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**Title** Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri

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**Abstract** This article explores what we know about the Joseph Smith Papyri, whether they are connected to the Book of Abraham, and the approaches that Latter-day Saints and non-LDS scholars take when trying to understand such a connection.

## SOME PUZZLES FROM THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPYRI

John Gee

Although the concept of preexistence is alluded to in various Latter-day Saint scriptures, the clearest discussion comes from the Book of Abraham, and it is almost the only reason that Latter-day Saints use that book. Of the 378 quotations of the Book of Abraham in general conferences of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since 1942, 238, or 63 percent, come from the section on the preexistence in Abraham 3:18–28.<sup>1</sup> The next most commonly cited passage is the section on the Abrahamic covenant in Abraham 2:6–11, which is cited 43 times for 11 percent of the citations. This situation is mirrored in the church's lesson manuals, where the Book of Abraham is cited 206 times—again the section on the preexistence is the most commonly cited (28 percent) and the Abrahamic covenant is second (22 percent).<sup>2</sup> Whatever else the Book of Abraham says is of comparatively minor importance to Latter-day Saints. My topic, therefore, a mote in our eyes but a beam in the eyes of the critics, is irrelevant to the doctrine of Christ.

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This article is based on a presentation given at the 2007 FAIR (Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research) conference in Sandy, Utah.

1. Information taken from <http://scriptures.byu.edu/> (accessed 28 August 2008).
2. From an analysis of the curriculum materials on <http://lds.org>. This includes Primary, Aaronic Priesthood, Young Women, Sunday School, Relief Society, and Melchizedek Priesthood materials. It does not include missionary, seminary, or institute materials.

Some individuals are so intimately acquainted with the discussions about the Book of Abraham and the Joseph Smith Papyri that they are inseparably wedded to them. Some are somewhat acquainted with the arguments but perhaps not yet on a first-name basis. Others are vaguely aware that some discussion exists but have not yet been introduced to it. I hope I have something for all of these groups. For those who are new to the discussion, allow me to introduce what I affectionately refer to as the mess of the Joseph Smith Papyri.

The fullest discussion of the origins of the Joseph Smith Papyri in the church's curriculum materials is in the Gospel Doctrine manual for the Old Testament, which says, "The book of Abraham is a translation that the Prophet Joseph Smith made from some Egyptian papyri."<sup>3</sup> That is it. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no official position on how the Book of Abraham was translated or from what papyrus. That the church takes no official position, however, does not mean that individual members do not have some opinions on the subject. Church members tend to fall into four groups regarding the translation of the Book of Abraham. The smallest group, comprising about one-half of 1 percent of Mormons—according to my informal, admittedly unscientific surveys—thinks that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Abraham from the existing fragments that were in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The next largest group thinks that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Abraham from papyrus fragments that no longer exist. About one-third think there is or was no connection between the Book of Abraham and any papyrus fragments. The largest group, more than half of church members, do not care where the Book of Abraham came from. Critics routinely assert that *the* Latter-day Saint position is the one that is actually the least popular of all. They want it to be our position because it is the most convenient straw man. The only eyewitness to the translation process to describe it was Joseph Smith's scribe Warren Parrish, who after he left the church claimed, "I have set by his side and penned down the translation of the Egyptian Hieroglyphicks as he claimed to

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3. *Old Testament: Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996), 1.

receive it by direct inspiration from Heaven.”<sup>4</sup> The majority of Latter-day Saints are probably comfortable leaving discussion of the translation of the Book of Abraham at that, and I will leave it at that here too except to say that no theory about the translation accounts for all the evidence. I would, however, like to look at the papyri themselves and some of the puzzles surrounding them, namely, What papyri did Joseph Smith have? and What do we know about the ancient owners of the papyri?

### Historical Overview

The saga of the Joseph Smith Papyri begins in the early part of the nineteenth century during the pillaging of Egypt that at that time passed for archaeology. One of those involved in the plunder and pillage was Antonio Lebolo. He exhumed one of the most spectacular caches of mummies and papyri from Thebes that Egyptology has ever known. (I used to think the accounts of several hundred mummies<sup>5</sup> were vastly exaggerated—I am no longer so sure.) Lebolo was acting as an agent procuring antiquities for Bernadino Drovetti but kept a few for himself. These were sent via Albano Oblasser to America, paraded around the country, and sold off piecemeal until the remainder were sold by Michael Chandler to the Church of Jesus Christ in July 1835. The church got four mummies and at least five papyri. After the death of Joseph Smith’s mother in 1856, the papyri were sold to Abel Combs, who sold part of the collection to the Wood Museum in St. Louis, which eventually relocated to Chicago and burned to the ground in the Chicago Fire of 1871. The other part of the collection Combs kept for himself, and that passed through various hands until it was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1947. The Metropolitan Museum of Art knew that they had acquired “papyrus fragments of hieratic Books of the Dead, once the property of the Mormon leader Joseph Smith.”<sup>6</sup> “The Metropolitan Museum was fully aware of what the papyri were when they first

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4. Warren Parrish, letter to the editor, *Painesville Republican*, 15 February 1838.

5. *History of the Church*, 2:348–49.

6. “Review of the Year 1947,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletins* 7/1 (1948): 17.

saw them in 1918, and they knew what they were doing when they acquired them.” Klaus Baer recalled, “I saw photographs of them for the first time in 1963, I believe, and was asked at the time, on my honor not to tell anyone where they were and to keep the whole thing confidential.”<sup>7</sup> The guard had changed at the museum, and the new curators were not as keen to have the papyri as the previous curators had been. Henry Fischer, curator of the Department of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the late 1960s, explained how the museum decided to deal with their religious hot potato: “We knew, since [Aziz Atiya] worked in Salt Lake City and was acquainted with leaders of the Mormon Church, that he might very tactfully find out how they felt about it. So we simply informed him about this in confidence, and I think he handled the matter very nicely.”<sup>8</sup> The newspapers garbled the story by wrongly making Atiya the discoverer of the documents, which disturbed Fischer. He wrote to Atiya as follows:

Although I was already aware that your version of the “discovery” of these documents had caused considerable confusion, it was startling to read that you had informed me of their existence.

While I have taken pains to avoid any outright contradictions of what you have said, I do not see why either I or the other members of my department—past and present—should be put in the position of being ignorant about facts we could not fail to have known.<sup>9</sup>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art gave the papyri back to the church in 1967. The papyri have now remained in one set of hands for the longest time since their excavation.

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7. Klaus Baer to Jerald Tanner, 13 August 1968, cited in Boyd J. Peterson, *Hugh Nibley: A Consecrated Life* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002), 316.

8. Norman Tolk, Lynn Travers, George D. Smith, and F. Charles Graves, “An Interview with Dr. Fischer,” *Dialogue* 2/4 (1967): 58.

