

virtue and reputation became still more conspicuous” (*Antiquities* 1.8.1). Josephus also wrote that Abraham “introduced them to arithmetic and transmitted to them the laws of astronomy” (*Antiquities* 1.8.2). See Astronomy.

The eternal nature of spirits

In speaking of the cosmos, God explained that just as there was one star above another until one reaches Kolob, the greatest of all, so there is one spirit above another until one comes to God, the greatest of all the INTELLIGENCES. And of God, one learns, “These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they. I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all” (Abr. 3:19).

The book of Abraham teaches of Abraham’s vision of the PREMORTAL EXISTENCE of all spirits. While the book of Moses (Joseph Smith’s translation of the early chapters of Genesis) makes reference to the premortal Grand Council, in which Jehovah was chosen to be the Redeemer and Lucifer was expelled from heaven (Moses 4:1–4), no mention is made of other entities being present. The book of Abraham, however, indicates that God showed to Abraham “the intelligences that were organized before the world was.” He also saw that from among this vast assemblage of “souls” were “many of the noble and great ones.” God said, “These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good.” These noble and great ones assisted JEHOVAH, the spirit “like unto God,” in creating and forming the earth. In addition, brief mention is made of the Grand Council, in which Jehovah was selected to be the one sent to implement the Father’s plan of salvation. The account also explains that Lucifer “was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him” (Abr. 3:22–28; 4:1). See First and second estates; Heaven, war in; Satan.

Abraham’s account of the Creation

While the books of Genesis and Moses provide accounts of the CREATION, Abraham 4 contains additional significant details. “The account of the creation in the book of Abraham,” President Joseph Fielding Smith observed, “is

‘The Lord’s Blueprint of Creation.’ By this I mean Abraham gives an account of the *planning* in heaven for this earth and its inhabitants, *before* the work of building was done” (*Doctrines*, 1:75; emphasis in original). Thus Abraham 4 contains such expressions as “let us prepare the earth” (v. 11), “the Gods prepared the waters” (v. 21), “the Gods took counsel among themselves” (v. 26), and “we will do everything that we have said” (v. 31). See Gods; Materials; Organize, organized.

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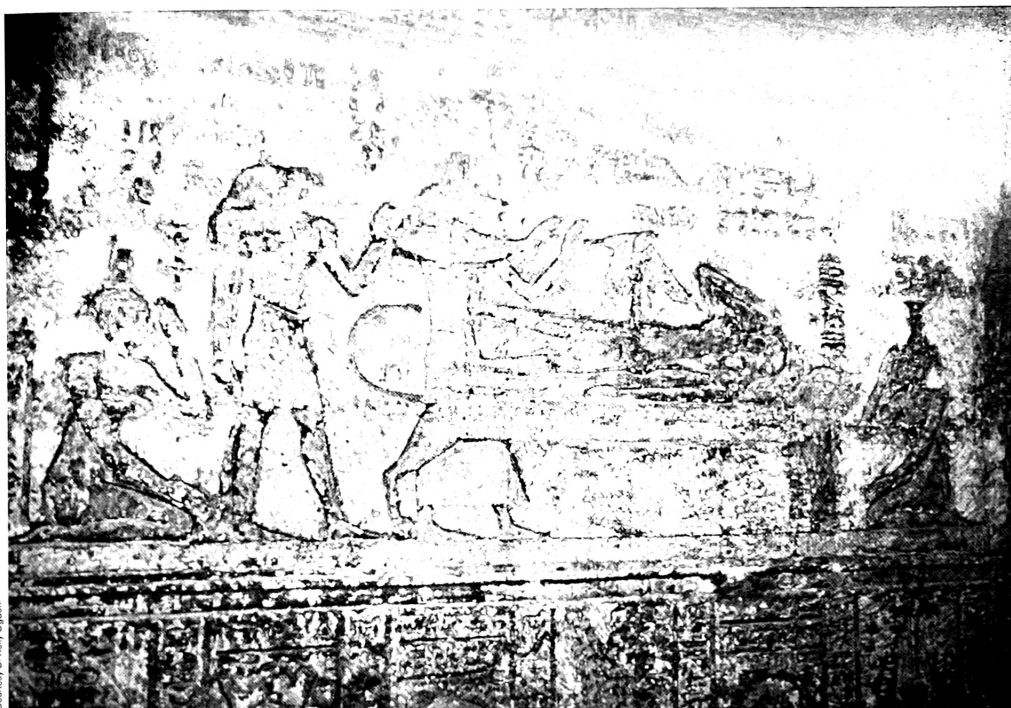
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RLM

Book of Abraham, facsimiles of

The three illustrations that accompany the text of the BOOK OF ABRAHAM. The book of Abraham is unique in Latter-day Saint scripture because it contains three canonized illustrations (facsimiles).

