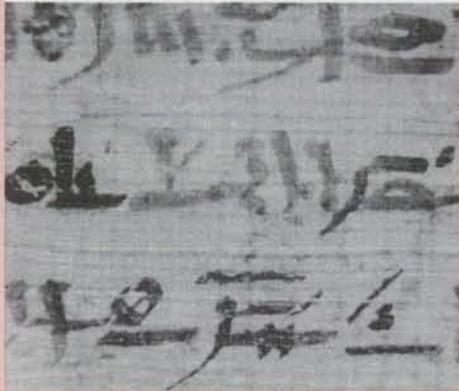


Illustration 35

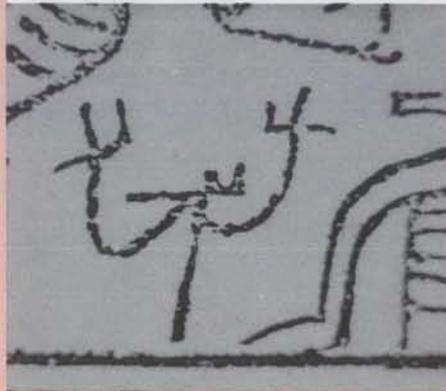


Illustration 38

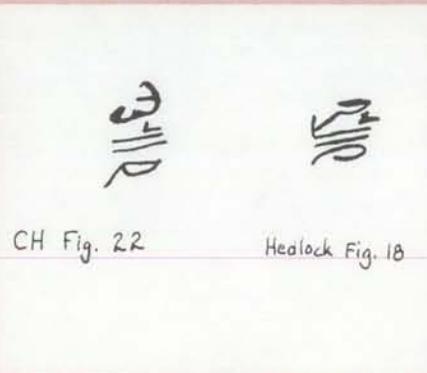


Illustration 39

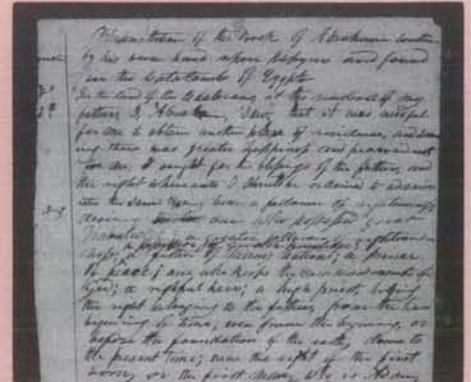


Illustration 40



Illustration 41

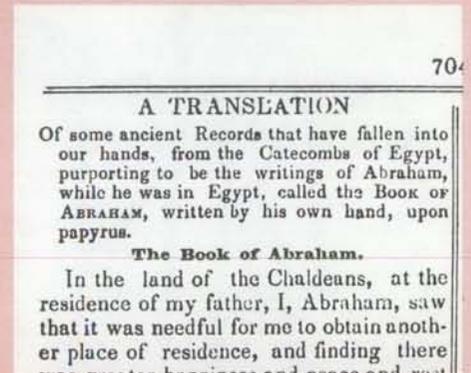


Illustration 42



Illustration 43