9. Henry G. Fischer to Aziz S. Atiya, 2 January 1968, Aziz S. Atiya Papers, Manuscripts Division, University of Utah Marriott Library.

## Physical Papyri

The papyri we currently have are eleven groups of fragments from three different papyri, containing two partial copies of what is usually misnamed “the Book of the Dead” and part of a copy of what is usually misnamed “the Document of Breathings Made by Isis.” The extant fragments do not contain any text from the Book of Abraham.

We know what we currently have, but how much papyri did Joseph Smith have? Critics want to minimize the amount of papyri originally owned by Joseph Smith, preferably to an amount not much more than what we currently have, because they do not want a Book of Abraham to have ever existed. As Richard Bushman has noted, “people who have broken away from Mormonism . . . have to justify their decision to leave. They cannot countenance evidence of divine inspiration in [Joseph Smith’s] teachings without catching themselves in a disastrous error.”<sup>10</sup> So critics who have left the church cannot allow Joseph Smith to have gotten anything right, even as a guess or by accident. They will go to extreme lengths and propound convoluted theories to have something else, anything else, to believe in. The critic Dale Morgan, himself such a defector, wrote in a moment of candor: “With my point of view on God, I am incapable of accepting the claims of Joseph Smith and the Mormons, be they however so convincing. If God does not exist, how can Joseph Smith’s story have any possible validity? I will look everywhere for explanations except to the ONE explanation that is the position of the church.”<sup>11</sup> So the critics cannot allow themselves to say, as Latter-day Saints can say, “Whether or not there was a Book of Abraham actually contained on the portion of papyri that did not survive is something that cannot be determined by scholarly means.”

A Latter-day Saint who has faith, that is, trust in God, can examine such issues without being bothered or without having to know all

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10. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), xix.

11. Dale Morgan to Juanita Brooks, 15 December 1945, in *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History*, ed. John P. Walker (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 87.

the answers to all the questions we might have. In fact, insisting on the answers to all our little questions is a sign of a lack of faith or trust; for example, if we insist that our spouse or employees must account for every moment out of our presence, it is a sign that we do not have faith or trust in them. Abraham, for example, was able to say, “Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee; thou didst send thine angel to deliver me from the gods of Elkenah, and I will do well to hearken to thy voice” (Abraham 2:12–13). He trusted God on the basis of one past experience without having to know all the details about how the Lord was going to fulfill his promises. Likewise, a Latter-day Saint who trusts God and his prophets, that is, spokesmen, does not need to see the actual Egyptian characters on the papyrus or know any of the details about the translation of the Book of Abraham in order to accept it and act with confidence that this life is a time of testing when God “will prove [us] herewith to see if [we] will do all things whatsoever the Lord [our] God shall command [us]” (Abraham 3:25). This is the reason why, for the vast majority of Latter-day Saints, the particulars of the translation of the Book of Abraham are not an issue.

Still, “as all have not faith”—and most of us either want faith or desire to help those who want it—we are commanded to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118). Learning is a partial substitute for and an aid to faith. So what do we actually know about the papyri Joseph Smith had?

Between the current fragments and some very bad copies of characters from the papyri, we know that Joseph Smith had papyri or portions of papyri from at least five individuals:

- Horos, son of Osoroeris and Chibois
- Semminis, daughter of Eschons
- Amenothis, son of Tanoub
- a woman with the unique name of Noufianoub
- a man named Sesonchis

Comparing the copies of the papyri with the fragments indicates that in no case do we have a complete record of what Joseph Smith had from these two sources alone.



Eyewitnesses from the Nauvoo period (1839–1844) describe “a quantity of records, written on papyrus, in Egyptian hieroglyphics,”<sup>12</sup> including (1) some papyri “preserved under glass,”<sup>13</sup> described as “a number of glazed slides, like picture frames, containing sheets of papyrus, with Egyptian inscriptions and hieroglyphics”;<sup>14</sup> (2) “a long roll of manuscript”<sup>15</sup> that contained the Book of Abraham;<sup>16</sup> (3) “another roll”;<sup>17</sup> and (4) “two or three other small pieces of papyrus, with astronomical calculations, epitaphs, &c.”<sup>18</sup> Only the mounted fragments ended up in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and were subsequently given back to the Church of Jesus Christ. The eyewitnesses not only describe the papyri, but they also describe specific vignettes or pictures on the papyri. When eyewitnesses described the vignettes as being on the papyri mounted under glass, they can be matched with the fragments from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On the other hand, when the vignettes are described as being on the rolls, the descriptions do not match any of the currently surviving fragments. Gustav Seyffarth’s 1859 catalog of the museum in St. Louis indicates that some of the Joseph Smith Papyri were there.<sup>19</sup> Those papyri moved with the Wood Museum to Chicago and were burned in the Chicago Fire in 1871. Whatever we conjecture their contents to be is only that: conjecture.

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12. William S. West, *A Few Interesting Facts Respecting the Rise, Progress, and Pretensions of the Mormons* (Warren, OH, 1837), cited in Jay M. Todd, *The Saga of the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 196.

13. Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), 386.

14. Henry Caswall, *The City of the Mormons; or, Three Days at Nauvoo, in 1842* (London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1842), 22.

15. Charlotte Haven to her mother, 19 February 1843, “A Girl’s Letters from Nauvoo,” *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine*, December 1890, 624.

16. Jerusha W. Blanchard, “Reminiscences of the Granddaughter of Hyrum Smith,” *Relief Society Magazine* 9/1 (1922): 9; Charlotte Haven to her mother, 19 February 1843, *Overland Monthly*, 624.

17. Charlotte Haven to her mother, 19 February 1843, *Overland Monthly*, 624.

18. Oliver Cowdery to William Frye, 22 December 1835, *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* 2/3 (1835): 234.

19. Gustav Seyffarth, Catalogue of the St. Louis Museum 1859, cited in Todd, *Saga*, 296–98.

Both Mormon and non-Mormon eyewitnesses from the nineteenth century agree that it was a “roll of papyrus from which [Joseph Smith] translated the Book of Abraham,”<sup>20</sup> meaning the “long roll of manuscript,” and not one of the mounted fragments that eventually ended up in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>21</sup> So the intellectual position that some members follow and that the critics would have us adopt as the position of the church is not in accord with the historical evidence.

How big were the rolls?