The three facsimiles depict “Abraham fastened upon an altar” (Fac. 1, fig. 2), “God sitting upon his throne, revealing through the heavens the grand Key-words of the Priesthood” (Fac. 2, fig. 7), and “Abraham sitting upon Pharaoh’s throne” (Fac. 3, fig. 1). The author of the explanations to the facsimiles is unknown, but it is generally assumed that Joseph Smith wrote them. Reuben Hedlock was responsible for the artwork of the facsimiles; he had the difficult task of making the metal printing plates by cutting away the metal where there was no ink on the papyrus, leaving metal where there was ink, and doing it all in mirror image and the same size as the original. Hedlock is responsible



From the Dendara temple, Upper Egypt, a scene similar to that in Facsimile 1.

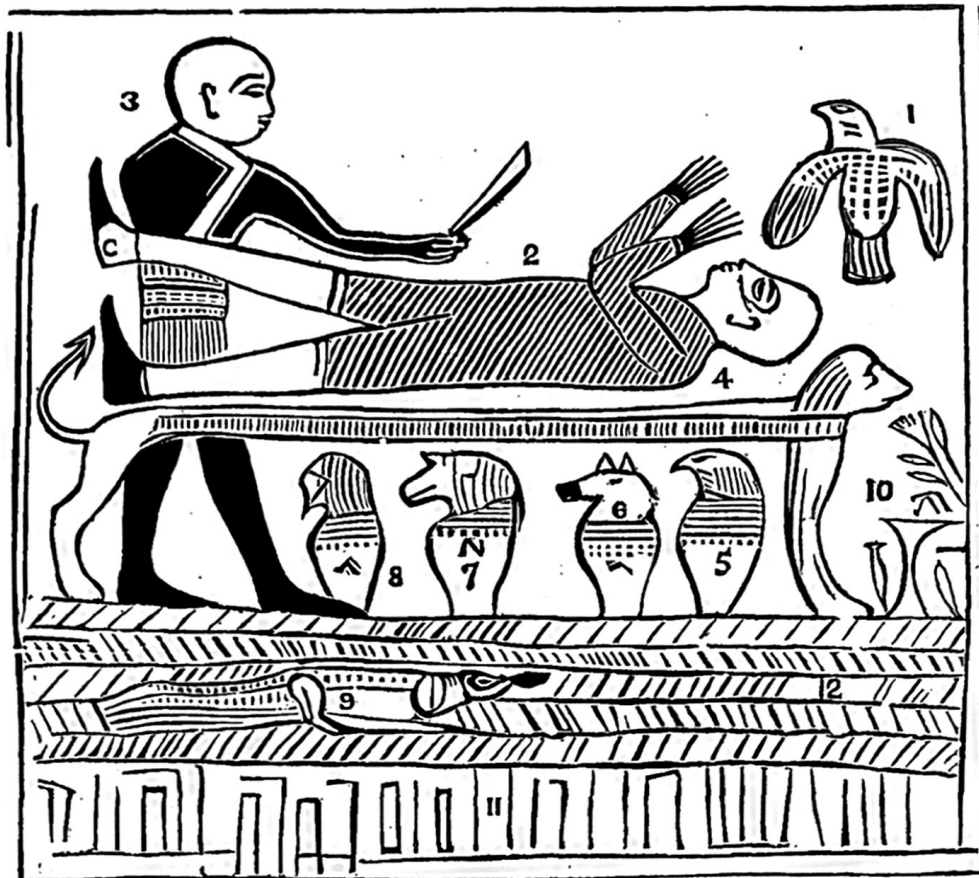
for the restorations where the PAPHYRUS was damaged. The only corrections Joseph Smith made were the placement of the numbers.

The facsimiles come from Ptolemaic period papyrus manuscripts (332–32 B.C.). That date can be deceptive, however, because the papyri can contain texts thousands of years old, even before the time of Abraham but as a copy from a later period. The artwork in the facsimiles reflects Ptolemaic styles just as the script on the papyri reflects Ptolemaic handwriting.

Facsimiles 1 and 3 come from one papyrus; Facsimile 2 comes from a different papyrus. At least one of the facsimiles, and perhaps all three, came from a different papyrus or papyri than the text of the book of Abraham. At the time Joseph Smith's papyri were made, it was common to include images that did not necessarily match the texts that accompanied them. So the facsimiles do not necessarily reveal anything about which papyrus contained the text of the book of Abraham.

