

Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts

Since the 1830s and 1840s, Latter-day Saints have viewed the Book of Abraham as the translation of an ancient text containing the writings of the biblical patriarch Abraham. Approximately 3,500 words long, the work presents a narrative of Abraham’s journey from Ur to Egypt, a description of his activities in Egypt, an account of the creation of the world, and doctrinal teachings on topics such as the eternal nature and premortal existence of spirits and the plan for a Savior for humankind. Like the Book of Mormon and the Bible revision, both of which were dictated by Joseph Smith early in his ministry, the Book of Abraham was understood by early Latter-day Saints as important evidence of Joseph Smith’s prophetic role.¹

Even before the Book of Abraham was published in 1842, Joseph Smith and other early Latter-day Saints described it as a divinely inspired translation of Egyptian papyri acquired by Smith and others in 1835.² Wilford Woodruff, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, stated in 1842 that “the Lord is Blessing Joseph with Power to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom of God; to translate through the Urim & Thummim Ancient records & Hyeroglyphics as old as Abraham or Adam, which causes our hearts to burn within us while we behold their glorious truths opened unto us.”³ Woodruff and other Latter-day Saints viewed the Book of Abraham text as resulting from a revelatory process rather than a scholarly one. Throughout this volume, the editors have used words such as *translation*, *decipherment*, and *transliteration* to discuss the work of Joseph Smith and his associates on the study of the Egyptian language and the creation of the Book of Abraham. This terminology is intended to reflect the early Saints’ understanding of their own work, rather than to indicate that their work comports with modern scholarly understanding of Egyptian documents.

This volume of *The Joseph Smith Papers* presents three sets of documents: (1) the extant fragments of the papyri purchased by Joseph Smith and his associates;⁴ (2)

the documents that collectively constitute the “Egyptian-language documents,” which are associated with the attempt by Joseph Smith and his associates to decipher hieroglyphic and hieratic characters from the papyri;⁵ and (3) the manuscripts and first publication of the Book of Abraham.⁶ The entire collection of documents is reproduced here for the first time in photographic and, when possible, typographic facsimiles. *The Joseph Smith Papers* include documents that were created by Joseph Smith—whether written or dictated by him or created by others under his direction—or that were owned by Smith (that is, received by him and kept in his office). All of these documents meet one or both of these criteria for inclusion.

The papyrus fragments published in the Joseph Smith Papers constitute the only known, surviving portions of the two papyrus rolls and various papyrus fragments purchased by Joseph Smith and his associates; only a fraction of that original collection survives today.⁷ Modern Egyptologists have identified these fragments as portions of ancient Egyptian funerary texts created for individuals who died sometime in the third or second centuries BC.⁸ The extant papyri are: (1) two fragments of the Book of Breathing for Horos;⁹ (2) four fragments and several scraps of the Book of the Dead for Semminis;¹⁰ and (3) a fragment from the Book of the Dead for Nefer-ir-nebu, which includes a vignette, or illustration.¹¹

The Egyptian-language documents published in the Joseph Smith Papers consist of the following: (1) several manuscripts on which associates of Joseph Smith copied Egyptian characters;¹² (2) three manuscripts containing attempts to decipher the Egyptian writing system, called the Egyptian Alphabet documents;¹³ (3) a document associated with the Egyptian Alphabet documents, called the Egyptian Counting document, that contains a system of counting;¹⁴ and (4) a manufactured book of ruled paper into which early Latter-day Saint scribes William W. Phelps and Warren Parrish inscribed a “Grammar and A[l]phabet” of the Egyptian language.¹⁵ The Egyptian-language documents are textually interdependent. The Egyptian Alphabet documents contain non-Roman characters—many of which were copied from the papyri—with accompanying transliterations and definitions. Characters, transliterations, and definitions from the Egyptian Alphabet documents were later copied into the Grammar and Alphabet volume. The extent of Joseph Smith’s

involvement in the creation of these manuscripts is unknown. His handwriting appears in two of these documents, and his journal references working on some of them on a few occasions.¹⁶