One way to answer that question is to take the standard size for a papyrus roll and just use that. “In the Ptolemaic period a roll was usually c. 320 cm long and c. 32 cm high.”<sup>22</sup> I have used such estimates before, but those figures are not entirely satisfactory. As Mark Depauw has pointed out in a later study, the measurements of papyri vary throughout the Ptolemaic period, with different standards applying at different times.<sup>23</sup>

One can take a more scientific—that is, mathematical—approach because the circumference of a scroll limits the amount of scroll that can be contained inside it. Thus, we can determine by the size of the circumference and the tightness of the winding how much papyrus can be missing at the interior end of a papyrus roll. Friedhelm Hoffmann has already developed such a formula in calculating the amount of material missing from the end of Papyrus Spiegelberg,

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20. Jerusha W. Blanchard, “Reminiscences of the Granddaughter of Hyrum Smith”; see also Charlotte Haven to her mother, 19 February 1843, *Overland Monthly*, 624.

21. For the distribution of the manuscript fragments, see John Gee, “Eyewitness, Hearsay, and Physical Evidence of the Joseph Smith Papyri,” in *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 188–91; John Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 10–13.

22. P. W. Pestman, *The New Papyrological Primer*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 4–5.

23. Mark Depauw, “The Royal Format of Early Ptolemaic Demotic Papyri,” in *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies*, ed. Kim Ryholt (Copenhagen: The Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies, University of Copenhagen, 2002), 85–100, specifically 89. Readers of Depauw, whose native language is not English, should note that he consistently interchanges the terms “height” and “width,” meaning in all cases “height.”

from which he was able to determine that there were five columns missing from the text.<sup>24</sup> I will not bore you with the derivation of the formula; it has been in print over a decade. If  $S$  = the average difference between the winding measurement, and  $E$  = the length of the last winding, then the theoretical length of the missing portion is  $Z$ , so that  $Z \approx ((E^2 - 6.25)/2S) - E$ .<sup>25</sup> We can apply this to the Joseph Smith Papyri and obtain some usable results.

For the scroll of Noufianoub, the final winding length is 7.8 cm and the average difference is .33 cm. The formula says that there are 74 cm missing, which is just over 2 feet. Thus this vignette was at the very end of the roll it was on. Unfortunately there is no way of knowing how much was missing from the beginning of the scroll.

For the Semminis scroll, the final winding length is 14 cm and the average difference is .25 cm. Thus there were 365.5 cm left in the scroll. This is the equivalent of 143.9 inches, or nearly 12 feet. The vignette in Joseph Smith Papyrus II is the furthest vignette into the Semminis scroll and normally occurs about halfway through the Book of the Dead,<sup>26</sup> which means that the total scroll would be about 20 to 24 feet long. This is longer than some scrolls<sup>27</sup> but shorter than others.<sup>28</sup>

For the scroll of Horos, the initial winding length is 9.7 cm, the last winding is 9.5 cm, and there are seven windings in total. This leaves us with an average value of .03333 for  $S$ .  $E$  is, as already stated, 9.5 cm. Plugging this into the equation gives 1250.5 cm of missing papyrus. This is the equivalent of 492.3 inches, or 41 feet of missing papyrus.

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24. Friedhelm Hoffmann, "Die Länge des P. Spiegelberg," in *Acta Demotica: Acts of Fifth International Conference for Demotists* (Pisa: Giardini Editori e Stampatori, 1994), 145–55.

25. Hoffmann, "Länge des P. Spiegelberg," 151.

26. P. BM 10479 in Malcolm Mosher Jr., *The Papyrus of Hor* (London: British Museum Press, 2001), plate 6 (frame 7 out of 12). P. Turin 1791, in R. Lepsius, *Das Totenbuch der Ägypter nach dem hieroglyphischen Papyrus in Turin* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1842), plate XLI (out of LXXIX). pQeqa, in Martin von Falck, *Das Totenbuch der Qeqa aus der Ptolemäerzeit (pBerlin P. 3003)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), tafel 6 (out of 10). pBerlin P. 10477, in Barbara Lüscher, *Das Totenbuch pBerlin P. 10477 aus Achmim (mit Photographien des verwandten pHildesheim 5248)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), tafel 9 (out of 20); pHildesheim 5248, in Lüscher, *Totenbuch pBerlin P. 10477*, tafel 28 (8 out of 19).

27. E.g., pQeqa at 472 cm; von Falck, *Totenbuch der Qeqa*, 1.

28. E.g., pBerlin P. 10477 at 952.4 cm; Lüscher, *Totenbuch pBerlin P. 10477*, 1.

Would such a thing be unusual? No. P. Turin 1791 is 57 feet 3 inches (= 1745 cm) long,<sup>29</sup> P. Nesmin is 1280 cm long,<sup>30</sup> and the ritual roll of Imouthes in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is 1088.6 cm,<sup>31</sup> 428.6 inches, or 35 feet 8 inches long, while his Book of the Dead is longer still. So such a length is not out of the question. While we know that the scroll of Horos had a text of the Document of Breathing Made by Isis, about one in four of those documents contain additional texts.<sup>32</sup> So the presence of additional texts would not be unusual.

The size of Horos's scroll at first seems excessive, even though it is not unheard of. When I first plugged the numbers in a few years ago and got the result, I checked the measurements and then checked them again. Then I checked the formula again. Then I rechecked the formula's derivation. Then I rechecked the assumptions behind the formula. Then I simply dismissed them and went back to the standard roll length. I had always assumed that the Semminis roll would be the longer one since the Book of the Dead is a much longer composition than the Document of Breathing Made by Isis and my initial estimates of the length of the Semminis roll, based on the length of the text preserved and the percentage of the Book of the Dead preserved, had been almost twenty feet. It was only after plugging the numbers from the other Joseph Smith Papyri into the formula that I realized that the formula does give reasonable results. I have since realized that having a long roll of Horos brings all the nineteenth-century eyewitnesses into agreement.

One might thoughtlessly suppose that one could make measurements from just any photograph. Most of the photographs, however, are not to scale (and making measurements of the Statue of Liberty from photographs, for example, might lead to the conclusion that it is only two inches high). Even if the photographs were to scale, pho-

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29. Lepsius, *Das Todtenbuch der Ägypter*, 4.

30. Jacques J. Clère, *Le Papyrus de Nesmin: un livre des morts hiéroglyphique de l'époque ptolémaïque* (Cairo: IFAO, 1987), 6; Mosher, *Papyrus of Hor*, 29.

31. Jean-Claude Goyon, *Le Papyrus d'Imouthès Fils de Psintaès* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 7.

32. Marc Coenen, "An Introduction to the *Document of Breathing Made by Isis*," *Revue d'Égypte* 49 (1998): 42.

tography can also introduce other distortions. Measurements from photographs are suspect and extremely susceptible to distortion. Calculations from such sources are therefore problematic.

