

# THE BREATHING PERMIT OF HÔR

A TRANSLATION OF  
THE APPARENT SOURCE OF  
THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

Klaus Baer

*Klaus Baer is Associate Professor of Egyptology at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, and was one of Professor Hugh Nibley's primary tutors in the art of reading Egyptian characters. Professor Baer journeyed to Provo, Utah last month and personally examined the papyri.*

*Some DIALOGUE readers may appreciate a recapitulation of papyri articles appearing in this journal. The Winter, 1967 issue carried interviews with Professor Aziz S. Atiya (who was credited with discovering the papyri) and with Dr. Henry G. Fischer (Curator of the Egyptian Collection of the Metropolitan Museum).*

*DIALOGUE ran a series of articles dealing with the scrolls in the Summer, 1968, issue. Professor of Egyptology John A. Wilson (of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute) rendered a "Summary Report" which identified Book of the Dead scrolls once belonging to an Egyptian lady named Ta-shere-Min. These scrolls tell of "the terrors which she felt for the next world and about the great dreams which she had for eternal life." An article by Professor of Egyptology Richard A. Parker (of Brown University) covered the same ground more briefly, and also gave a translation of the scroll which became Facsimile No. 1 in the Book of Abraham which, he said, was "a well-known scene from the Osiris mysteries, with Anubis, the jackal-headed god . . . ministering to the dead Osiris on the bier." Richard P. Howard, Church Historian of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints gave an historical account to the effect that his church has not accepted the Book of Abraham as scripture.*

*The next three articles involved the controversial "sensen" scrolls, also called The Book of Breathings, or, as Klaus Baer labels them, "The Breathing Permit of Hôr." Two former Mormons, Grant S. Heward and Jerald Tanner,*

combined their talents to make out a *prima facie* case for the proposition that Joseph Smith believed that the Breathing Permit was the Book of Abraham. Some orthodox L.D.S. scholars also share this view. Heward and Tanner also produced evidence indicating that certain gaps in Facsimile No. 2 had been filled in with material from the Breathing Permit and from a scroll labeled "Photo 3" in the Summer issue. Then followed a brief translation of the Breathing Permit by Professor Parker.

Finally, Professor Nibley responded (primarily to Heward and Tanner). He said that he was not sure that the "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar" (a notebook containing Egyptian characters and parts of the Book of Abraham, which is in the Church Historian's office) had been authorized by Joseph Smith; moreover, that even if it had been, he was not sure that the Egyptian characters (apparently taken consecutively from the Breathing Permit) on the left side of each page in the EAG had been intended by its author to have anything to do with the Book of Abraham verses found immediately to the right of each character. See p. 94 of the Summer DIALOGUE for a photo of a page from the EAG; also see footnote 116 in the Baer article for Baer's translation of those Egyptian characters in the left-hand margins of the EAG pages. Professor Nibley indicates that even if the left-hand characters do have something to do with the text material to the right of them, these characters may truly represent all the information to the right of them — in a way that scholars have not yet fathomed. Still another possibility suggested by Professor Nibley is that Joseph Smith may have translated none of the Book of Abraham, but may have received all of it by way of direct revelation. A final defense by Professor Nibley is that there is a marked similarity between the message in the Breathing Permit and the text of the Book of Abraham: ". . . there is cosmological matter here, with the owner of the papyrus longing to shine in the heavens as some sort of physical entity along with the sun, and Orion; also he places great importance on his patriarchal lineage and wants to be pure, nay baptized, so as to enter a higher kingdom. . . ." Professor Nibley has an important summary article in the Summer issue of Brigham Young University Studies and tells us he will soon begin to present the affirmative case for the inspired basis of the Book of Abraham (using materials on Abraham from Coptic and other sources in his monthly Improvement Era articles). DIALOGUE will continue to publish scholarly developments and personal responses relating to this important subject.

In the following article Professor Baer uses as a constant reference the numbering of papyri fragments established by the Improvement Era's first publication of them in February, 1968; this numbering should remain standard until there is a definitive edition.

The speed with which photographs of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri were published once they came into the possession of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a gratifying contrast to the secrecy with which their previous custodians surrounded them. The definitive edition of the documents will take time, but in the meantime the Egyptologist can show his

---

Note the abbreviations used in this article: *BD* = *Book of the Dead*, followed by the chapter number; *BYU Studies* = *Brigham Young University Studies*; *EAG* = *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*, Large Edition; *Era* = *The Improvement Era*; *P.* = Papyrus, followed by the name of the collection and the catalogue number; *PGP* = *Pearl of Great Price*; *P. JS* = Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyrus, followed by the number assigned in the *Era* article (February 1968) by Green and Todd.

appreciation by taking advantage of the opportunity to make preliminary studies.<sup>1</sup>

The eleven fragments (as now mounted) are the surviving parts of three ancient papyri, none of which is complete:

(1) The *Book of the Dead* belonging to the lady Tshenmîn, whose mother was Skhons<sup>2</sup> (P. JS II, V–IX, and most of IV).<sup>3</sup> The handwriting dates it to the second half of the Ptolemaic Period, perhaps around 100 B.C.<sup>4</sup> This is the papyrus that Joseph Smith believed to contain the Book of Joseph.<sup>5</sup>

(2) The *Book of the Dead* belonging to the (female) musician of Amon-Re Neferirnûb (P. JS III A–B).<sup>6</sup>

(3) The *Breathing Permit*<sup>7</sup> belonging to the priest Hôr,<sup>8</sup> son of the priest Osorwêr<sup>9</sup> and the lady Tikhebyt<sup>10</sup> (P. JS I, X–XI, and at least four fragments now mounted with P. JS IV). The handwriting is of the late Ptolemaic or early Roman Period, about the time of Christ. Joseph Smith thought that this papyrus contained the Book of Abraham.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The following photographs were available to me: the cover of *Era*, 71 No. 1 (January 1968); G[reen] and Todd, *Era*, 71, No. 2 (February 1968), 40–41 (incl. p. 40 A–H); Nibley, *BYU Studies*, 8 (1968), after p. 178 (17 unnumbered pages).

<sup>2</sup>This is the approximate pronunciation of these names when the papyrus was written. The scientific transliteration of the Egyptian spelling (which only indicated the consonants and was based on the way classical Middle Egyptian was pronounced around 2100 B.C.) is *T'-šrt-Mnw* and *Ns-Hnsw*. The names mean "The Daughter of [the fertility god] Min" and "She Belongs to Khons," the Theban moon god, son of Amon and Mut.

<sup>3</sup>The numbering does not reflect the actual sequence of the fragments. Following the direction of the writing from right to left, P. JS VII came first (the piece on the right should be moved so that the left margin of the writing lines up with that of the first column of P. JS VIII). P. JS VIII joins P. JS VII at the bottom, and P. JS V joins both of them on the left. P. JS VI comes immediately to the left of V, IV follows VI, also in direct contact, and the plowing scene of P. JS II is the middle register of the scene whose right edge became visible when the frame was removed from P. JS IV. I have not been able to place the tattered and disorganized fragments of P. JS IX; see n. 118.

<sup>4</sup>By comparison with the shapes of dated signs in Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, III.

<sup>5</sup>Based on the statements by Oliver Cowdery in the *L.D.S. Messenger and Advocate*, 2, No. 3 (December 1835), 234–37, cited on p. 3 of the "Introduction" to *EAG* and by Howard, *Dialogue*, 3, No. 2 (Summer 1968), 89. The vignettes of the serpent legs (P. JS V) and of the three gods seated beside each other (P. JS IV) come from "Joseph's Record."

<sup>6</sup>The labels on the picture are in hieroglyphs, drawn rather than written, and cannot be dated paleographically, but the MS is likely to be roughly contemporary with the other two.

<sup>7</sup>Usually called *Book of Breathings*, which sounds like a manual of yoga. The Egyptian word *št*, however, does not mean "book"; the correct translation is "letter, document." See n. 90, 104 for two instances where the context requires the translation *Breathing Permit*. The captions in G[reen] and Todd, *Era*, 71, No. 2 (February 1968), 41, call it "Sensen," a "pronounceable" form of the Egyptian *snsn* "breathing." The text is a short compilation of materials largely from the *Book of the Dead* and tended to replace it during the Roman Period at Thebes, from where all the known copies seem to come.

<sup>8</sup>The name means "[the god] Horus."

<sup>9</sup>"Osiris is Great."

<sup>10</sup>"The [female] Dancer."

<sup>11</sup>This identification is now certain. It was immediately evident that "Facsimile From the Book of Abraham No. 1" of the *PGP* was copied from P. JS I. The interpretation pro-

The third is the most important,<sup>12</sup> and the rest of the article will be devoted to it. The surviving fragments all come from somewhat more than the first half of the original scroll. It will be easier to explain where they belong if we begin with a description of the papyrus up to the point beyond which nothing has survived. Starting at the right,<sup>13</sup> three vertical lines of hieroglyphs (lines 1–3) are followed by a vignette (“Facsimile No. 1” from the *PGP*), which once contained another line of hieroglyphs (line 4) now lost except for a couple of signs above the arm of the standing figure. A fifth line of hieroglyphs frames the vignette on the left. Four severely damaged columns of text follow. They are separated by double vertical rules and, when complete, contained 9, 12, 13, and 13 horizontal lines, respectively, of progressively more cramped hieratic writing.<sup>14</sup>

P. JS I contains all that has survived of the vignette and lines 1–5. It is continued on the left by P. JS XI,<sup>15</sup> which preserves almost all of col. i and, where least damaged, about a third of the original width of col. ii. The small, rectangular lacuna (gap in the manuscript) at the beginning of ii, 9–12 is filled by P. JS IV d,<sup>16</sup> now mounted below the human-headed bird with outstretched wings near the upper right corner of P. JS IV. Though one cannot be sure without examining the original, the photograph of P. JS XI does suggest that P. JS IV d once was correctly mounted and became separated after careless handling. P. JS IV a, now upside down in the upper left corner of P. JS IV, preserves about one sixth of ii, 3–10 at the left margin of the column. About half the width of col. ii separates it from P. JS XI.