The final group of documents contains Book of Abraham material. Joseph Smith dictated the text of the Book of Abraham during two periods of time: in the weeks and months after he purchased the papyri in summer 1835, and in early 1842, shortly before the publication of the text in Nauvoo, Illinois. This volume, therefore, includes the following: (1) the three manuscripts of the Book of Abraham created in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835;¹⁷ (2) the two manuscripts of the Book of Abraham created in Nauvoo in 1842;¹⁸ (3) the two installments of the Book of Abraham text as published in the church newspaper *Times and Seasons* in 1842; (4) three facsimiles of vignettes, or illustrations, found on the papyri, which were also published in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842; and (5) explanations of the various figures in the facsimiles, which were published alongside them.¹⁹ The Kirtland-era manuscripts contain the first portion of what would later be published as the Book of Abraham, along with Egyptian characters copied in the left margin. Most of these characters were copied from the papyri, but few of them are found in the Egyptian Alphabet documents or in the Grammar and Alphabet volume. The Nauvoo-era Book of Abraham manuscripts include a copy of a Kirtland-era manuscript and a partially extant portion of text that was produced in 1842. This volume also presents photographs of the printing plates used to publish the facsimiles in the *Times and Seasons*.²⁰

This introduction examines two converging narratives that contextualize the Book of Abraham and the Egyptian-language manuscripts in the early history of the United States and of the Latter-day Saint faith. The first is the explosion of interest in ancient Egypt that occurred in early nineteenth-century America, as well as Joseph Smith's interest in Egypt and other ancient cultures. The second is Smith's previous dictation of sacred texts—including the Book of Mormon, the Bible revision, and his revelations. Understanding these themes informs the study of these documents and Smith's interaction with them.

The Rediscovery of Ancient Egypt

Joseph Smith dictated the Book of Abraham at a time when Western culture was enthralled with the discovery and excavation of ancient Egyptian artifacts.^[21] But even before such discoveries, scholars, philosophers, and theologians had studied and written about ancient Egypt for centuries. According to many of these writers, ancient Egyptian documents and artifacts—such as monuments, mummies, and papyri—held universal truths waiting to be revealed. Joseph Smith too believed that spiritual wisdom and historical knowledge were hidden in ancient cultures and languages. To understand the production and publication of the documents in this volume, it is crucial to examine both America’s fascination with ancient Egypt and Joseph Smith’s own search for truth in antiquity.

Western interest in the Egyptian writing system began with the ancient Greeks and continued throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.^[22] Attempts at deciphering the language during the Renaissance and the eighteenth century resulted in differing theories about the grammar, meaning, and history of the language and its relationship to other languages, but they yielded little progress in the quest to actually read Egyptian characters. This failure to decipher the language encouraged individuals to posit new hypotheses. Some saw a relationship between the Greek, Roman, Hebrew, and Egyptian cultures and languages.^[23] Some assigned multiple meanings to each Egyptian hieroglyph.^[24] The seventeenth-century German scholar Athanasius Kircher published an ambitious three-volume dictionary of Egyptian hieroglyphs, synthesizing many of these ideas and adding his own.^[25] Kircher’s dictionary explored the symbolic nature of the hieroglyphs, projecting his own Neoplatonic philosophy onto them.^[26] His volumes illustrate that much of the scholarship on the Egyptian language was a mixture of supposition and reliance upon erroneous, centuries-old assumptions.^[27]

Napoleon Bonaparte’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 dramatically increased interest in ancient Egyptian artifacts and eventually led to the deciphering of the language. A variety of scholars accompanied the French army to document the remnants of ancient Egyptian culture. Their inquiry and publications resulted in a rush of

European scholars and collectors to study the antiquities the French scholars brought back to Europe. Among the artifacts discovered by Bonaparte's forces was the Rosetta Stone, which was used by the Frenchman Jean-François Champollion in the 1820s in his effort to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphs. Champollion's work would ultimately upend previous notions about the Egyptian language. His work revealed that Egyptian characters, both hieroglyphic and hieratic, represented both sounds (as with Roman letters) and ideas.²⁸ Even after Champollion's groundbreaking discoveries, though, some continued to assert competing theories about Egyptian hieroglyphs, whether because they rejected Champollion's findings or were ignorant of them.²⁹ Indeed, in America in the 1830s and 1840s, Champollion's findings were available only to a small group of scholars who either read them in French or gleaned them from a limited number of English translations or summaries.³⁰

There is no evidence that Joseph Smith or his associates had read contemporary works of French or English Egyptological scholarship, but they nevertheless seemed to approach the papyri with many assumptions that were espoused by scholars who wrote before Champollion. The documents created by Smith and his associates, for example, suggest they assumed that the Egyptian language contained a series of complex systems and symbols, each of which held multiple meanings; they believed the meaning of each character was shaped by its position in a language hierarchy made of five tiers (which they called "parts" or "degrees"), and they thought marks such as underlining could be added to a character to change its meaning. In the language system found in the Grammar and Alphabet volume, each character contained five different degrees of meaning, and the definition of the character in each successive degree was more complex or detailed than in the previous degree.³¹ Scholars have yet to explain comprehensively the ways in which earlier concepts regarding the Egyptian language—such as the notion that each character represented multiple ideas—may have been inherited, used, or understood by Joseph Smith.