If we look at the nineteenth-century eyewitnesses and ask the question, Which of the five known rolls that Joseph Smith had do the eyewitnesses identify as the source of the Book of Abraham? we come up with some useful information. Charlotte Haven and Jerusha Blanchard identify the long roll as being the source of the Book of Abraham (see notes 16 and 17). On the other hand, William Appleby identifies the Book of Abraham as having been written by a poor scribe,<sup>33</sup> which matches the Horos roll. Only if the Horos roll is longer than the Semminis roll do the nineteenth-century eyewitnesses agree. And for that to be the case, the unmounted portion of the Horos roll has to be longer than the twelve feet left on the Semminis roll. One could take the average for S of only the last four windings (.05 cm) and still come up with a value for Z of 830.5 cm, or 27 feet 3 inches, and Horos's roll would still be longer than the Semminis roll and well within the range of comparable Ptolemaic rolls.

Furthermore, a lengthy Horos roll accommodates the otherwise problematic testimony of Gustav Seyffarth, who describes Facsimile 3, which is on the roll of Horos, and claims that a portion of the text he saw was an invocation to Osiris.<sup>34</sup> If all there was on the Horos roll was the Document of Breathings Made by Isis, then the problem is that there is no invocation to Osiris in the portion of that text that Seyffarth would have seen, or anywhere in the document for that matter. With a longer roll, Seyffarth's testimony can be accounted for because there would certainly be room for an invocation to Osiris on the roll (if Seyffarth is accurate in his interpretation) and who knows what else.

### Horos, Son of Osoroeris

Although scholarship is unable to tell us whether or not there was a Book of Abraham on the roll of Horos, perhaps we can tell something

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33. William I. Appleby journal, 5 May 1841, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, MS 1401, 71–72.

34. Catalogue of the St. Louis Museum, 1859, cited in Todd, *Saga*, 298.

about the individual who owned the papyrus and the likelihood that the Book of Abraham might have interested him. To do so requires moving from the mess of the Joseph Smith Papyri to their message. The puzzle that is before us is to determine what we can know about Horos.

The beginning of the roll of Horos lists Horos's name, titles, and parents. Horos bore three titles, or high-ranking positions, at some point in his life, perhaps concurrently, perhaps sequentially: prophet of Amonrasonter, prophet of Min who Massacres his Enemies, and prophet of Chespisichis. The last two titles are rare, the second one being extremely rare (only four men are known to have borne it).

Horos's names and titles allow him to be linked with a number of other texts, such as an inscription on the statue of his father, now in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore.<sup>35</sup> These texts yield a family tree covering eight generations from Horos's grandfather to his great-great-grandsons. Thanks to a graffito on the small temple of Medinet Habu, we can date the family. Horos's third-great-grandson was alive in 37 BC under the reign of Cleopatra VII, his son died before 153 BC, and two of his grandsons died between 146 and 124 BC. This would place Horos as roughly contemporary with Ptolemy V, which means that this roll from the Joseph Smith Papyri was contemporary with the Rosetta Stone.<sup>36</sup> Horos probably lived through the revolt of Haronnophris and Chaonnophris,<sup>37</sup> and the priests of Amonrasonter seem to have some special connection with the revolt.<sup>38</sup> Horos was also probably well acquainted with all three of the languages of the Rosetta Stone. Two of them, hieroglyphs and Demotic, he probably knew better than any Egyptologist alive today.

Horos's titles link him directly with three of the temples at Karnak. Prophet of Amonrasonter links him as prophet in the main temple at

35. Walters Art Gallery 22.213, in George Steindorff, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Sculpture in the Walters Art Gallery* (Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 1946), 70 and pls. XXXIX, CXVIII.

36. For the most recent treatment see Stephen Quirke and Carol Andrews, *The Rosetta Stone* (London: British Museum, 1988).

37. See P. W. Pestman, "Haronnophris and Chaonnophris: Two Indigenous Pharaohs in Ptolemaic Egypt (205–186 B.C.)," in *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, ed. S. P. Vleeming (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 101–37.

38. Pestman, "Haronnophris and Chaonnophris," 131–32.

Karnak. Prophet of Min who Massacres his Enemies links him with the Montu temple north of the main temple. Prophet of Chespisichis links him with the small temple of Chespisichis southwest of the main temple. Let's take these titles in order.

The first title is prophet of Amonrasonter. This means that he was employed in the great temple of Karnak. We know a considerable amount about this temple, the largest surviving one in Egypt.<sup>39</sup> As prophet, he probably would have been initiated in the festival hall.<sup>40</sup> We have two of its daily rituals preserved. In the first of them, the prophet lit a lamp and an incense burner and chanted on his way into the holy of holies. There he saw God and worshipped him face to face.<sup>41</sup> The other daily ritual was the execration ritual, in which a wax figure of an enemy—with the enemy's name written in fresh ink<sup>42</sup>—was spat upon,<sup>43</sup> trampled under the left foot,<sup>44</sup> smitten with a spear,<sup>45</sup> bound,<sup>46</sup> and placed on the fire.<sup>47</sup> Any priest or prophet at Karnak would have been intimately acquainted with both of these rituals. The temple also had a library that would have had king-lists, annals, prophecies and chronicles, compendia of each nome, medical texts, wisdom and ethical teachings, books of lucky days, dream interpretation manuals, astrological and astronomical texts, lexical texts, geographies, festival books, ritual books, glorification texts, hymns, cult prescriptions, construction manuals, manuals of painting and relief, manuals of purification, offering manuals, calendars of feasts, manuals of cultic receipts, inventories, property-list

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39. For an overview, see Paul Barguet, *Le temple d'Amon-Rê à Karnak: Essai d'exégèse*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: IFAO, 2006).

40. Dimitri Laboury, "Archaeological and Textual Evidence for the Function of the 'Botanical Garden' of Karnak in the Initiation Ritual," in *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*, ed. Peter F. Dorman and Betsy M. Bryan (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2007), 27–34, specifically 29.

41. P. Berlin 3055, in *Rituale für den Kultus des Anon und für den Kultus der Mut*, Hieratische Papyri aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin I (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1901).  
 42. P. Bremner-Rhind 23/6–7, in Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind* (*British Museum No. 10188*) (Brussels: FERE, 1933), 46.