P. JS X contains most of what survives from cols. iii and iv. At the bottom, where the papyrus is best preserved, it extends over about two-thirds of the original width of col. iii and three-fifths of that of col. iv.<sup>17</sup> When intact,

---

posed by Joseph Smith for the first two lines of text in P. JS XI corresponds to Abraham 1:4–2:6, see Heward and Tanner, *Dialogue*, 3, No. 2 (Summer 1968), 93–96, and the discussion on page 129. The fact that the name of the owner is identical in both papyri, and that the left edge of the P. JS I appears to fit the right edge of P. JS XI (see n. 15) — that is, that they are parts of the same scroll — confirms this.

<sup>12</sup>To Egyptologists as well as Latter-day Saints, since published MSS of the *Breathing Permit* are in far shorter supply than copies of the *Book of the Dead*.

<sup>13</sup>Right to left is the normal direction of Egyptian writing. For artistic and other reasons, hieroglyphs could also be reversed and written from left to right, and they could in either case be arranged in horizontal or vertical lines, the latter being preferred in papyri. Drawing countless little pictures was not a practical way to communicate, and a cursive form of hieroglyphs called hieratic developed early in Egyptian history. It stands in about the same relationship to hieroglyphs as our handwriting does to print. By the Greco-Roman Period, hieratic was mostly used for religious books (hence the name) and had been replaced by the even more cursive demotic for practical purposes. Hieratic was only written from right to left, and only in horizontal lines after about 1700 B.C.

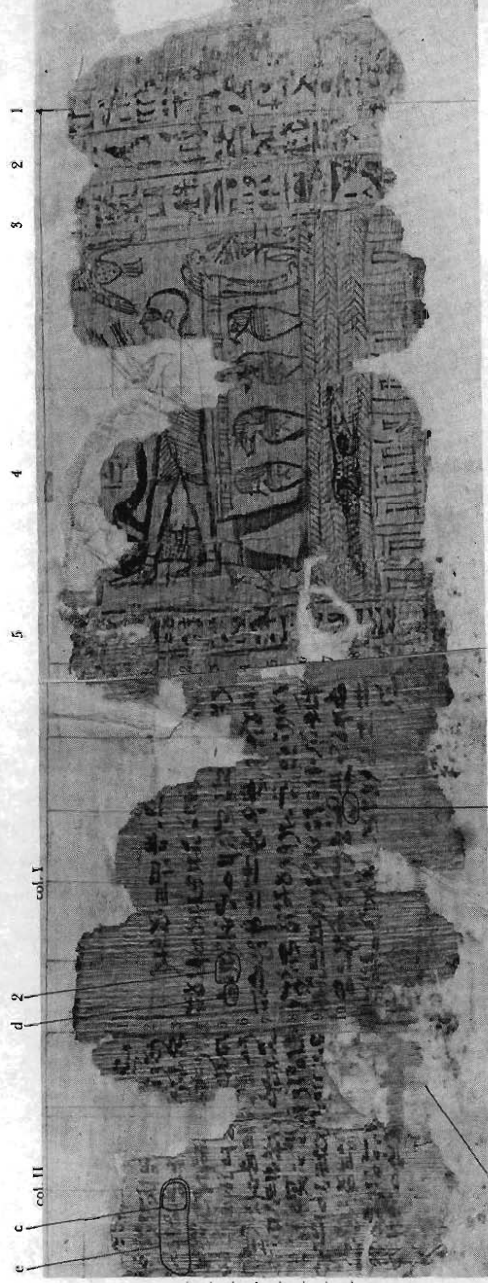
<sup>14</sup>Passages in the text are cited by column (in lower case Roman numerals) and line, e.g., “iii, 5.”

<sup>15</sup>They seem to have been cut apart after being mounted. The edges match exactly in the photograph, and the pattern of vertical lines drawn on the backing about 2 cm. apart continues evenly from P. JS XI onto the left end of P. JS I when the two are placed in contact.

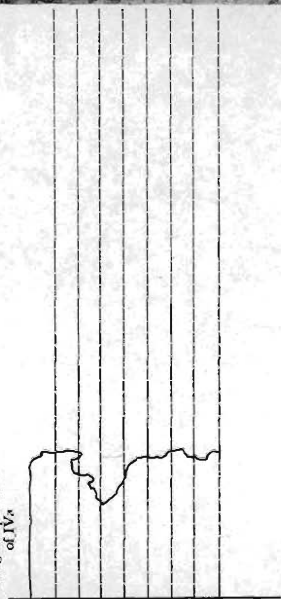
<sup>16</sup>The letters reflect the order in which the fragments were identified.

<sup>17</sup>The original width of the columns was approximately: i, 8.5 cm.; ii, 20 cm.; iii, 28 cm.; iv, 21 cm. The extent of the missing portions and the relative location of the pieces has been determined by comparison with other copies of the text. See n. 38 for references.





Original position of IVc



P. JS I

P. JS XI

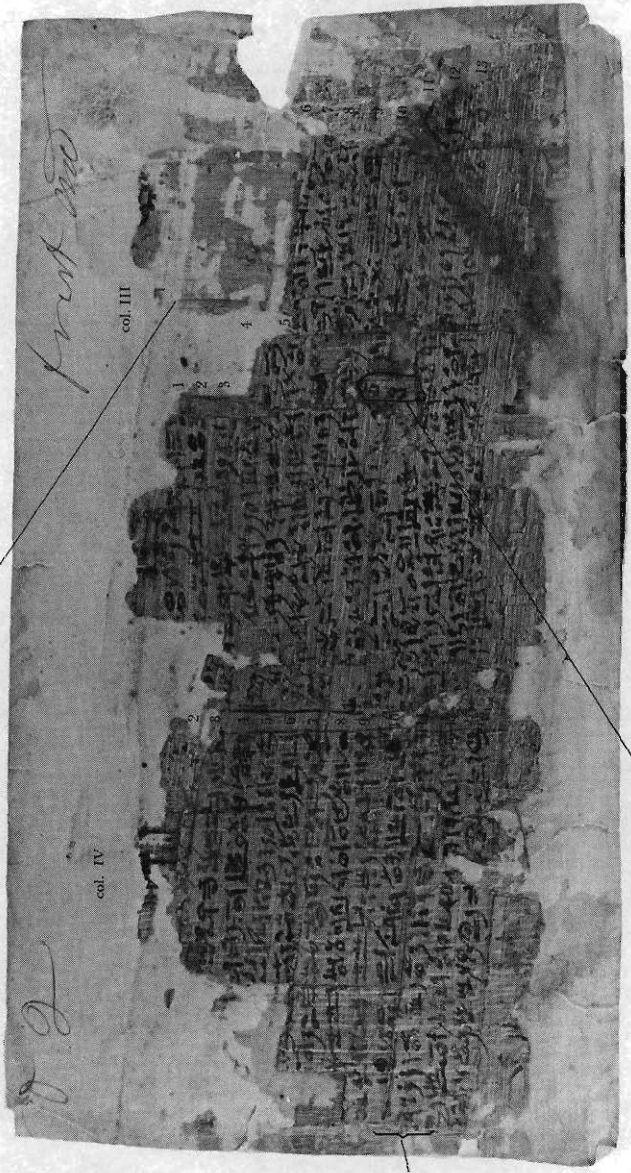
Original position of IVd

1 2 3 4 5 col. I col. II

a b c d e

11

Original position of IVc



col. IV

col. III

Original position of IVb

Misplaced fragment P. JS X

III

IVa

IVb

IVd

IVc



P. JS IV

both columns extended considerably beyond the limits of the sheet of paper on which P. JS X is mounted. A small fragment about 0.5 cm. wide has been incorrectly mounted in iii, 9–10 about 8 cm. from the left margin of the column. It belongs at the beginning of iii, 8–9 and shows part of the marginal rule and the first sign in each of two lines.<sup>18</sup> P. JS IV c, now upside down slightly above the middle of P. JS IV, contains part of iii, 1–6. It has rather obviously become separated from the backing above what is now the right end of P. JS X, and part of what seems to be the bottom layer of the papyrus still adheres to the paper. P. JS IV b, upside down above the human-headed bird in the upper right corner of P. JS IV, preserves about a fifth of iv, 10–12, immediately to the left of P. JS X. There are many small fragments scattered about P. JS IV, some of which may belong to the *Breathing Permit* of Hôr, but I have not succeeded in identifying any of them.

The five lines of hieroglyphs on P. JS I are more severely damaged than may appear at first sight. At least a group is lost at the top, rather more at the bottom, and much of the ink is rubbed away, leaving indistinct traces that suggest too many possible readings. I have preferred to translate only what seemed sure.

Lines 1–3 give the titles, name, and parentage of the man for whose benefit the *Breathing Permit* was written:

. . . the prophet<sup>19</sup> of Amonrasontêr,<sup>20</sup> prophet [?] of Mîn Bull-of-his-Mother,<sup>21</sup> prophet [?] of Khons the Governor<sup>22</sup> . . . Hôr, justi-

<sup>18</sup>See n. 62.

<sup>19</sup>A translation already found in the Rosetta Stone for the highest category of priests. An Egyptian prophet, however, did not prophesy in our sense of the word. He "spoke for" the god in taking responsibility for more mundane matters of temple administration, announced oracles, and conducted the daily services.