The general type of scenes depicted in Facsimiles 1 and 3 is not attested much before the time of Moses. The type of scene depicted in Facsimile 2 might date as early as the time of Lehi, but almost all parallel examples of this sort of picture date to the Ptolemaic period. So the artwork may not go back to the time of Abraham. There are two references to the facsimiles in the text of the book of Abraham (Abr. 1:12, 14). The earliest manuscripts of the book of Abraham, however, indicate that the references to the facsimiles in the text (the last two phrases in Abr. 1:12 and the first two phrases in Abr. 1:14) are inserted in the margins and between the lines of the text. Some have argued that these are nineteenth-century editorial insertions and not part of the ancient text. If so, then it is possible that the ancient book of Abraham did not have pictures accompanying the text.

Interpreting the facsimiles requires more than simply identifying a name for a particular figure. A fuller explanation requires both



Facsimile 1 from the book of Abraham.

understanding the associations of the individual figures and understanding how they function together in terms of the larger facsimile. Without the narrative in the book of Abraham, the individual facsimiles make only partial sense. Based solely on the explanation to Facsimile 1, for example, one would not know how the episode it depicts plays out. The text of the book of Abraham is necessary to understand that the priest actually died. Understanding Facsimiles 2 and 3 is problematic because the corresponding text in the book of Abraham is missing.

Different ways of interpreting the facsimiles have been proposed. Some see the explanation as Joseph Smith's understanding of the images, others think Joseph Smith was providing ancient Jewish interpretations of the scenes, and still others think that the explanations reflect an ancient Egyptian understanding of the pictures.

If one wishes to understand the scenes in the facsimiles in an ancient Egyptian context, the explanations of the facsimiles should be compared with ancient Egyptian interpretations of the scenes, which may not necessarily

be the same as interpretations of those scenes by modern Egyptologists. There was no one ancient Egyptian interpretation of scenes; ancient Egyptians seem to have a range of interpretations of scenes and individual elements. In judging the explanations to the facsimiles, the entire range of ancient Egyptian interpretations needs to be considered.

Facsimile 1 has no close Egyptian parallels. All scenes said to be parallel to Facsimile 1 are missing at least two major elements, one of which is always the crocodile (fig. 9). The closest parallels are said to be from the roof chapels of the Dendara temple, some of which are accompanied by inscriptions relating to human sacrifice, such as this one: "You are happy with his deeds, overthrowing the enemies of his father, when the mighty one brought an end to the evil doer: He will not exist, nor will his name exist, since you will destroy his town, cast down the wall of his house, and everyone who is in it will be set on fire; you will demolish his district; you will stab his confederates, his flesh being ashes, the evil conspirator consigned to