43. P. Bremner-Rhind 22/2–5, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 42.

44. P. Bremner-Rhind 22/5–9, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 42–43.

45. P. Bremner-Rhind 22/9–17, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 43–44.

46. P. Bremner-Rhind 22/17–23, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 44–45.

47. P. Bremner-Rhind 22/23–23/16, in Faulkner, *Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, 45–47.

instructions, oracle texts, priestly correspondence, temple day-books, and accounts.<sup>48</sup> From the library in Thebes, the earlier Greek writer Hecataeus wrote an account of Abraham.<sup>49</sup>

Horos was also prophet of Min who Massacres his Enemies. The term for “massacre,” *sm3*, “to slay,” “is also the verb used of slaughtering or sacrificing animals” and can be used as a term for the “sacrificial offering.”<sup>50</sup> “The texts specify that this is done by the knife held in the right hand and the foe in the left or with the harpoon. The [sacrifice] is dismembered and portions of him are put into the brazier as offerings.”<sup>51</sup> The term for enemy, *hryw*,<sup>52</sup> can also mean “sacrificial victim.”<sup>53</sup> The only place where representations of the rituals associated with Min who Massacres his Enemies appear is on the interior portions of the Bab el Abd, the gate in the enclosure wall of the Montu temple north of the great temple of Amun at Karnak.<sup>54</sup> The gate was built by the Pharaoh Ptolemy III Euergetes, the contemporary of Horos’s grandfather Chabonchonsis, who is the earliest known prophet of Min who Massacres his Enemies, and the decoration finished by Ptolemy IV Philopater.<sup>55</sup> Unlike most of the deities featured on the gateway, Min who Massacres his Enemies did not have his own temple in the Montu complex because his rituals were performed in the courtyard of the Montu temple.<sup>56</sup> Two rituals are associated with him; one of them is labeled “subduing sinners,”<sup>57</sup> and the other is the

48. Donald B. Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals and Day-Books: A Contribution to the Study of the Egyptian Sense of History* (Mississauga, Canada: Benben Publications, 1986), 215–23.

49. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 5.113; see John A. Tvedtnes, Brian M. Hauglid, and John Gee, eds., *Traditions about the Early Life of Abraham* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2001), 3.

50. Penelope Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 839.

51. Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 839.

52. Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 745.

53. Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 746. Note the hieroglyphic spellings.

54. The information in this section is taken from John Gee, “History of a Theban Priesthood.” *Proceedings of “Et maintenant ce ne sont plus que des villages . . .” Thèbes et sa région aux époques hellénistique, romaine et byzantine* (forthcoming).

55. Dieter Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 167–68.

56. Aufrère, *Le propylône d’Amon-Rê-Montou à Karnak-Nord*, 271–83.

57. Sydney H. Aufrère, *Le propylône d’Amon-Rê-Montou à Karnak-Nord* (Cairo: IFAO, 2000), 284–91.



burning of enemies. Both scenes come from the execration ritual. The first scene identifies Min who Massacres his Enemies with Reshep,<sup>58</sup> a foreign deity imported into Egypt much earlier, and like many non-Egyptian deities imported into Egypt, he is given a different Egyptian name. The second scene says that he “smites his enemies in the temple of burning” and then “burns them on the altar of burnt offerings.”<sup>59</sup> The gods also “overthrow your enemies in the slaughterhouse (*nm.t*), they sacrifice [the enemy] in your altar (*ʕh*).”<sup>60</sup>

The term for this altar of burnt offerings, *ʕh* (Coptic  $\lambda\Omega$ ), is described in a number of contemporary texts:

P. Onchsheshonqy tells the story of a rebellion against Pharaoh led by Harsiese, Pharaoh’s chief physician. The plot is unsuccessful, and the conspirators are rounded up. “Pharaoh caused an altar (*hw3.t*) of earth to be built at the gate of Pharaoh’s palace. He caused Harsiese, son of Rameses to be placed on an altar (*ʕh*) of copper with all the men who he had, and all the men who were in the plot against Pharaoh.”<sup>61</sup>

P. Vandier tells a story of a group of priests who are jealous of Meryre and have him put to death so that the Pharaoh can live longer and Pharaoh can marry Meryre’s wife. But Meryre appears to Pharaoh in a vision and reproves him. As a consequence, Pharaoh “caused all the priests to be brought outside the prison. . . . Pharaoh went with them to Heliopolis. He caused them to be killed . . . [He caused] them to be placed on the altar (*ʕh*) before Mout who carries her brother in Heliopolis.”<sup>62</sup>

In P. Rylands IX, the cry goes forth against one set of enemies, “Let our lord bring these young men, who have abandoned our ways, and let them be placed on an altar (*ʕh*)!”<sup>63</sup>

58. Aufrère, *Le propylône d’Amon-Rê-Montou à Karnak-Nord*, 288–89.

59. Aufrère, *Le propylône d’Amon-Rê-Montou à Karnak-Nord*, 271–83.

60. Aufrère, *Le propylône d’Amon-Rê-Montou à Karnak-Nord*, 271–83.

61. P. Onch. 4/3–5, in S. R. K. Glanville, *Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum, vol. II, The Instructions of ‘Onchsheshonqy* (London: British Museum, 1955), plate 4.

62. P. Vandier 5/11–12, in Georges Posener, *Le Papyrus Vandier* (Cairo: IFAO, 1985), 76–77.

63. P. Rylands IX 13/10–11, in Günther Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 1:61, 2:494–95.

P. Petese II, published in 2006, begins with the fragmentary text, “Necho caused to set up . . . an altar (š) . . . you, yourself, they would have placed you on the altar,”<sup>64</sup> and then unfortunately breaks off.

Thus stories about slaughtering and then burning people on an altar were common in the time of the Joseph Smith Papyri, and Horos, the owner of Joseph Smith Papyrus I, had a professional interest in such things.

The temple of Chespisichis was first mentioned by Lepsius, who listed it as Temple V.<sup>65</sup> By 1885, when Wiedemann visited the site, he found it “almost entirely in ruins.”<sup>66</sup> The temple walls had been disassembled and used to fence a garden, and the inscriptions were “almost entirely destroyed,” but he found some (probably reused) blocks of the Eighteenth Dynasty king Thutmosis III (1479–1425 BC), as well as fragments from the Twenty-ninth Dynasty king Nephertites I (399–393 BC), Ptolemaic material, and some fragments he thought belonged to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty king Piye.<sup>67</sup> Later work indicates that the cult of Chespisichis seems to have existed only since the Nineteenth Dynasty,<sup>68</sup> where he is particularly known as a healer.<sup>69</sup> He is said to be one who “publishes the book of death and life.”<sup>70</sup> He is a savior god who rescues from all manner of sickness, death, and catastrophe.<sup>71</sup> Two other places depict him: the temple of Tod, located a few miles south of Thebes, and on the Ptolemaic gateway of the main Chonsu temple at Karnak. At the Tod temple, the inscrip-

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64. P. Petese II Fragment C1 1, in Kim Ryholt, *The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)* (Copenhagen: The Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies, University of Copenhagen, 2006), 31.

65. C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, n.d.), Abt. I, Bl. 75; Paul Barguet, *Le temple d'Amon-Rê à Karnak. Essai d'exégèse* (Cairo: IFAO, 1962), 7–8.

66. A. Wiedemann, “Sur deux Temples bâtis par des Rois de la 29<sup>e</sup> dynastie à Karnak,” *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* (1885): 110–11.