<sup>20</sup>"Amon-Re King of the Gods," the chief deity of the great Temple of Karnak at Thebes. Amon, the god of Thebes, may originally have been the god of void, one of the eight gods of chaos, who antedated creation.

<sup>21</sup>A common epithet of the fertility god Mîn, and a very typical Egyptian concept. The *Tale of the Two Brothers* shows how it was explained mythologically: Bata (the god of a small town called Sako near the modern Beni Mazar in Middle Egypt) had transformed himself into a sacred bull, who was installed at Pharaoh's court. When Bata revealed himself to his faithless wife, who had betrayed him (before his transformation) to an expedition sent out to bring her to Egypt to become Pharaoh's favorite, she induced Pharaoh to kill the bull. Out of his blood there grew two sacred trees, which she had chopped down. A splinter flew into her mouth, and she became pregnant and gave birth to the heir to the throne — who was still Bata. (The most recent English translation of the whole *Tale* is by Gunn in Lewis, *Land of Enchanters*, pp. 55-66).

On a more elevated plane is the pantheistic Egyptian concept of the divine. It could manifest itself anywhere (also in humans) and could be experienced both in its infinitely many manifestations and as a whole. As a result, a god such as Amon could be many or one, and gods of different names could be conceived as distinct or as aspects of one and thus were identified with each other virtually without restrictions — certainly not those of mythological consistency. "All gods are three. . . , and they are one" (P. Leiden I 350, iv, 21; literally, "and they have no second"; see Wilson in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, p. 369). The confusion of attributes and disregard of chronological sequence that result are aided and abetted by the Egyptian tendency to follow their metaphors literally, wherever they might lead. The difficulties are largely of our own creation, when we insist on comparing and reconciling statements that belong to different



fied,<sup>23</sup> son of the holder of the same titles, master of secrets, and purifier of the gods Osorwêr, justified [?] . . . Tikhebyt, justified.<sup>24</sup> May your ba<sup>25</sup> live among them,<sup>26</sup> and may you be buried in the West . . .<sup>27</sup>

Too little is left of line 4 to permit even a guess at what it said. Insofar as I can make it out,<sup>28</sup> line 5 reads:

May you<sup>29</sup> give him a good, splendid burial<sup>30</sup> on the West of Thebes just like . . .

The vignette on P. JS I is unusual, but parallels exist on the walls of the Ptolemaic temples of Egypt, the closest being the scenes in the Osiris chapels

contexts and reflect different approaches to the divine. Modern thought is not exempt from this "illogicality." To take a trivial example from American folk mythology: grandmother is the embodiment of all that is lovable. A mother-in-law is not — and yet they are the same person.

The creator god created, "begot" himself. We can talk of Jesus as the "only begotten Son, begotten of the Father before all worlds" without wondering who His Mother was before the Incarnation. The Egyptian could not. When the fertility god in his aspect of a bull was thought of as creator, as any god could be, the concept of "Bull-of-his-Mother" was the result. The Egyptian, with his static, cyclical view of the universe, in which each dawn was, in one sense, the moment of creation, was not bothered by the logical consequences of the created existing before creation.

<sup>23</sup>An epithet of Khons.

<sup>24</sup>The usual epithet placed after the name of a deceased person.

<sup>25</sup>His mother. Cf., e.g., the intact passage iii, 13: "Osiris Hôr, justified, born to Tikhebyt, justified." The title Osiris is given to the deceased in all mortuary texts after about 2200 B.C. Osiris was murdered by his brother Seth, revived by his wife and sister Isis, avenged by Horus, the son whom he begot after his resurrection, and justified by the tribunal of the gods. He was the dead and resurrected god, the god and king of the dead, and the dead king, with whom every king of Egypt became identified when he died, just as the living king was the falcon god Horus. By 2200 B.C., private individuals had begun to claim the privileges of the royal hereafter. The deceased person who has been "justified" in the judgment of the dead and lives again in a blessed existence in the Netherworld is like Osiris and therefore, accounting to the Egyptian way of thought, is Osiris. The fact that Osiris NN can appear in a scene together with Osiris bothered the Egyptians no more than the occasional representation of Pharaoh worshipping his deified self.

<sup>26</sup>Ba is impossible to translate, though it is often used in contexts where we would say "soul." The ba is an emanation, capable of independent action and of existence apart from its owner in both the natural and supernatural worlds. Among other functions, a person's ba can come out of the tomb to receive offerings, and it is his ba that seems to enjoy most of the active benefits of a blessed existence in the hereafter. Gods have many ba's; the totality of their ba's is their power. One god can be the ba of another, and in this way the interchangeability of Egyptian gods can be rationalized. Here ba almost corresponds to the "hypostasis" of Christian theology. In the Greco-Roman Period, the ba was visualized as a human-headed owl.

<sup>27</sup>Hôr's parents?

<sup>28</sup>The "West" is both the cemetery (as here) and the Netherworld, which the sun enters when it sets. At Thebes, the cemetery actually was across the Nile at the foot of the western cliffs, but this was not the case in all Egyptian towns.

<sup>29</sup>Several signs now lost were copied by Joseph Smith. See page 129.

<sup>30</sup>Osiris?

<sup>31</sup>The Egyptian word refers to the preparations for burial, especially mummification, rather than the interment.

on the roof of the Temple of Dendera.<sup>31</sup> The vignette shows the resurrection of Osiris (who is also the deceased owner of the papyrus) and the conception of Horus.<sup>32</sup> Osiris (2) is represented as a man on a lion-couch (4)<sup>33</sup> attended by Anubis (3), the jackal-headed god who embalmed the dead and thereby assured their resurrection and existence in the hereafter.<sup>34</sup> Below the couch are the canopic jars for the embalmed internal organs. The lids are the four sons of Horus, from left to right Imset (8), Hapi (7), Qebeh-senuwef (6), and Duwa-mutef (5), who protect the liver, lungs, intestines, and stomach, respectively. At the head of the couch is a small offering stand (10) with a jug and some flowers on it and two larger vases on the ground beside it. The *ba* of Osiris (1) is hovering above his head.<sup>34\*</sup>

The versions of the Osiris myth differ in telling how Seth disposed of Osiris after murdering him, but he was commonly believed to have cut Osiris into little pieces, which he scattered into the Nile, leaving Isis the task of fishing out and assembling the parts of her brother and husband so that he could be resurrected and beget Horus. In this she was helped by Horus in the shape of a crocodile,<sup>35</sup> who is represented in the water (the zigzags) below

<sup>31</sup>Mariette, *Dendérah*, IV, pl. 68-71, 90. The description of the vignette is based only on the presently existing papyrus. See pages 132 and 133; the vignette was probably in essentially the same condition in 1835 that it is now, and the restorations, both that sketched on the backing and that in "Facsimile No. 1" in the *PGP*, are not copies of the missing parts. The numbers on "Facsimile No. 1" are here added in parentheses.

<sup>32</sup>See n. 24 for an outline of the myth and the identification of the dead with Osiris.

<sup>33</sup>Such couches are not uncommon, e.g., Carter, *The Tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen*, I, pl. 17.

<sup>34</sup>The identification is assured by the black color of the body and many parallels, e.g., Mariette, *Dendérah*, IV, pl. 70-71 and the countless examples of Anubis attending a mummy on a lion-couch (*BD* 151 and often elsewhere). He is, of course, not holding a knife.

[For illustrations of Anubis attending a mummy on a lion-couch, see *Life magazine*, June 7, 1968, pp. 69, 76-77. For an illustration of Osiris, which Egyptologists say is the second figure from the left in Facsimile No. 3, see *Life magazine*, April 12, 1968, p. 69 (compare also with Photo 5, *Dialogue*, Summer 1968, p. 88). Also compare the first figure at the left (the goddess Isis?) in Facsimile No. 3 with the picture from the Tomb of Nefertari in *Life magazine*, April 12, 1968, p. 66. Ed.]

<sup>34\*</sup>One tends to see what one expects to see. So far as I know, Nelson, *The Joseph Smith Papyri*, p. 42, was the first to point out that the bird above the head of Osiris clearly has a human head and therefore must be his *ba*. In "Facsimile No. 1," it is drawn with a falcon's head, and I must confess with some embarrassment that I also "saw" the falcon's head before reading Nelson's study.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Junker, *Das Götterdekret über das Abaton*, pp. 41-44. Möller, *Die beiden Totenpapyrus Rhind*, p. 79, discusses the occasionally attested practice of having a small (and prudently muzzled) crocodile swim alongside the boat carrying the mummy across the Nile to the cemetery. The reader who is bothered by Horus' being in existence before he was conceived and assisting his own conception by helping to put his father back together again is referred to n. 21. Similarly, the king is often praised as one "who took possession (of his kingdom) while in the egg" before he was born. Horus aided and avenged his father and did so at all times when his intervention was needed. To make the confusion complete, note that Horus who contended with Seth for the kingship was often regarded as the brother rather than the nephew of Seth; and *BD* 112 (Budge, *The Book of the Dead* [1898 ed.], I, 232) informs us that Imset and his brothers were the children of Horus and Isis. Historical factors are involved. Horus, Seth, and Isis are attested from the very beginnings of Egyptian history, while the cult and myth of Osiris seem to appear during the Fifth Dynasty, ca. 2450 B.C. Given the Egyptian approach to theology, no attempt was made to iron out the contradictions that resulted from combining the two sets of myths.

the vignette (9). Below that is a decorative pattern derived from the niched façade of a protohistoric Egyptian palace.