By 1835, when Joseph Smith and others purchased four mummies and some papyri, antiquities were flowing into America to satisfy the growing interest of collectors, museums, exhibitioners, and spectators. The enthusiasm Americans

showed for mummies exhibited throughout the country influenced journalism, scholarship, poetry, and architecture.³² Some considered mummies educational: one newspaper encouraged teachers “to take their classes to the exhibition [of mummies], as much useful information may by this means, in a few moments, be indelibly impressed upon the youthful mind!”³³ For others, mummies inspired reflection upon ideas of time, mortality, and religion. One viewer reported being confronted with questions about the materiality of the soul while looking at the mummies: “Look again at this ancient remnant of mortality. What was it once? The residence of an immortal soul. What is it now? A senseless lump of clay; and such, in a short period, reader, shall we be.”³⁴ Early Latter-day Saint leader Oliver Cowdery offered similar reflections after he observed the four mummies that Joseph Smith and others had purchased. Cowdery wrote in a letter that the “mummies themselves are a curiosity and an astonishment, well calculated to arouse the mind to a reflection of past ages, when men strove, as at this day, to immortalize their names.” Cowdery, however, placed even greater value on “those records which were deposited with them [the mummies].”³⁵ For Cowdery and for Joseph Smith himself, the most potent connection with the past offered by the recently acquired antiquities lay in the papyri.³⁶

The journey of the mummies and papyri from Egypt to Ohio can be traced to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when England and France vied for control of ancient Egyptian artifacts in the wake of French discoveries under Bonaparte. At the time, England’s consul-general Henry Salt and France’s consul-general Bernardino Drovetti oversaw the collection of antiquities by their respective nations. Both Salt and Drovetti employed agents in Egypt to hire workers and supervise digging projects.³⁷ One of Drovetti’s agents was the Italian-born French national Antonio Lebolo. Between 1817 and 1822, Drovetti and his agents disinterred mummies, papyri, and other Egyptian artifacts primarily from tombs in Luxor, Egypt, the site of the ancient city of Thebes. In addition to supplying material for Drovetti, Lebolo obtained a small collection of artifacts for himself.³⁸ Many of these artifacts ended up in museums throughout Europe. Before Lebolo died in 1830, Drovetti assigned him to sell some of the antiquities to individuals or institutions in America.³⁹ While the mummies were not mentioned in either

Lebolo's last will and testament or the lengthy inventory of his belongings made after his death, a power of attorney drafted after his death listed eleven mummies.⁴⁰ By 1831, the guardian of Lebolo's younger children authorized the sale of the mummies.⁴¹

The mummies were entrusted to a man named Albano Oblasser, who ensured that they were transported to New York City perhaps as early as 1831.⁴² The mummies appeared in Philadelphia by 1833. An Irish immigrant named Michael Chandler claimed that Lebolo was his uncle and had left the artifacts to him,⁴³ but in fact, Chandler appears to have been an agent for a group of individuals in Philadelphia who purchased the mummies and hired him to exhibit them.⁴⁴ He traveled through the United States with the mummies in 1833 and 1834, visiting cities such as Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and New Orleans and selling the mummies as he went.⁴⁵ In March 1835, the mummies and papyri received much attention in Cleveland, Ohio.⁴⁶ After exhibiting his show in that city, Chandler traveled east to Kirtland. He arrived there in late June or early July 1835, hoping to sell his remaining wares: four mummies, two papyrus scrolls, and additional papyrus fragments.⁴⁷