67. Wiedemann, “Sur deux Temples bâtis par des Rois de la 29<sup>e</sup> dynastie à Karnak,” 111; Barguet, *Le temple d'Amon-Rê à Karnak*, 8.

68. Georges Posener, “Philologie et archéologie égyptiennes,” in *Annuaire du Collège de France* 67 (1967–68): 349.

69. I. E. S. Edwards, *Oracular Amuletic Decrees of the Late New Kingdom* (London: British Museum, 1960), 1:1.

70. BM 10083 r. 1–6, in Edwards, *Oracular Amuletic Decrees*, 2:plate Ia.

71. BM 10083, in Edwards, *Oracular Amuletic Decrees*, 2:plates Ia–IIIa.

tion refers to “subduing the weaklings (*bdš.w*, a derogatory term for foreigners<sup>72</sup>)” and depicts a jackal-headed figure wielding knives under the name of Chespisichis.<sup>73</sup>

The only inscription that really remains of the temple of Chespisichis is a single stele, now in the Louvre (C 284), more commonly known as the Bentresh stele.<sup>74</sup> Stylistically, the Bentresh stele most closely matches the style of Ptolemy IV,<sup>75</sup> although Ptolemy III has also been argued.<sup>76</sup> Lanny Bell reported the discovery of another copy of this text back in 1979, but he never published it.<sup>77</sup> The Bentresh stele tells the story of an otherwise unattested king named Ramses, whose names are a mixture of those of Ramses II and Thutmosis III, who made his annual trip to Mesopotamia to collect tribute. He marries a princess of Bakhtan, perhaps a corruption of the Egyptian word for “Hittite” rather than a reference to Bactria, modern Afghanistan.<sup>78</sup> When the princess’s sister Bentresh gets sick, first a priest is sent, and then the god Chespisichis, to heal her of her illness—she had been possessed by an angel. Finally, after many years, Chespisichis appears to the ruler of Bakhtan in a dream and requests that he be sent back to Egypt, and much tribute comes with him.

We can be fairly confident that as prophet of Chespisichis, Horos would have read this text at some point in his life. The god appearing in visions and dreams, Egyptian presence in Syria and Mesopotamia,

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72. Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 339.

73. Tod I 144–45, in Jean-Claude Grenier, *Tôd: Les inscriptions du temple ptolémaïque et romain* (Cairo: IFAO, 1980), 221.

74. For publication, see Michèle Broze, *La princesse de Bakhtan* (Brussels: FERE, 1989).

75. John Gee, “Stylistic Dating of Greco-Roman Stele II: Heads and Hands” (paper presented at the American Research Center in Egypt Annual Meetings, Atlanta, Georgia, 25 April 2003).

76. Sergio Donadoni, “Per la data della ‘Stele di Bentres,’” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 15 (1957): 47–50.

77. Lanny Bell, “The Epigraphic Survey,” in *The Oriental Institute Annual Report, 1978–79* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, [1979]), 25.

78. Anthony Spalinger, “On the Bentresh Stela and Related Problems,” *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 8 (1977): 11–18; Scott N. Morschauser, “Using History: Reflections on the Bentresh Stela,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 15 (1988): 203–23, specifically 210.

angels interfering in human affairs, sicknesses caused by spiritual beings, and a savior—all of these are elements shared between the world of Horos and the Book of Abraham.

### Facsimile 1

Next in the roll of Horos is a vignette that we know as Facsimile 1. The facsimiles from the Book of Abraham are three illustrations floating like islands in the sea of thousands of pages of words in our scriptures; hence they draw interest. Despite that interest, there is no emphasis put on them in the church. Of the current curriculum materials, Facsimile 1 is mentioned only once, in an optional enrichment activity in a lesson for eight- through eleven-year-olds.<sup>79</sup> Facsimile 2 has been mentioned only once in general conferences of the church in the last sixty-five years.<sup>80</sup> I cannot help but wonder if the critics attack the facsimiles because they are relatively insignificant in the church.

The facsimiles, like all vignettes, present a number of challenges, and it is worth remembering a few things about (1) the placement of vignettes, (2) the drawing of vignettes, and (3) the identification of figures on vignettes.

(1) With regard to the placement of vignettes, I will provide a number of quotations from Egyptologists about Late Period documents in general and Ptolemaic texts in particular. The list is lengthy because it is a common thing, but everyone seems to want to treat the Joseph Smith Papyri as a special exception to a general rule, and I do not think we should do so. From Malcolm Mosher, who specializes in Late Period religious texts: “In documents from the 21st Dynasty on, misalignment of the text and vignette of a spell can occur, with the text preceding the vignette, or vice versa.”<sup>81</sup> “While this type of problem can be observed sporadically from the late New Kingdom on,

79. *Primary 6: Old Testament* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996), 35–38.

80. Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, April 1962, 60–61.

81. Malcolm Mosher Jr., “The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead in the Late Period: A Study of Revisions Evident in Evolving Vignettes, and the Possible Chronological or Geographical Implications for Differing Versions of Vignettes” (PhD diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1989), 1:53.

it is more common in the Late Period.”<sup>82</sup> “The problem is particularly acute where more spells are textually represented for such a group than there are vignettes. . . . It can be difficult to determine which spells have a vignette and which do not.”<sup>83</sup> “A similar problem to misalignment frequently encountered in Late documents is where the vignette for a particular spell is associated with the wrong text and the correct text is not found in the document.”<sup>84</sup> From Henk Milde, probably the foremost authority on papyrus vignettes: “Unfortunately, the connection between text and picture is not always clear cut.”<sup>85</sup> “One has to take into account at least the following difficulties in vignette research, that are here placed in eight categories. . . . 1. Spatial discrepancy between text and vignette. . . . 2. Incorrect combination of text and vignette in the original. . . . 3. Incorrect combination of text and vignette in studies and editions of the Book of the Dead. . . . 4. Unclear relation between text and vignette. . . . 5. Transfer or omission of pictorial elements. . . . 6. Emendation of the picture. . . . 7. Combination and contamination of pictorial elements of different vignettes. . . . 8. Conglomeration of texts under a vignette.”<sup>86</sup> From Jean-Claude Goyon, who has published so many Late Period Papyri: The vignettes “often do not have but a very distant connection with the discussion written beneath.”<sup>87</sup> From Marc Étienne, of the Louvre: “The vignettes do not always correspond to the chapters which the text prescribes.”<sup>88</sup> This is particularly the case in Documents of Breathings Made by Isis: “The relation between the vignettes and the text is not straightforward. . . . The vignettes are not meant to illustrate the contents of the composition.”<sup>89</sup> In other words, the vignettes in the Document of Breathings Made by Isis usually do

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82. Mosher, “Ancient Book of the Dead in the Late Period,” 1:53–54.