There are some problems about restoring the missing parts of the body of Osiris. He was almost certainly represented as ithyphallic, ready to beget Horus, as in many of the scenes at Dendera. I know of no representations of Osiris on a couch with both hands in front of his face. One would expect only one hand in front of his face, while the other was either shown below the body (impossible in P. JS I) or grasping the phallus. In the latter case it would be hard to avoid the suggestion of Professor Richard A. Parker<sup>36</sup> that what looks like the upper hand of Osiris is actually the wingtip of a representation of Isis as a falcon hovering in the act of copulation.<sup>37</sup>

The resurrection of Osiris (and of Osiris Hôr) is the necessary preliminary to the benefits that the *Breathing Permit* was supposed to obtain for him, so the vignette served as a kind of introduction to it. The text of the *Breathing Permit* is written in a crabbed hand and suffers from many lacunae where the papyrus has been destroyed or where the ink has been rubbed off the surface. Fortunately, the manuscripts of the *Breathing Permit* show relatively little variation, so that it is not too difficult to restore the missing passages; restorations are marked by italics in the translation.<sup>38</sup>

Col. i gives directions for wrapping up the *Breathing Permit* with the mummy:

*Osiris shall be conveyed into the Great Pool of Khons<sup>39</sup> — and likewise Osiris Hôr, justified, born to Tikhebyt, justified<sup>40</sup> — after his arms have been placed on his heart<sup>41</sup> and the Breathing Permit (which [Isis]<sup>42</sup>*

<sup>36</sup>*Dialogue*, 3, No. 2 (Summer 1968), 86.

<sup>37</sup>Not uncommonly depicted, e.g., Mariette, *Dendérah*, IV, pl. 90.

<sup>38</sup>The best edition is still the 1877 one of de Horrack, *Le Livre des Respirations* (reprinted in Maspero, *Bibliothèque égyptologique*, 17 [1907], 109–37). It gives the text of two MSS in full (P. Louvre 3284, 3291) and variants from six others. In addition, I have used the text of P. British Museum 9995 as published in Budge, *op. cit.*, I, 508–17 and the photograph of P. Berlin 3135, col. ii, published in Moller, *Hieratische Palaographie*, III, pl. 11. The text should not be confused with the so-called *Second Book of Breathings* or the book *May My Name Flourish* and similar compositions. The best survey of all these late mortuary texts is Stricker, “De lijkpapyrus van Sensaos,” *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*, N. R. 23 (1942), 30–47; see also Goyon, *Le papyrus du Louvre N. 3279*, pp. vii–ix, 75–87. The latter two works give extensive references to the scholarly literature. Stricker’s study (especially pp. 30–35) should be of particular interest to L.D.S. students because of its careful documentation of the objects discovered by Lebolo in a tomb of the time of Hadrian, the find discussed by Clark, *BYU Studies*, 8 (1968), 195–203. Virtually all the items are accounted for, so that, contrary to Clark’s impression, the mummies and papyri acquired for Joseph Smith must have come from another find. Cf. also Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings* (2nd ed.), I Part 2, 674–76. Note also that the names are different, and that the Joseph Smith Papyrus are about two centuries older.

<sup>39</sup>Probably a liturgical designation of the portion of the Nile that has to be crossed in order to reach the Theban cemetery on the west bank.

<sup>40</sup>References to the owner of the papyrus will be abbreviated to “Osiris Hôr. . .” in the rest of the translation.

<sup>41</sup>The arms of a mummy are usually folded so that the hands meet on the breast. Osiris is similarly represented, e.g., P. JS III.

<sup>42</sup>Omitted by the scribe; a rather uncertain emendation since the other MSS do not have the phrase.



made and has writing on its inside and outside)<sup>43</sup> has been wrapped in royal linen and placed under his left arm near his heart; the rest of his mummy-bandages should be wrapped over it. The man for whom this book has been copied will breathe forever and ever as the bas of the gods do.

The *Breathing Permit* proper begins in col. ii and continues without breaks or indications of sections. Paragraph I describes the purpose of the document:

Here begins the *Breathing Permit*, which Isis made for her brother Osiris in order to revive his ba, to revive his corpse, and to make his entire body young again, so that he might enter the horizon<sup>44</sup> with his father Re,<sup>45</sup> that his ba might appear gloriously in heaven in the disk of the moon, and that his corpse might shine in Orion in the belly of Nut<sup>46</sup> — and in order that the same might happen to Osiris Hôr . . . Keep it secret! Do not let anyone read it. It is useful for a man in the Necropolis,<sup>47</sup> to help him live again, and it has worked successfully millions of times.

Paragraph II assures the deceased that he will be ritually and morally pure when he undergoes the judgment of the dead:

O Osiris Hôr . . . , you are pure. Your heart is pure. Your front is in a state of purity, your back is in a state of cleanliness, and your middle is cleansed with natron.<sup>48</sup> No part of you is engaged in wrong-doing. Osiris Hôr . . . has purified himself in that Pool of the Field of Offerings to the north of the Field of Locusts.<sup>49</sup> Uto<sup>50</sup> and Nekhbet<sup>51</sup> have purified you in the third hour of the night and the third hour of the day. Come, Osiris Hôr . . . , that you may enter the Hall of Double Justice.<sup>52</sup> You have been purified of all impurity and all sin. True Precious Stone is your name.

---

<sup>43</sup>One hopes that the description of the scroll as being inscribed on both sides is not literally true in this case. It would imply that whoever mounted the papyrus on its present backing sacrificed about a third of the text to do so.

<sup>44</sup>The Egyptian word refers only to that part of the horizon where the sun rises and sets.

<sup>45</sup>The sun god. Osiris is to join him in his daily circuit around the earth.

<sup>46</sup>The sky goddess, sister and wife of Geb and mother of Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys. Her belly is the firmament, and Orion is the constellation.

<sup>47</sup>"The city of the dead," a more descriptive term than "cemetery" in the Egyptian context.

<sup>48</sup>Used by the Egyptians instead of soap, also for ritual purification externally and internally. Natron was also the major ingredient in mummification.

<sup>49</sup>Mythological places in the Netherworld. The Field of Offerings was one of the abodes of the blessed dead. For the "geography" cf. *BD* 125 (Budge, *op. cit.*, I, 262): "I have purified myself in the Southern Pool and have rested in the Northern City, in the Field of Locusts, in which the crew of Re purifies itself in that second hour of the night and third (hour) of the day, and the hearts of the gods are soothed when they have passed it by night or by day."

<sup>50</sup>The cobra goddess of Lower (northern) Egypt, whose main place of worship was at Buto, now Tell el-Fara'in in the northern Delta.

<sup>51</sup>The vulture goddess of Upper Egypt, worshipped at Elkab, south of Thebes.

<sup>52</sup>The hall in which the judgment of the dead was believed to take place.



Paragraph III assures the deceased of what the gods will do for him when he arrives in the next world:

O Osiris Hôr . . . , you have entered the Netherworld in a state of purity. The Double Goddess of Justice has purified you greatly in the Great Hall. A purification has been made for you in the Hall of Geb.<sup>53</sup> Your body has been purified in the Hall of Shu.<sup>54</sup> You see Re when he sets and Atum<sup>55</sup> at twilight. Amon is with you and gives you breath. Ptah<sup>56</sup> shapes your body, that you may enter the horizon with Re. Your ba has been welcomed into the Neshmet-bark<sup>57</sup> together with Osiris; your ba has been made divine in the palace of Geb. You are justified forever and ever.

Paragraph IV assures the deceased of his bodily well-being in the hereafter:

Osiris Hôr . . . , your name endures, your corpse lasts, and your mummy is permanent. You have not been repulsed in heaven or on earth. Your face has been gladdened in the presence of Re, your ba lives in the presence of Amon, and your corpse has been rejuvenated in the presence of Osiris, that you may breathe forever and ever.

Paragraph V turns to the all-important invocation-offerings, the prayer and ritual by which the deceased is assured sustenance (see Paragraph XII). Note that the *ba* can perform this function in the absence of heirs or mortuary priests:

Your ba has made invocation-offerings for you consisting of bread, beer, cattle and fowl, libations<sup>58</sup> and incense in the course of every day. Your flesh is on your bones just like the shape you had on earth. You have drunk with your throat, eaten with your mouth, and received offering-cakes together with the bas of the gods. Anubis has guarded you and protected you. You have not been turned back from the gates of the Netherworld. Thoth, Twice Great, the Great, Lord of Hermopolis<sup>59</sup> has come to you to write for you a Breathing Permit with his own fingers, that your ba may breathe forever. You have assumed again the shape you had on earth among the living. You are divine together with the bas of the gods. Your heart is the heart of Re, and your body is the body of the Great God.

<sup>53</sup>The earth god, husband of Nut, cf. n. 46.

<sup>54</sup>The god of air, father of Geb and Nut, husband and brother of Tefnut.

<sup>55</sup>The sun god, especially in his aspect as creator, who begot Shu and Tefnut as the first generation of gods according to the Heliopolitan cosmogony.

<sup>56</sup>The divine craftsman, chief god of Memphis.

<sup>57</sup>The sacred boat in which Osiris traveled. Ships were the major means of transport in ancient Egypt, and the rich usually had their own. The gods also had their boats, which often appeared in several versions: models used in the cult, real boats used in processions on the Nile and in ritual dramas, and of course the invisible, "real" one.

<sup>58</sup>Libations (of water) were so important in the rituals for the dead that professional mortuary priests were called "water-pourers" in the Late Period, "choachyte" in more technical English.

<sup>59</sup>The ibis-headed god of writing and learning, identified by the Greeks with Hermes. Normally he is just "twice great," and the third "great" (using a synonym) is unique to this MS. It seems to be approaching the Hermes Trismegistos ("thrice great") of the Greco-Egyptian mystical texts. His chief place of worship was Hermopolis, now el-Eshmunein near Mellawi in Middle Egypt.