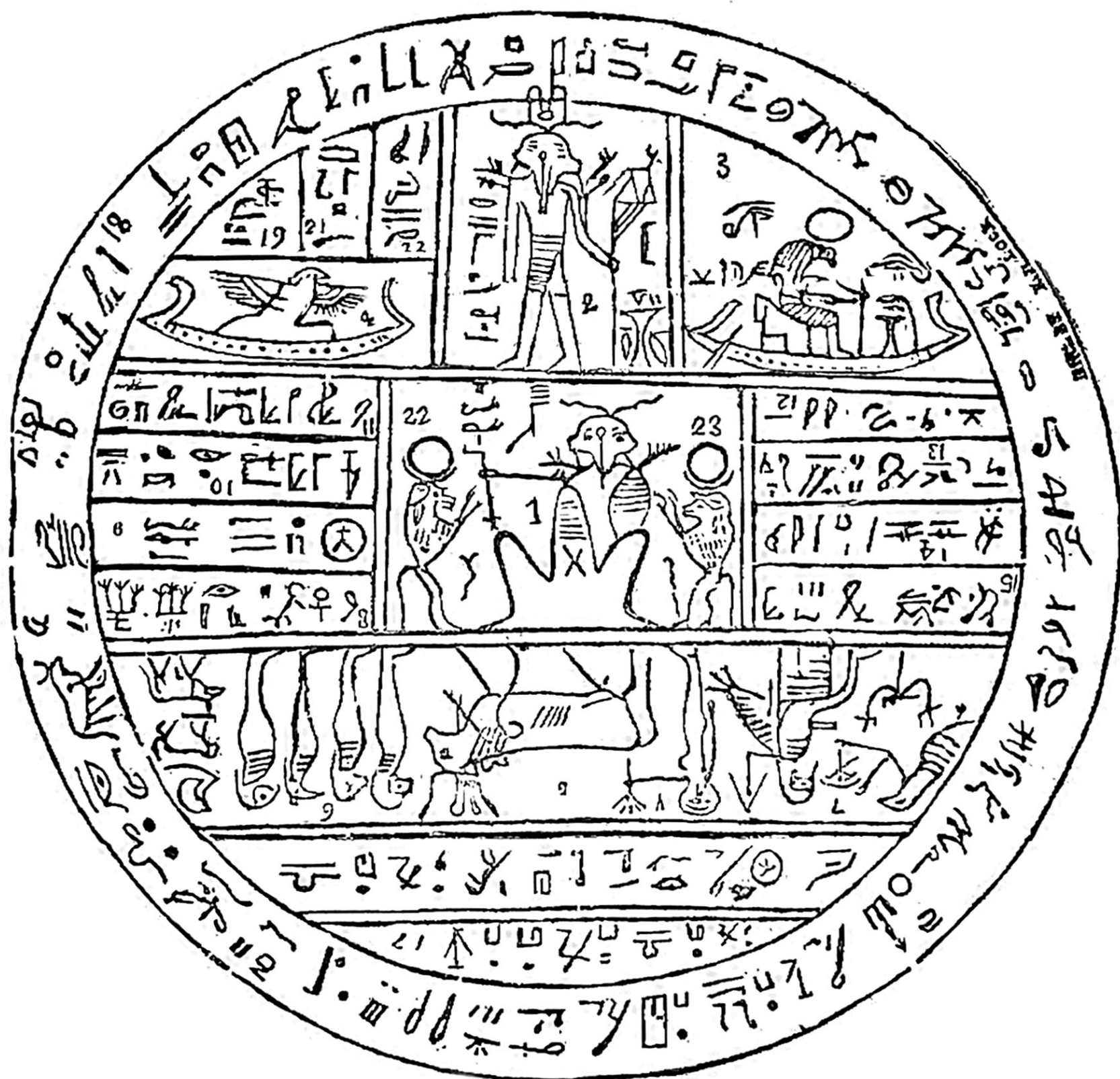
the slaughter so that he will no longer exist" (*Le Temple de Dendara*, X 199–200). This inscription parallels instructions for human sacrifice in Egypt in which the victim was bound, spat upon, trampled underfoot, stabbed, decapitated, set on fire, and spat upon while burning.

Some of the figures in Facsimile 1 can be identified, at least in general terms. Most Egyptologists think that Figure 1 should have a human head, which would make it a *ba*-bird, a term which ancient Egyptians translated into Greek as *angelos*, or angel. Most Egyptologists would place a jackal head on Figure 3, but whether a jackal-headed figure or a bald-headed man, either way the figure would be a priest. Figure 5 is an Egyptian deity who "removed rebellion" (*Le Temple de Dendara*, X 217). Figure 6 is an Egyptian deity who caused "the hostile foreigners to retreat" (*Le Temple de Dendara*, X 217).

Figure 7 is an Egyptian deity who "slaughtered those who create injuries . . . [and] take away the breath from his nostrils" (*Le Temple de Dendara*, X 217). Figure 8 is an Egyptian deity who "repulses enemies" and "comes tearing out the enemies who butchers the sinners" (*Le Temple de Dendara*, X 217). Figure 9 is usually identified as "Sobek who is in the water" when "the lords of truth . . . cause the sacrifice of the evildoers" (*Book of the Dead* 17).

Facsimile 2 is a HYPOCEPHALUS, an object placed at the head of a MUMMY in order that its possessor "will be like a fire after his enemies on earth. If it is placed for you at the throat of a man after his death, he will be a god on the god's property, and he will not be held back at the gates of the next life" (*Book of the Dead* 162, rubric).