83. Mosher, “Ancient Book of the Dead in the Late Period,” 1:54.

84. Mosher, “Ancient Book of the Dead in the Late Period,” 1:54.

85. Henk Milde, “Vignetten-Forschung,” in *Totenbuch-Forschungen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 221.

86. Milde, “Vignetten-Forschung,” 221–31.

87. Jean-Claude Goyon, *Le Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279* (Cairo: IFAO, 1966), 2.

88. Marc Étienne, “*Livre des Morts au nom de Hor*,” in *La mort n'est pas une fin: Pratiques funéraires en Égypte d'Alexandre à Cléopâtre*, ed. Alain Charron (Arles: Musée de l'Arles antique, 2002), 145.

89. Coenen, “Introduction to the *Document of Breathing*,” 41.

not match the text and may not even belong to it. This would explain why “the vignette of the P. Joseph Smith I” represents “new themes and contain[s] a variety of unique features.”<sup>90</sup> The vignette in P. Joseph Smith I is, in fact, unique. After looking at vignettes in thousands of documents from the Saite period on, I have not found any exact match or anything really very close.

(2) Furthermore, in vignettes from the Ptolemaic period, “the genders of the various figures are often incorrect. . . . The genders of priests and deities are occasionally confused.”<sup>91</sup>

(3) Finally, I wish to mention something about the perils of identifying iconography in vignettes. The bulk of iconographic study in Egyptology is based on New Kingdom material, and there is a danger in applying such iconographic experience to Ptolemaic materials from a millennium later. For instance, in the New Kingdom, a jackal-headed figure might be Anubis, but in the Ptolemaic period, jackal-headed figures might be Osiris, or Shesmu, or Isdes, or the Khetiu, while Anubis might have a human or lion head.

Egyptologists, and many others, point to parallels in the roof chapels of the Dendara Temple as parallels for Facsimile 1. There are over forty lion couch scenes in these chapels, most of which are labeled as local variants of the same scene. What the critics do not do, however, is read the inscriptions. In the Dendara texts, the word for the lion couch, *nm.t*,<sup>92</sup> is either homophonous or identical with the word *nm.t*, “abattoir, slaughterhouse,”<sup>93</sup> as well as a term for “offerings.”<sup>94</sup> This is picked up in the inscriptions. For example, in the central scene in the innermost eastern chapel, we read, “He will not exist nor will his name exist, since you will destroy his town, cast down the walls of his house, and everyone who is in it will be set on fire, you will demolish his

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90. Coenen, “Introduction to the *Document of Breathing*,” 40.

91. Malcolm Mosher Jr., “The Book of the Dead Tradition at Akhmim during the Late Period,” in *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest*, ed. A. Egberts, B. P. Muhs, and J. van der Vliet (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), 206–7.

92. Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 516–17.

93. Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 521–22.

94. Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 522.

district, you will stab his confederates,<sup>95</sup> his flesh being ashes, the evil conspirator consigned to the lion couch / slaughterhouse,<sup>96</sup> so that he will no longer exist.”<sup>97</sup> In another scene, Bastet (who is not pictured) “is your protection every day; she has commanded her messengers<sup>98</sup> to slaughter your enemies.”<sup>99</sup> Symmetrical with this scene we have another scene with a broken inscription that mentions “ashes” and continues, “to burn his flesh with fire.”<sup>100</sup> So here we have both a scene and descriptions that parallel the Book of Abraham. Furthermore, in the same chapel we have depictions of Anubis and the sons of Horus (presumably the figures under the lion couch in Facsimile 1) holding knives. Anubis is here identified as the one “who smites the adversaries with his might, since the knife is in his hand, to expel the one who treads in transgression; I am the violent one who came forth from god, after having cut off the heads of the confederates of him whose name is evil.”<sup>101</sup> The human-headed son of Horus is identified above his head as “the one who repulses enemies” and “who comes tearing out (*šd*) the enemies who butchers (*thš*) the sinners.”<sup>102</sup> The baboon-headed son of Horus says: “I have slaughtered those who create injuries in the house of God in his presence; I take away the breath from his nostrils.”<sup>103</sup> The jackal-headed son of Horus says: “I cause the hostile foreigners to retreat.”<sup>104</sup> Finally, the falcon-headed son of Horus says: “I have removed rebellion (*h3y*).”<sup>105</sup> So the inscriptions from Dendara

95. For this interpretation of *wnp*, see Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 234.

96. Reading *w3w3 ḏw ḥsb r nm.t* as opposed to Cauville’s reading of *w3w3 ḏw r ḥbt* in Sylvie Cauville, *Le Temple de Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes* (Cairo: IFAO, 1997), 1:105; see Christian Leitz, *Quellentexte zur ägyptischen Religion I: Die Tempelinschriften der griechisch-römischen Zeit* (Münster: LIT, 2004), 172 T101.

97. Dendara X 200, in Cauville, *Temple de Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes*, 1:200.

98. For the reading *wḫwty* for this sign, see Leitz, *Die Tempelinschriften der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, 156, C26. Cauville reads this as *šm3y(w)* but still translates as “messengers”; see Sylvie Cauville, *Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes* (Cairo: IFAO, 1997), 1:122-23.

99. Dendara X 232, in Cauville, *Le Temple de Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes*, 1:232.

100. Dendara X 227, in Cauville, *Temple de Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes*, 1:227.

101. Dendara X 215, in Cauville, *Temple de Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes*, 1:215.

102. Dendara X 217, in Cauville, *Temple de Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes*, 1:217.

103. Dendara X 217, in Cauville, *Temple de Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes*, 1:217.

104. Dendara X 217, in Cauville, *Temple de Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes*, 1:217.

105. Dendara X 217, in Cauville, *Temple de Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes*, 1:217.

associate the lion couch scene with the sacrificial slaughter of enemies. Nor are they the only depictions of lion couch scenes to do so. A papyrus in Berlin, for example, contains instructions that it is “to stab (or cut)<sup>106</sup> your disobedient ones,<sup>107</sup> to sacrifice your apostates, to overthrow your enemies every day.”<sup>108</sup> “May your flames shoot out against your enemies each and every day so that you remain while your adversaries are overthrown.”<sup>109</sup> Another frequently occurring lion couch scene contains the description “the lords of truth . . . cause the sacrifice of the evildoers.”<sup>110</sup> This is interpreted as being either “Seth and Isdes”<sup>111</sup> (a knife-wielding jackal-headed deity),<sup>112</sup> or “Sobek (a deity usually depicted as a crocodile), who is in the water.”<sup>113</sup> The Sons of Horus, “Imseti, Hapi, Duamutef, and Qebhsenuf,”<sup>114</sup> are described as forming “the council around (or behind) Osiris who cause the sacrifice of the evildoers”<sup>115</sup> by “placing knives into the evil doers” and

106. Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 480.

107. Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 337–38.

108. P. Berlin 3162 5/6–7, in J. Frank-Kamenetzky, “Der Papyrus Nr. 3162 des Berl. Museums,” *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 17 (1914): 152.

109. P. Berlin 3162 6/6-7, cf. 8/3–4, in Frank-Kamenetzky, “Papyrus Nr. 3162 des Berl. Museums,” 152, 154.

110. BD 17, in Herman Grapow, *Religiöse Urkunden = Urkunden V* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1915-17), 39–40; Ursula Rößler-Köhler, *Kapitel 17 des ägyptischen Totenbuches* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979), 328, 332.

111. BD 17, in *Urkunden V* 41.

112. Émile Chassinat, *Le Temple d’Edfou* (Cairo: IFAO, 1928-60, specifically 1930), 5:143; Christian Leitz, *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 1:560. The jackal-headed Isdes holding the knife might be referred to later in BD 17 section 26: “I have been saved from the hand of this god whose face is a dog and whose skin is human” (*Urkunden V* 26), though in later times it is Anubis who has the face of a dog (P. Mag. 7/3, 14/28, in *Demotic Magical Papyrus of London & Leiden*, vol. II, ed. Francis L. Griffith and Herbert Thompson [London: H. Grevel & Co., 1905], 2:pls. VII, XIV; PGM XIXb 8, in Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri* [Leipzig: Teubner, 1931], 2:144) and is also connected in a fragmentary tale with killing a man. Kim Ryholt, “A Parallel to the Inaros Story of P. Krall (P. Carlsberg 456+P. CtYBR 4513): Demotic Narratives from the Tebtunis Temple Library (I),” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 84 (1998): 153, 157, 165.

113. BD 17, in *Urkunden V* 42.

114. BD 17, in *Urkunden V* 42.

115. BD 17, in *Urkunden V* 39–40; Rößler-Köhler, *Kapitel 17 des ägyptischen Totenbuches*, 328, 332.



“incinerating the souls of the evil-doers.”<sup>116</sup> They are said to be “put in place by Anubis.”<sup>117</sup> Excluding a sacrificial dimension to lion couch scenes is un-Egyptian, even if we cannot come up with one definitive reading at this time.

### Document of Breathings

The next thing we know for certain is that the roll of Horos was misnamed Document of Breathings Made by Isis. Why is it misnamed? The problem comes with the interpretation of the term *snsn* as “breathing,” an interpretation that goes back to Heinrich Brugsch’s 1868 dictionary.<sup>118</sup> But as recent studies have shown, *snsn* never means “to breathe.”<sup>119</sup> Instead, here it means something like “to fraternize, fellowship, associate, join.” Quaegebeur has suggested that it be interpreted as a Letter of Recommendation Made by Isis;<sup>120</sup> the translation of breathing permit is simply impossible. Examination of the titles of those who possessed a copy of this text<sup>121</sup> shows that almost all the men were prophets of Amonrasonter, while the women held corresponding feminine titles. Most of the possessors of the text are known to be members of the same family, and the rest probably were as well.

It is commonplace among the critics to assert that this document is a prayer to an Egyptian god. This, however, is unsustainable by any careful reading of the document itself. The majority of the text consists of “words spoken by the gods who follow Osiris”<sup>122</sup> to the

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116. BD 17, in *Urkunden V* 42.

117. BD 17, in *Urkunden V* 39–40; Rößler-Köhler, *Kapitel 17 des ägyptischen Totenbuches*, 328, 332.

118. Heinrich Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1868), 4:1254.

119. John Gee, “A New Look at the ‘nh ꝓ by Formula,” *Proceedings of IXe Congrès International des Études Démotiques*, ed. M. Chauveau, D. Devauchelle, and G. Widmer (forthcoming).

120. Jan Quaegebeur, “P. Brux. Dem. E. 8258 un lettre de recommandation pour l’au-delà,” in *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim*, ed. Sarah Israelit-Groll (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990), 2:776–95.

121. Conveniently gathered in Marc Coenen, “Owners of Documents of Breathing Made by Isis,” *Chronique d’Égypte* 79/157–158 (2004), 59–72.

122. Document of Breathings Made by Isis §11.

individual<sup>123</sup> and employs a formula that is used to address mortals rather than gods.<sup>124</sup> Space will not permit much exploration of this fascinating text; those interested can see the second edition of the late Professor Hugh Nibley's commentary *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*. I only note that Professor Nibley's commentary in no way exhausts the possibilities.

### Facsimile 3

The last item known to be on the roll of Horos was Facsimile 3, for which I have published some preliminary explorations in an appropriate Egyptological venue. I also note that every single facsimile from the Book of Abraham has been connected to Abraham using ancient Egyptian evidence and that the connection has been made in Egyptological publications.

### Conclusions

Since, for the most part, Latter-day Saints and Egyptologists agree that the preserved portions of the Joseph Smith Papyri do not contain the Book of Abraham, there is the possibility of detente between the two because scholarship cannot tell what was or was not on the missing papyri. Egyptologists could stick to what is knowable from the remains, and Latter-day Saints could trust God about the origins of the Book of Abraham. Our trust (or faith) in God becomes, for those fortunate enough to possess it, "the basis of what we hope for, the evidence of things unseen" (Hebrews 11:1, my translation). Those who have it require no other proof. Those who have chosen not to trust God will not "be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). If we had the papyrus from which the Book of Abraham was translated—and I testify that we do not—the critics would not believe it; and most of them could not read it anyway. One of the ironies of the Joseph Smith Papyri is that critics (and even some Egyptologists), who

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123. Document of Breathings Made by Isis §2–11.

124. Jan Assmann, *Images et rites de la mort dans l'Égypte ancienne* (Paris: Cybele, 2000), 39.

are quick to point out what the papyri are not, are otherwise uninterested in what they contain. They could be a laundry list, a get-well card, or the greatest piece of literature ever written; it does not matter so long as they are not the Book of Abraham, so long as they are not scripture, so long as they do not contain the words of God, so long as they are not conveyed by a prophet of God. Here, though, is another great irony. The Rosetta Stone ends with a passage that directs that it be written “on a stone stele in the writing of words of god (hieroglyphs), the writing of letters (Demotic), and the script of the foreigners (Greek).”<sup>125</sup> For the Egyptians, hieroglyphs are literally the “words of God.” For the Egyptians, the Joseph Smith Papyri contain the words of God, conveyed by a prophet of God, just as for Latter-day Saints, the Book of Abraham contains the words of God, conveyed by a prophet of God.

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125. Rosetta Stone, hieroglyphic version, line 14, in *Urkunden* II 197.