The preservation of the senses and the bodily functions is the topic of Paragraph VI:

O Osiris Hôr . . . , Amon is with you every day . . .<sup>60</sup> in the Temple of Re so that you may live again. Wepwawet<sup>61</sup> has opened the good way for you. *You have seen with your eyes, heard with your ears, spoken with your mouth, and walked with your feet. Your ba is divine in the Netherworld, so that it can assume any form it wishes. You have scattered the Noble<sup>62</sup> Ished-tree<sup>63</sup> in Heliopolis. You have awakened every day and seen the rays of the sun. Amon has come to you bringing the breath of life to let you breathe in<sup>62</sup> your sarcophagus. You have gone out to the earth every day. The Breathing Permit of Thoth has been made as a protection for you that you may breathe by means of it like Re. Your eye has seen the rays of the sun's disk. You have been declared just before Osiris. . . .<sup>64</sup> Horus of Edfu<sup>65</sup> has protected your body and made your ba divine as all the other gods do. The ba of Re revives your ba; the ba of Shu<sup>66</sup> enters your nostrils.*

In Paragraph VII the deceased, now fully equipped for existence in the hereafter, is identified with Osiris:

O Osiris Hôr . . . , your ba has breathed *everywhere* you wished, for you have the attributes of *Osiris*.<sup>67</sup> *Osiris Foremost-of-the-Westerners*<sup>68</sup>

<sup>60</sup>The phrase “. . . in the Temple of Re” is in none of the parallels available to me, and I am unable to read the damaged sign(s) preceding it.

<sup>61</sup>The jackal god of Asyut in Middle Egypt. His name means “Opener of the Ways,” and his standard was carried, from earliest times, at the head of royal processions.

<sup>62</sup>A small, displaced fragment has been mounted here. The remaining traces suggest that the word “Noble” was written twice, and that there was a short gap in the following line (iii, 10) at this point; perhaps there was a hole in the papyrus at the time the text was written.

<sup>63</sup>The sacred Ished-tree in Heliopolis is best known because Seshat, the goddess of history, was supposed to inscribe the names of the kings of Egypt on its leaves. Here, however, the text calls to mind passages such as *BD 17* (Budge, *op. cit.*, I, 60–61): “I am that cat beside whom the Ished-tree was split in Heliopolis on that night when the enemies of the Lord of All were destroyed.” The ancient commentary explains that the cat is the new-born Re (the sun at sunrise), and that the splitting of the Ished-tree refers to the punishment of the “children of rebellion” when “they entered the eastern side of heaven, and then there was a battle in heaven and on the entire earth.” During the night, the sun was believed to undergo various transformations, finally being born as a new sun at dawn, a process which repeated the first appearance of the sun at creation and as creator. Dawn/Creation was the time when the forces of chaos, which always threatened the created world, were overcome. When the deceased scatters (the pieces?) of the Ished-tree, he is accompanying Re at dawn; note the next sentence: “You have awakened . . .”

<sup>64</sup>A damaged passage in which only three signs are preserved, enough to show that the text was entirely different from that in the parallel MSS, but not enough to guess at a restoration. The other MSS read: “‘Justified’ has been written on your body” — just as the statue of the deceased would be inscribed with his name and the same epithet.

<sup>65</sup>The spelling is unusual, but no other reading comes to mind. Edfu, between Elkab and Aswan, is well known for its great temple of Horus, the only temple to have survived virtually undamaged from ancient Egypt. The other MSS have “Harendotes,” i.e., “Horus Who Helped His Father” Osiris.

<sup>66</sup>I.e., the air.

<sup>67</sup>The Egyptian uses the construction that indicates an acquired attribute rather than an inherent characteristic. Literally: “for you are as Osiris.”

<sup>68</sup>The “Westerners” are the dead.

is your name. *The Great Inundation has come to you from Elephantine that it might fill your altar with provisions.*<sup>69</sup>

Paragraph VIII brings assurances of eternal existence in the retinue of Osiris:

Osiris Hôr . . . , *the gods of Upper and Lower Egypt have come to you in order to show you how to spend millions of years in all together with your ba. You have accompanied Osiris and breathed in Rostau.*<sup>70</sup> *Hapetnebes*<sup>71</sup> *and the Great God have protected you. Your corpse lives in Busiris*<sup>72</sup> *and the Thinite Nome;*<sup>73</sup> *your ba lives in heaven every day.*

The Egyptians conceived the hereafter very much in terms of this world, and personal attacks and loss of status were a threat in both places. Paragraph IX promises that this will not happen:

Osiris Hôr . . . , *Sekhmet*<sup>74</sup> *has prevailed over those that plotted against you. Horus the Steadfast protects [you].*<sup>75</sup> *Horus of Edfu*<sup>76</sup> *carries out your wishes. Hormerti*<sup>77</sup> *guards your body. Your life, prosperity, and health have become permanent, and you will remain in your position in the Sacred Land.*<sup>78</sup> *Come, Osiris Hôr . . . , for you have appeared in your glorious form, and your appurtenances are complete. You have spent the night alive and the day in health. You have gone and breathed everywhere. Re has shined on your cavern*<sup>79</sup> *as he did on that of Osiris, that you might breathe and live by his rays. Amon-Re has caused your ka*<sup>80</sup> *to live and made you flourish by means of the Breathing Permit. You have accompanied Osiris and Horus, the Lord of the Henu-bark,*<sup>81</sup> *for you have the attributes of the Great God,*

<sup>69</sup>The annual flood of the Nile was the only source of water for the fields of ancient Egypt (apart from manual lifting at low water), and the country was utterly dependent on it for its crops. Theologically, the Inundation was believed to come from two caverns below the Nile at Elephantine, an island across from Aswan at the southern frontier of ancient Egypt, though the connection between the Inundation and rains in the highlands of Ethiopia was known (at least to some people in Egypt) by the seventh century B.C. As a god, the Inundation is, of course, the source of food.

<sup>70</sup>"The Tomb-Shafts," a term for "necropolis" in general and a part of that of Giza in particular.

<sup>71</sup>"She Who Conceals Her Lord," a name for the necropolis of Abydos, the chief center for the cult of Osiris in Upper Egypt, now el-'Araba el-Madfuna near Balyana.

<sup>72</sup>The major cult-center of Osiris in Lower Egypt, now Abusir Bana.

<sup>73</sup>The province in which Abydos was situated.

<sup>74</sup>The lion-headed goddess of pestilence and destruction.

<sup>75</sup>Omitted by the scribe and supplied on the unanimous testimony of the parallels.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. n. 65. Most of the MSS read: "Horus the Savior."

<sup>77</sup>"Horus of the Two Eyes" (the sun and the moon), a form of Horus worshipped in Pharbaithos, now Horbeit in the eastern Delta.

<sup>78</sup>The Necropolis and the Netherworld.

<sup>79</sup>Both the tomb and a part of the Netherworld. The other MSS have: "your mansion."

<sup>80</sup>*Ka* is another untranslatable term. The best short definition is probably: The personality (of a person or god) personified as an entity separate from him. The *ka* is created (as a sort of "double") at birth, and one joins it at death. It is symbolized by a pair of raised arms (like those of a surrendering soldier).

<sup>81</sup>The sacred boat of Sokar, god of the Memphite Necropolis, with whom Horus is here identified.

*the Foremost of Gods. Your face is alert and your form perfect. Your name endures always. Come, that you may enter the Great Divine Council in Busiris! That you may see the Foremost of the Westerners<sup>82</sup> at the Wag-festival.<sup>83</sup> Your smell is pleasant like that of a young man,<sup>84</sup> and your reputation is as great as that of a functionary of high rank.*

Paragraph X concludes the assurances of an undisturbed existence in the hereafter:

*O Osiris Hôr . . . , your ba lives by means of the Breathing Permit, and you have joined the ba by the same means. You have entered the Netherworld. You have no enemies, for you are a divine akh<sup>85</sup> in Busiris. You have possession of your heart;<sup>86</sup> it will not leave you. You have possession of your eyes, which are open every day.*

Col. iv came to an end about here and with it the surviving part of the *Breathing Permit* belonging to Hôr. The missing portion was about half as long. On the whole, the preserved text does not differ greatly from that in the parallel manuscripts,<sup>87</sup> so a translation based on them should provide a reasonable approximation of the lost parts. The italics will be a reminder that none of what follows comes from the Joseph Smith Papyri.

Paragraph XI consists of two addresses by the gods:

*Words spoken by the gods who are in the retinue of Osiris to Osiris Hôr . . . : "May you accompany Re; may you accompany Osiris. Your ba lives forever and ever."*

*Words spoken by the gods who are in the Netherworld to Osiris, Foremost-of-the-Westerners, and to Osiris Hôr . . . : "Open the gates of the Netherworld for him; admit him into the Necropolis. Let his ba live forever. For he has built a portal<sup>88</sup> in the Necropolis, and his ka has praised his god.<sup>89</sup> Accept his Breathing Permit.<sup>90</sup> Let him breathe."*

<sup>82</sup>Osiris.

<sup>83</sup>A festival of Osiris and the dead celebrated on the 18th day of the first month of the Egyptian year.

<sup>84</sup>The Egyptian is thinking of both the stench of a decaying corpse and that of the unwashed lower classes. The other MSS are clearer, comparing the smell of the deceased to that of "the revered ones."