A number of the figures in Facsimile 2 can be



Facsimile 2 from the book of Abraham.

identified. Ancient Egyptians have no consistent identification of figure 1. Normally on hypocephali this figure has four heads. As such he is “the King, the noble image, chief of all the gods, . . . who crosses the sky as a manifestation with four heads on one neck, the hidden one, whose form none knows, who came forth from the abyss, who appears in flames, the great flyer in heaven whose might is greater than all the gods, whose rays bring earth to the highest heaven” (*Le Temple d’Esna*, 431). The Ancient Egyptians have no consistent name for figure 2, though it resembles the iconography for the planet Venus. Different hypocephali have different figures represented in place of figure 3. Ancient Egyptians consistently identify figure 4 as Bibiou, whom they ask to “open heaven to me in its breadth and depth, and bring the pure light” (*Demotic Magical Papyrus 29/6–7*). Ancient Egyptians labeled figure 5 as the “great cow who gave birth to the sun.” She is identified with both the horizon and the sun itself; she “has driven out darkness and brought light” and “commands the processions of gods and men” and thus governs

them (*Le Temple d’Esna*, 442). Ancient Egyptians identified figure 6 with the sons of Horus, who were originally connected with the cardinal directions. There are a number of significant variations in the depiction of figure 7 on hypocephali, but he is identified as “the great god,” a designation of many gods in Egypt, including Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts.

Facsimile 3 is not an ancient Egyptian judgment scene, as it is missing a number of key elements of such scenes, most notably the weighing of the heart. Instead, it is similar to initiation scenes. Preserved initiations from ancient Egypt contain accounts of creation and instructions in astronomy. Similar scenes on gravestones are often accompanied by an inscription asking for the individual, “may his soul live in the presence of Osiris the great god.” In later times this formula is replaced with living “in the bosom of Abraham.”

Less work on the identification of the various figures in Facsimile 3 has been published. Still, the name and function of “Shulem, one of the king’s principal waiters” (Fac. 3, fig. 5) are



Facsimile 3 from the book of Abraham.

attested for Abraham's day; but since the corresponding text for the book of Abraham is missing, his role is not clear.

While not all details of the facsimiles have been worked out yet, for those that have, the explanation of the figures attributed to Joseph Smith is generally in the range of interpretations found among the ancient Egyptians.

See also Book of Abraham, frequently asked questions about; Book of Abraham, translation of; Book of Breathings; Book of the Dead.

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Book of Abraham, frequently asked questions about

Question: How did Joseph Smith acquire a collection of mummies and papyrus?

Answer: See Book of Abraham, coming forth of.

Question: How much of Joseph Smith’s papyri do we have today?

Answer: See Book of Abraham, coming forth of.

Question: What is on the papyri we have today?

Answer: The PAPYRUS fragments still in existence from the collection Joseph Smith bought from Michael H. Chandler in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835 contain portions of a BOOK OF BREATHINGS and a BOOK OF THE DEAD, two Egyptian funerary documents designed to help the deceased reach his or her desired station in the afterlife. One of the fragments contains the original drawing of Facsimile 1 in the Pearl of Great Price. This drawing is surrounded by the text of a Book of Breathings. See Book of Abraham, coming forth of.

Question: What is the relationship between the papyrus fragments that exist today and the book of Abraham?

Answer: The relationship between the extant fragments and the BOOK OF ABRAHAM is not fully known. Although many assumed that the text adjacent to Facsimile 1 was the source of the book of Abraham, that assumption does not

square with the eyewitness accounts. Those who heard either Joseph Smith or his mother, who was charged with the care and exhibition of the papyri and mummies, speak of the source of the book of Abraham, indicate that the long scroll, not the mounted fragments, was the source of the book of Abraham. Some scholars have supposed that fragments had been cut from the long scroll and mounted under glass and that some had been cut from the short scroll and mounted similarly. However, those suppositions are not certain.

Question: How does what Joseph Smith says about the interpretation of the facsimiles correlate with how the ancient Egyptians would have viewed them?

Answer: Many elements of what Joseph Smith said about the facsimiles seem to match how the ancient Egyptians would have interpreted them, but there are also some that do not. That is probably irrelevant. First, it cannot be determined exactly what the ancient Egyptians would have made of these drawings. Egyptologists do their best, but Egyptologists themselves have shown that what they say about the meaning of such drawings is frequently wrong. Second, it is not clear that all Egyptians would have interpreted the drawings the same way. Third, it may be that what ancient Jews in Egypt or elsewhere would have seen in the drawings was more relevant than what Egyptians would have understood. Or perhaps Egyptians familiar with Jewish writings would have given them an interpretation different from that of other Egyptians. Fourth, it is possible that Joseph Smith was providing a spiritual interpretation that superseded any ancient interpretations. It is also possible that none of these paradigms for interpreting the facsimiles is correct and that the right way to interpret them has yet to be revealed. See Book of Abraham, facsimiles of.

Question: What do Egyptologists say about the papyri and the book of Abraham?

Answer: Only a few Egyptologists have dealt with the book of Abraham and the papyri, and they all agree that the extant papyri contain Egyptian religious writings but no text