Chandler traveled to Kirtland likely because he saw the Latter-day Saints as potential buyers. According to one reminiscence, Chandler established his exhibit in a hotel in Kirtland, and Joseph Smith visited him the next morning.⁴⁸ Smith inspected the papyri, and he and Chandler discussed ancient languages and Smith's previous translating activities.⁴⁹ Oliver Cowdery described the documents as being "beautifully written in papyrus with black, and a small part, red ink or paint, in perfect preservation."⁵⁰ Chandler allowed Cowdery to copy "some four or five different sentences or separate pieces" from the papyri.⁵¹ Smith provided Chandler with a sample decipherment of these copied Egyptian characters, and Chandler in return supplied Smith with a certificate stating that his translation corresponded "in the most minute matters" to other knowledge he had gleaned "in many eminent cities . . . [from] the most learned."⁵² Scholars, experts, and doctors in the early nineteenth century often signed certificates authenticating mummies and papyri; Chandler even had one such certificate in his possession.⁵³ Chandler may have issued the certificate to ingratiate himself to the Latter-day Saints and increase the

likelihood of a sale.⁵⁴ In reality, though, modern Egyptological scholarship was so new that neither Chandler nor any other American at that time would likely have been able to make such an attestation authoritatively.⁵⁵

Shortly after Chandler produced the certificate, Joseph Smith and others purchased the mummies and papyri for \$2,400. No contemporary receipt of sale exists, but Joseph Coe, who was tasked with making the purchase, explained later that the cost was divided equally into three parts of \$800, which were paid by himself, “S. Andrews,” and Joseph Smith “& Co.,” suggesting that a consortium of individuals assisted in paying Smith’s share.⁵⁶ While Coe and others believed they overpaid for the mummies, it appears that \$2,400 for four mummies and a number of papyri was roughly market value in the mid-1830s.⁵⁷ For Smith, the real value was in the papyri. He wanted to buy only the papyri, but Chandler demanded that his four remaining mummies be included in the purchase.⁵⁸

Word quickly spread that the Mormons had acquired ancient writings and that Joseph Smith could translate the record. Like many of Smith’s endeavors, the purchase and translation of the papyri elicited strong reactions from surrounding communities and from church members. Latter-day Saints were excited for the translation, while non-Mormons were incredulous at Smith’s claims. Writing from Kirtland to his parents in Missouri, church member Albert Brown stated, “Many of the Learned have been to kirtland to examine the characters but none of them have been able to tell but very little a bout them and yet Joseph without any of the wisdom of this world can read them and know what they are.”⁵⁹ The *Cleveland Whig*, on the other hand, printed a brief editorial titled “Another Humbug” in early August 1835: “We are credibly informed that the Mormons have purchased of Mr. Chandler . . . the Mummies which he recently exhibited in this village; and that the prophet Joe has ascertained, by examining the papyrus through his spectacles, that they are the bodies of *Joseph*, (the son of Abraham,) and King Abimeleck and his daughter.” The *Whig* worried that Latter-day Saints would “no doubt gull multitudes into a belief of its truth.”⁶⁰

Joseph Smith's keen interest in Egyptian writings may have stemmed in part from his belief that the writing system on the gold plates from which he translated the Book of Mormon had an Egyptian component. A passage in the Book of Mormon explained that the writings on the plates were "in the characters, which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech."⁶¹ Smith mentioned "engravings, in Egyptian characters," when describing the plates in a later history and recalled that the language of the Book of Mormon plates was the "same as the Hebrew language."⁶² Oliver Cowdery compared the characters "upon the writings of Mr. C[handler]" and those "which were previously copied from the plates, containing the history of the Nephites, or book of Mormon."⁶³ Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph's mother, recalled later in her life that Joseph Smith was given divine instruction to make a copy of "the charecters composing the alphabet[,] which were called reformed egyptian."⁶⁴

Joseph Smith's interest in the Egyptian language dovetailed with his fascination with ancient cultures. Smith and his followers identified many of the sacred texts he dictated as rooted in Adamic, Abrahamic, Egyptian, Enochian, Johannine, or ancient New World cultures.⁶⁵ These texts prompted an interest in ancient languages within the early church and an anticipation that additional ancient texts would be revealed.⁶⁶ Early Latter-day Saints believed that ancient cultures provided a conduit to a purer language, perhaps inspired in part by the story from the Book of Mormon of an ancient people who retained their language when God cursed other languages at the Tower of Babel.⁶⁷ Shortly following the publication of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith—with his wife Emma Smith, Cowdery, and others as scribes—began work on what they came to understand as an inspired revision or "new translation" of the Bible.⁶⁸ Members of the church would learn from Joseph Smith's Bible revision project that "a book of remembrance was kept" in ancient times, written "in the Language of Adam."⁶⁹ The Bible revision posited that Adam and Eve's children "were taught to read & write having a languag[e] which was pure & undefiled."⁷⁰ Smith perhaps felt it part of his prophetic responsibility to unlock this pure language and that doing so would uncover ancient truths. Shortly after Smith dictated the narrative of Adam and Eve's pure language, he created a short

document exploring “A Sample of pure Language.” The surviving manuscript lists words and their meanings in what Smith believed was the pure Adamic language.⁷¹