<sup>85</sup>An *akh* is an "effective spirit," one of the four non-exclusive categories of sentient beings (gods, men, *akhs*, and the dead). A blessed dead person becomes an *akh* by having the appropriate rituals performed for him. It is as an *akh* that a dead man is able to threaten the wrongdoers who might damage his tomb, letters asking for his intercession are addressed to the "Akh NN," and in ghost stories it is the *akh* that appears. Here the other MSS have *ba*, and the scribe of P. JS X was uncertain and ended up by writing something halfway between *ba* and *akh*.

<sup>86</sup>In Egyptian, the word "heart" also covers the semantic range of our word "mind" and thus can wander or even abandon its owner. No particular importance was ascribed to the brain, which was discarded in mummification.

<sup>87</sup>However, the notes give a false impression of uniformity since only the more significant variants have been mentioned.

<sup>88</sup>I.e., a tomb.

<sup>89</sup>The concept of a personal god was widespread in ancient Egypt; in most instances he was presumably the god of one's local temple or shrine. I suspect that "his ka has praised his god" is a euphemism for "he has died" but cannot prove it with the resources available at the time of writing.

<sup>90</sup>Here is one passage where the translation *Breathing Permit* (see n. 7) is demanded by the context.



The ritual formula for making invocation-offerings follows in Paragraph XII:

*May the king give a boon to Osiris, Foremost-of-the-Westerners, the Great God, Lord of Abydos that he may give invocation-offerings consisting of bread, beer, cattle, fowl, wine, milk, sacrificial offerings and provisions, and every good thing to the ka of Osiris Hôr . . . .*<sup>91</sup>

*Your ba lives and your corpse endures by the command of Re himself and like Re will not perish or decay forever and ever.*

An abbreviated version of the so-called "Negative Confession" ("Declaration of Innocence" is a better term) forms Paragraph XIII. In the original (*BD* 125), forty-two gods and demons are addressed; here we have only the first seven, and various other changes are made:

(1) *O Wide-Strider*<sup>92</sup> *who originated in Heliopolis, Osiris Hôr . . . has not done wrong.* (2) *O Great Striker*<sup>93</sup> *who originated in Kheraha,*<sup>94</sup> *Osiris Hôr . . . has not committed robbery.* (3) *O Beaky*<sup>95</sup> *who originated in Hermopolis, Osiris Hôr . . . has not made people groan.*<sup>96</sup> (4) *O Eye-Swallower who originated in the Two Caverns,*<sup>97</sup> *Osiris Hôr . . . has not stolen things.* (5) *O Wild-Face who originated in Rostau, Osiris Hôr . . . has not been quarrelsome.* (6) *O Double Lion*<sup>98</sup> *who originated in heaven, Osiris Hôr . . . has not done wrong. . . .*<sup>99</sup> (7) *O Fiery-Eyes*<sup>100</sup> *who originated in Letopolis, Osiris Hôr . . . has not committed pollution.*

The *Breathing Permit* ends with Paragraph XIV, a eulogy of the deceased:

*O gods of the Netherworld, hear the claims of Osiris Hôr . . . ! He has come before you. He is not the source of any evil. No wrong-doing is blamed on him, and no witness can rise against him. He has lived by*

<sup>91</sup>The offering formula ends here. In theory, only the king served the gods and made offerings to them; the priests only acted as his deputies, and private individuals who made a gift to a temple or endowed it did so with royal permission and as a mark of favor — again theoretically. At least from the Middle Kingdom (2050–1650 B.C.) onward, it was usual for the mortuary cult of individuals to be arranged through a temple, which undertook to provide the offerings out of its income in exchange for an appropriate endowment. In most cases, the offerings were probably "second-hand," having been placed first on the altar of the god. This explains the wording of the offering formula, though the god will almost always be Osiris or Anubis without regard for the local god through whose temple the arrangements, if any, would have been made.

<sup>92</sup>Re, who makes a daily circuit around the world.

<sup>93</sup>Variants have: "O Greatly Majestic."

<sup>94</sup>Now Old Cairo.

<sup>95</sup>The ibis-headed Thoth.

<sup>96</sup>Translation uncertain. *BD* reads: "has not been greedy."

<sup>97</sup>The caverns from which the Inundation was believed to come, see n. 69.

<sup>98</sup>Shu, the god of air, and his sister and wife Tefnut.

<sup>99</sup>The phrase that stands here seems to be corrupt; at least there are no other occurrences known to me that might suggest what "as a consequence of a wooden heart" could mean. *BD* reads: "has not tampered with the grain measures."

<sup>100</sup>Horus as the falcon of heaven, whose eyes are the sun and the moon. He was worshipped at Letopolis, now Usim near the head of the Delta northwest of Cairo.

Righteousness, he has swallowed Righteousness.<sup>101</sup> The hearts of the gods are satisfied with everything he has done. He has given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, and clothes to the naked. He has made sacrifices to the gods and invocation-offerings to the akhs.<sup>102</sup> No charges have been brought against him before any gods. Let him enter the Netherworld without being repulsed. Let him accompany Osiris together with the gods of the Caverns,<sup>103</sup> for he is favored among those who are favored and is divine among the virtuous. Let him live. Let his ba live. Admit his ba to every place it wishes. Accept his Breathing Permit.<sup>104</sup> Let him breathe together with that ba of his in the Netherworld and, like the Westerners,<sup>105</sup> assume any shape that his heart desires. Let his ba go to every place he wishes so that he may be alive on earth forever and ever and ever!

Here ends the Breathing Permit of Hôr . . .

If we include the damage that the initial vignette and the four surviving columns of text have suffered, considerably less than one half of the original surface of the *Breathing Permit* of Hôr now exists. Was it in better condition in Joseph Smith's time? Yes, but not perfect. Our evidence is the facsimiles that accompany the Book of Abraham in the *Pearl of Great Price*<sup>106</sup> and Joseph Smith's own copies in his *Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*.<sup>107</sup>

"Facsimile No. 3" shows a man (5),<sup>108</sup> his hand raised in adoration and a cone of perfumed grease and a lotus flower on his head (ancient Egyptian festival attire), being introduced by Maat (4), the goddess of justice, and Anubis (6), the guide of the dead, into the presence of Osiris (1), enthroned as king of the Netherworld. Behind Osiris stands Isis (2), and in front of him is an offering-stand (3) with a jug and some flowers on it. Over the whole scene is a canopy with stars painted on it to represent the sky.

The scene comes from a mortuary papyrus and is similar to, but not identical with scenes showing the judgment of the deceased before Osiris such as P. JS III. It is a summary in one illustration of what the *Breathing Permit*

<sup>101</sup>Egyptian uses the same preposition to indicate living "by" some standard and living "on" food. Thus, the phrase suggested to the Egyptian that the righteous actually eat righteousness and, of course, swallow it in the process.

<sup>102</sup>See n. 85.

<sup>103</sup>The chambers into which the Netherworld is divided.

<sup>104</sup>See n. 7, 90.

<sup>105</sup>The dead.

<sup>106</sup>I have used xerox copies of the engravings of "Facsimile No. 1" and "No. 3" as printed in *Times and Seasons*, 3, No. 9 (March 1, 1842), 1; 3, No. 14 (May 16, 1842), 1. The cuts that appear in modern, cheap editions of the *PGP* have lost too much detail to be of use and appear to have been touched up slightly.

<sup>107</sup>The numbered and lettered pages are cited as they are in the edition (the lettered pages are in the sequence A, . . . , M, S, R, Q, P, N, O, T, . . . , X). The pages of the "Valuable Discovery" are not numbered in the edition and are here cited by bracketed numbers, [1] - [14] consecutively, following the arrangement in the typed portion of the book. I am in no position to tell how much of *EAG* is in Joseph's own hand, and how much was written by his secretaries, but it is a safe assumption that the whole MS represents Joseph's intentions.

<sup>108</sup>The numbers are those on the facsimile.

promised: The deceased, after successfully undergoing judgment is welcomed into the presence of Osiris.

The texts, poorly copied as they are,<sup>109</sup> carry us one step further. As far as it can be made out, the line of hieroglyphs below the scene reads.

O gods of . . . , gods of the Caverns, gods of the south, north, west, and east, grant well-being to Osiris Hôr, justified, . . .<sup>110</sup>

The characters above and to the left of the man are probably to be read: "Osiris Hôr, justified forever." Even though Hôr is a relatively common name in Greco-Roman Egypt, this does suggest that "Facsimile No. 3" reproduces a part of the same manuscript that "Facsimile No. 1" does. Hôr's copy of the *Breathing Permit* would then have had two vignettes, one at the beginning and another ("Facsimile No. 3") at the end, an arrangement that is found in other copies of the same text.<sup>111</sup>

The fact that both cuts are labeled "A Facsimile from the Book of Abraham" unfortunately does not help to support this conclusion, since "Facsimile No. 2," representing a hypocephalus<sup>112</sup> made for an "Osiris Shoshenq," cannot possibly reproduce a portion of the *Breathing Permit* of Hôr, though it also is supposed to be "from the Book of Abraham." On the other hand, a comparison with the photograph shows that "Facsimile No. 1" was originally printed actual size, so the fact that "Facsimiles Nos. 1 and 3" are about the same height may well be significant. It is what would be expected if they came from the same scroll.<sup>113</sup>

It is, therefore, not too rash to suggest that parts of Paragraphs XI–XIV still existed in 1835. However, the three mounted pieces of the papyrus (P.

<sup>109</sup>The engravings were not too expertly made and contain many errors of detail, as a comparison of "Facsimile No. 1" with P. JS I will show. For instance, the Egyptian drew the legs of the recumbent figure in front of the standing figure and the standing figure in front of the couch, a visual illogicality that accords with the Egyptian convention of not allowing the less important to cover the more important. The engraver "corrected" this to agree with modern conventions. There are many differences in the feathers, ornamental patterns, cross-hatchings, etc. Unfortunately, a legible copy of the text requires an accurate reproduction of the small details.

<sup>110</sup>I have only translated what can actually be read on the "Facsimile." The signs at the end of the line (the hieroglyphs run from left to right in this case) may have indicated the parentage but are too vaguely reproduced to permit a reading without some idea of what the text ought to say, a dangerous procedure when one is trying to use the names to prove something.

<sup>111</sup>E.g., P. Berlin 3135 (Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, III, 15).

<sup>112</sup>A flat, circular, inscribed object, ultimately derived from a pillow placed under the head of a mummy. Most examples date from the Greco-Roman Period, but *BD* 162, which, at least later, was taken to refer to the hypocephalus, is attested from as early as the Twenty-First Dynasty (ca. 1085–945 B.C.). The hypocephalus was supposed to "create a flame under the head" of the deceased, which would make him divine as well as possessed of his vital functions, especially his sexual powers.

<sup>113</sup>If this is correct, we can estimate the original size of the scroll. The four preserved columns with a total width of about 79 cm. contained about 946 cm. of text out of an original 1387. Assuming that the lost columns also had 13 lines each, they would have been 34 cm. wide (i.e., two columns), 35 cm. allowing for the space between them. To this we can add 18.5 cm. for P. JS I, 16 cm. for "Facsimile No. 3," and a small amount for the margins around the latter. The total will have been about 150 or 155 cm. The scroll was about 10.5 cm. high.

JS I, X, XI) are probably in about the same condition as in Joseph Smith's time, except that the places where the surface is now rubbed away, leaving only a more or less blank stretch of papyrus, and sometimes only the bottom layer,<sup>114</sup> were still in better condition. The photographs (especially of P. JS X) also show places where papyrus has parted company with the paper backing; at least two such pieces were then framed with P. JS IV (see pages 112 and 116). But apart from this, the lacunae evidently existed at the time the papyri were mounted, and Joseph Smith's copies indicate that they were already damaged at these points when he began to study them.

The copies provide detailed evidence for lines 1-3 and 5 of P. JS I and col. i, 1-2 of P. JS XI:

Line 1 ("Fourth part of the first degree," *EAG*, p. E-F [omitting the group at the top of the line], I, U-V). All signs in the copies are still visible, and not much ink has flaked off since the copies were made.

Line 2 ("The third part of the first degree," *EAG*, p. E [a very inexperienced copy, with signs broken up and parts placed in incorrect relative positions], I, U [much better copies]). A little bit more seems to have been preserved at the top (the three specks of ink are combined into a sign). At the bottom, the surface and some ink that are now lost still remained, but not beyond the present lower edge of the papyrus.

Line 3 ("Second part of the first degree," *EAG*, p. D-E, I [only the last seven signs of the line], T-U). The copies are hard to interpret since little attempt was made to preserve the relative positions of the signs. Beginning with the hieroglyph labeled "Veh Kli flos-isis" (about one sixth of the way from the top in the photograph), the copy shows the signs that still exist, and in the same order (note that characters standing beside each other are read from right to left in the Egyptian but have been copied from left to right; hieroglyphs representing men or animals face the beginning of the text).

Before this point, there are characters in Smith's copy that are not based on anything visible on the papyrus. Thus, the signs labeled "Ho-hah-ooop" and "Jah-ni-hah" adjoin on the papyrus but are separated by three characters in *EAG*, and four separate the latter from "Veh Kli flos-isis," the next sign on the papyrus. As we work backwards (on p. D), "Baeth Ku" probably represents the first traces of ink visible at the upper edges of line 3. Most of the characters that follow up to "Kah tu ain tri ette" can be matched with ink on the papyrus, and the fact that four hieroglyphs in the original have been broken up into the seven signs from "Beth Ki" to "Kah tu ain tri ette" in the copy shows that the ink was flaked much as it is now.

The signs at the beginning of the "Second part of the first degree" on p. C cannot be identified with anything on the photograph. They differ in general

---


<sup>114</sup>Papyrus was made by cutting the pith of the papyrus plant into strips, placing a layer of parallel strips beside each other and another layer at right angles on top of them, and pounding the whole into a sheet (Lucas, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries* [4th ed.], pp. 137-40). The side with horizontal fibers was preferred for writing. Places where the top (horizontal) layer has come off revealing the vertical fibers of the bottom layer are very clear in the color photograph on the cover of the January 1968 *Era* (upper left corner and lower right edge of P. JS I).



appearance from the signs on p. D–F that are certainly copied from P. JS I. Whatever their source may have been, it is unlikely that they come from this papyrus, and we can again conclude that the present upper edge was also the upper edge when Joseph Smith began his studies.

Line 5 (“Fifth part of the first degree,” *EAG*, p. F, V, [11]). The last is the best copy and shows that eight signs still visible 133 years ago are now lost at the top and about five at the bottom; the section about a third of the way from the bottom where an isolated piece of papyrus is now surrounded by a lacuna was still intact at that time. At the top and bottom, the missing signs would easily fit in that part of the papyrus where only the bottom layer is now preserved.

Col. i, 1 (*EAG*, p. J–K, S–Q). The signs now visible are the ones interpreted by Joseph Smith as “Sign of the fifth degree of the second part” and “The priest of Elk Kener . . .” through “And his voice was unto me . . .” inclusive. He gives three groups of which no trace now exists. Are they a copy or a proposed restoration of an already existing lacuna? There can be little doubt that they are the latter, since the parallel manuscripts of the *Breathing Permit* tell us what the missing signs were:

The first signs in the line were the same as the fifth to third signs from the end of i, 3 (the second sign from the end is above the last sign in the line). Only the upper tip of the first sign is now preserved in i, 1 — and that is all that Joseph Smith copied. It seems that the papyrus broke off at that point as it does now. The fourth sign looked like this: . There is no example in the photograph. The fifth sign in i, 1 resembled the bottom half of the group “And as they lifted up their hands . . .” in *EAG*, p. K, Q, or the sign marked (b) in Fig. 1. The sixth to eighth signs in i, 1 should be the same group as that copied at “Behold Potiphers hill . . .” in *EAG*, p. K, P, or that marked (c) in Fig. 1. and a sign like the last one in i, 3 came at the end of the lacuna.

Now this is not what Joseph Smith drew, and it follows that the three groups in question are only his suggested restoration.

Col. i, 2 (*EAG*, p. K–M, P–O). The signs now preserved start in Joseph Smith’s copy at “Now after the priest of Elk Kiner . . .”; the copy then continues until the end of the line, where it stops at “Now the lord had said unto me . . .” (*EAG*, p. M).<sup>115</sup> The missing signs occur again on the same photograph in ii, 3, to the left of the break, starting with the group after the short horizontal dash and continuing to the end of the preserved part of the line. Joseph Smith drew four groups, of which the first (“Behold Potiphers

<sup>115</sup>Heward and Tanner, *Dialogue*, 3, No. 2 (Summer 1968), p. 95 (illustration No. 4), reproduce Joseph Smith’s copy of i, 3 from another manuscript. In this case, the signs corresponding to the present lacuna are repeated from the preceding text: the group interpreted as “Now the Lord God caused . . .” (*EAG*, p. O) followed by the upper part of “The priest of Elk Kener . . .” (*EAG*, p. S). The lacuna in i, 3 is about 14 mm. wide, the two groups at least 20 mm. on the papyrus. The restoration of the second half of the lacuna is not quite certain, but the first half was occupied by the end of the word “after,” which begins the line: ← (about 6 mm. long) connecting with the short vertical stroke at the break and the fifth sign in the lacuna in i, 1 [b] below it. Neither the shape nor the dimensions of Joseph Smith’s drawings fit. The lacuna evidently existed already at his time.

hill . . .") has the expected shape and is still visible in traces at the beginning of the line, while the remaining three (including the one corresponding to Abraham 1:26) are clearly proposed restorations that bear no resemblance to the signs that certainly were on the papyrus before it was damaged; note also the difference in general appearance or style. Our conclusion is essentially the same as before: The papyrus was slightly better preserved at the beginning of the line but otherwise broke off at the same point it does now.<sup>116</sup>

EGYPTOLOGIST	JOSEPH SMITH
S, 1: Corner of "They shall"	"Sign of the fifth degree of the second part"
2: [Incorrectly restored]	"I sought for mine appointment unto the priesthood accordin[g] to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed"
3: [Incorrectly restored]	"my fathers having turned from their righteousness and from the holy commandments which the Lord their God had given unto them unto the worshiping of the gods of the heathens"
4: [Incorrectly restored]	"utterly refused to hearken to my voice for their hearts were set to do evil and were wholly turned to the God of Elk Kener and the god of Libnah and the god of Mah-machrah and the god of Pharaoh King of Egypt. Therefore they turned their hearts to the sacrafice of the heathens in offering up their children u[nto] these dumb Idols and harkened not unto my voice, but endeavoured to take away my life by the hand of the priest of Elk Ken[er]"
5: "inside of; in"	"The priest of Elk Kener was also the priest of Pharaoh now at this time it was the custom of the priest of Phar-[aoh] the King of Egypt to offer up upon the altar which was built in the land of Chaldea for the offering unto these strange gods both men, women and children and it came to pass that the priest made an offering unto the god of Pharaoh and also unto the god of Shagreel, even after the manner of the Egyptians. Now the god of Shagreel was the sun, even a thank offering of a child did the priest of Pharaoh offer upon the altar which stood by the hill called Potiphers hill at the head of the plain of Olishem"
R, 1: "the"	"now this priest had offered upon this altar three virgins at one time who were the daughters of Onitah, one of the royal descent directly from the loins of Ham, these virgins were offered up because of their virtue they would not bow down to worship gods of wood or stone, therefore they were Killed upon this altar"
2: "pool" (first half)	"and it was done after the manner of the Egyptians and it came to pass that the priests laid violence upon me, that they might slay me also, as they did those virgins upon this altar, and that you might have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation, at the commencement of this [record]"

---

<sup>116</sup>The reader may be interested in comparing the Egyptologist's and Joseph Smith's interpretations of the groups from i, 1-2 as copied in *EAG*, pp. S-O. Joseph Smith's sections correspond to Abraham 1:4-2:5 (the modern verse divisions are different). The Egyptologist's connected translation is on pages 119 and 120. The groups are identified by the page of *EAG* and a consecutive number supplied by the writer.

- Q, 1: "pool" (second half) "it was made after the form of a bed stead such as was had amon[g] the Chaldeans, and it stood before the Gods of Elk Kener Libnah Mahmachrah and also a god like unto that of Pharaoh King of Egypt, that you may have an understanding of these gods I have given you the fassion of them, in the figures at the beginning, which manner of figures is called by the Chaldeans Rahleenos."
- 2: "great" "And as they lifted up their hands upon me that they might offer me up, and take away my life, behold I lifted my voice unto the Lord my God and the Lord hearkened and heard, and he filled me with a vision of the Almighty and the angel of his presence stood by my feet and immediately loosed my bands."
- 3: "Khons" "And his voice was unto me Abram, Abram, behold my name is Jehovah, and I have heard thee, and have come down to deliver thee, and to take thee away from thy fathers house, and from all thy Kinsfolks, into a strange land, which thou knowest not of, and this because they have turned their hearts away from me, to worship the god of Elk Kener, and the god of Libnah and of Mah mach rah and the god of Pharaoh King of Egypt; therefore I have come down to visit them and to destroy him who hath lifted up his hand against thee Abram my son to take away thy life; behold I will lead thee by my hand, and I will take thee, to put upon thee my name even the priesthood of thy Father, and my power shall be over thee as it was with Noah so shall it be with thee, that throug[h] thy ministry my name shall be known in the earth forever; for I am thy God"
- P, 1: "Osiris" "Behold Potiphers hill was in the land of Ur of Chaldea, and the Lord broke down the altar of Elk Kiner, and of the gods of the land, and utterly destroyed them, and smote the priest that he died and there was great mourning in Chaldea, and also in the court of Pharaoh which Pharaoh, signifies King by royal blood. Now this King of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the canaanites by birth from this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the canaanites was preserved in the land."
- 2: [Incorrectly restored] "The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham and the daughter of Zeptah, which in the Chaldea, signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden. When this woman discovered the land, it was under water, who after settled her sons in it; and thus from Ham sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land."
- 3: [Incorrectly restored] "Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the Eldest son of Egyptes, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of governm[ent] of Ham which was patriarchal, Pharaoh being a righteous man established his Kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign even in the reign of Adam; and also Noah his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth and with the blessings of wisdom but cursed him as pertaining to the priesthood."

- N, 1: [Incorrectly restored] "Now Pharaoh being of that lineage, by which he could not have the right of priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would feign claim it from Noah through Ham, therefore my father was led away, by their Idolitry but I shall endeavor hereafter to deliniate the chronology run[n]ing back from myself to the beginning of the creation: for the records have come into my hands which I hold unto this present time."
- 2: "born to" "Now after the priest of Elk Kiner was smitten that he died there came a fulfillment of those things which were spoke[n] unto me conserning the land of Chaldea, that there should be a famine in the land, and accordingly 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 records of the fathers, even the patraarch's, concerning the right of priesthood the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands, therefore a Knowledge of the beginning of creation, and also of the planets and of the stars, as it was made know[n] unto the fathers have I kept even unto this day."
- O, 1: "Ti-" ("the") "And I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me."
- 2: "-khebyt" ("dancer") "Now the Lord God caused the famine to wax sore in the land of Ur, insomuch that Haran my brother died, but Terah my father yet lived in the land of Ur of the chaldeas. And it came to pass that I Abram took Sarai to wife and Nahor, my brother, took Micah to wife."
- 3: Sign indicating a woman's name "Who was the daughter of Haran"
- 4: "justified, likewise" "Now the lord had said unto me Abram get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred even from thy fathers house, unto a land that I will [show] thee: Therefore I left the land of Ur of the [Chaldees] to go into the land of Canaan, and I took Lot my brothers son, and his wife, and Sarai my wife; and also my father followed after me [un]to the land which we denominated Haran. And the famine abated, and my father tarried in Haran and dwelt there, as there were many flocks in Haran; and my father turned again unto his idolitry: Therefore he continued in Haran (from p. M)

Is there any evidence for the condition of the vignette of "Facsimile No. 1" in Joseph Smith's time? The cut shows it complete, but we have already seen that Joseph Smith attempted to fill lacunae in his copy of the texts. Is this the case here also? There is no direct evidence, but line 4 is an indication. One would have expected it to appear in the "Facsimile" and in the copies in *EAG* if more had existed than the insignificant remnant now visible — the hieroglyphs are included in "Facsimile No. 3."

The sketch in the lacuna is a stronger argument. The head and shoulders of the standing figure (3) are quite different in "Facsimile No. 1" and on the backing of P. JS I. Neither can be a copy of the other, and they diverge too



much to be copies of the same original. If the sketch were later than the cut in *PGP*, one would expect it to resemble the "Facsimile"; if, on the other hand, Joseph Smith had drawn it himself (or had it drawn) in order to replace a part of the papyrus that had been damaged after it came into his possession, one would still expect the two versions to resemble each other. The likeliest interpretation of the difference is that the sketch on the backing fills an already existing gap in a manner that Joseph Smith himself rejected as unsatisfactory.<sup>117</sup> In addition, as we have already seen, the Egyptian parallels to the missing portions of the vignette resemble neither the sketch nor "Facsimile No. 1." The human-headed bird (1) would hardly have been drawn with a bird's head in *PGP* if more of the papyrus had been preserved when the woodcut was made.

To judge by the available evidence, the surviving pieces of Joseph Smith's collection of papyri are in approximately the state they were in when he worked on them.<sup>118</sup>

This is as far as an Egyptologist can go in studying the document that Joseph Smith considered to be a "roll" which "contained the writings of Abraham."<sup>119</sup> The Egyptologist interprets it differently, relying on a considerable body of parallel data, research, and knowledge that has accumulated over the past 146 years since Champollion first deciphered Egyptian — none of which had really become known in America in the 1830's. At this point, the Latter-day Saint historian and theologian must take over.

#### ADDENDUM

Just before this paper went to press, Professor Nibley was kind enough to show me the original papyri at Brigham Young University. The reverse of the backings of both P. JS I and XI contains parts of the plan mentioned in n.

---

<sup>117</sup>At the last minute I find that Tanner and Tanner, *The Mormon Papyri Question*, pp. 12-13 have anticipated the argument from the difference between the sketch on the backing of P. JS I and "Facsimile No. 1." The conclusion can only be tentative until the backings are carefully studied. Lyon, *Era*, 71, No. 5 (May 1968), 18-23 has made a beginning by showing that P. JS II and IV are mounted on a map showing the townships of northeastern Ohio around Kirtland and P. JS I, III, and XI on parts of a large sheet with rough plans of the temple projected for Jackson County, Missouri. The relative position of P. JS II and IV proposed in n. 3 is confirmed by the way in which the two sections of the map fit together. Unfortunately, not enough information is given to serve as a check on the possibility of joining P. JS I and XI (see n. 15). In any event, the drawings do suggest that the papyri were mounted while in Joseph Smith's possession, and probably not too long after 1835.

<sup>118</sup>There is one exception, P. JS IX (the Church Historian's fragment), consisting of a number of pieces of papyrus mounted at random. Most of the text in *EAG*, p. [14] can be identified on the photograph of P. JS IX, but the fragments are arranged quite differently (note that Joseph Smith disregarded the line divisions of the original and copied continuously across the sheet). For the condition of the papyri in Joseph Smith's time cf. also the passage quoted by Clark, *BYU Studies*, 8 (1868), 200, from William S. West that ". . . These records were torn by being taken from the roll of embalming salve which contained them, and some parts entirely lost . . .," a statement published in 1837 that contradicts Nibley, *BYU Studies*, 8 (1968), 17th unnumbered page after p. 178: "There is ample evidence that all the papyri though very fragile were in excellent condition when Joseph Smith worked with them — the clumsy patching, gluing, and sketching came later."

<sup>119</sup>B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City; Deseret News Press, 1948), vol. II, p. 236.

117, and they clearly adjoin as proposed in n. 15; matching upper and lower parts of handwriting are on the two pieces of paper with the cut going through the letters. The fiber patterns show that the papyri were adjoining parts of the same scroll and not simply mounted on adjoining pieces of paper. Papyrus fibers are always irregular and can be used (much like fingerprints) to check whether fragments come from the same sheet; in this case, the horizontal fibers on the left and right edges of P. JS I and XI, respectively, match exactly. The misplaced fragments in P. JS IV are crudely mounted (quite differently from the careful job done with the other fragments). In their present position, it was not possible to compare their fibers with the presumably adjoining parts of P. JS XI and X at the time I examined them.

*People often ask me why I can be a progressive in politics and a fundamentalist in religion. The answer is easy. Government is man made and therefore imperfect. It can always be improved. But religion is not a man made affair. If Christ is the word, how can anyone be a progressive in religion? I am satisfied with the God we have, with the Bible and with Christ.*

*William Jennings Bryan*