Joseph Smith looked to ancient cultures in search not only of the language of the divine but also of promised records. As Smith and Cowdery translated the Book of Mormon, Smith dictated a revelation promising that Cowdery would “Translate all those ancient Records which have been hid up which are Sacred.”⁷² While working on the Bible revision, Smith wrote about the prospect of recovering lost biblical writings in an 1833 letter to church leaders in Missouri: “We have not found the book of Jasher nor any of the othe[r] lost books mentioned in the bible as yet nor wille we obtain them at present,” he said.⁷³ Joseph Smith’s history briefly describes an anticipatory attitude among Latter-day Saints: “Much conjecture and conversation frequently occurred among the saints, concerning the books mentioned and referred to, in various places in the old and new testaments, which were now no where to be found.”⁷⁴ He continued to reference lost or hidden records after the purchase of the papyri, dictating a revelation that anticipated that Book of Abraham scribe Warren Parrish would do additional translation work. “He shall see much of my ancient records,” the revelation said, “and shall know of hid[d]en things, and shall be endowed with a knowledge of hid[d]en languages.”⁷⁵ It is little surprise, with such fervor for ancient languages and cultures, that when four Egyptian mummies and papyri came into Kirtland, they received rapt attention from Joseph Smith and his followers.

Joseph Smith’s Revelations and Translations

Joseph Smith used the term *translation* to describe his work on the Book of Abraham. His usage, however, did not correspond to the conventional meaning of the word. The decipherment of the Egyptian language was newly under way when Smith began to study the papyri, and there is no evidence that he was acquainted with the progress that had been made. He was certainly unequipped to translate the scrolls as a scholar would. The translation of the Book of Abraham is perhaps best

understood by examining the way in which Smith produced other scriptural works, namely the Book of Mormon, the Bible revision, and his revelations.⁷⁶

Joseph Smith stated that he translated the Book of Mormon by “the gift and power of God” but was largely silent on the particulars of his methods.⁷⁷ It appears that Smith first created copies of characters from the plates, and one of his associates, Martin Harris, consulted experts in ancient languages, perhaps hoping to obtain aid in the translation effort.⁷⁸ Following Harris’s unsuccessful trip, Smith used instruments he saw as divinely appointed—namely, the “interpreters” found with the gold plates and a “seer stone” already in his possession—to aid in the translation of the Book of Mormon. While Joseph Smith sometimes worked with the plates in front of him on a table, witnesses said the plates were often covered.⁷⁹ Indeed, accounts by his scribes suggest that the plates were not always present and that Smith typically looked directly at the interpreters or seer stone while he dictated, reading words directly from whichever instrument he was using.⁸⁰ During the period when he was translating the Book of Mormon, Smith dictated a revelation that described translation as both an intellectual and a spiritual process. The revelation explained to Oliver Cowdery the process by which he should have approached his own effort to translate—to first “study it out in [his] mind” and then seek spiritual confirmation from God.⁸¹

According to contemporary accounts, Joseph Smith also accessed the divine in a variety of ways when he dictated revelations: he and his followers recorded that he used seer stones, experienced heavenly visions, and received revelations by direct inspiration, without use of any physical tool or artifact.⁸² When revising the Bible, Smith worked with a copy of the King James Version, apparently with no other instrument at hand. Some revisions, like minor grammatical changes, may well have been considered to be the result of human reason rather than divine revelation.⁸³ A subset of the changes appears to be the result of an attempt to harmonize differences among the gospels or other scriptures, and evidence also suggests that Smith and his scribes consulted Adam Clarke’s biblical commentary as they considered the text.⁸⁴ All of these processes—both intellectual and inspired—provided precedents that Joseph Smith could have drawn upon while producing the Book of Abraham.

No known first-person account from Joseph Smith exists to explain the translation of the Book of Abraham, and the scribes who worked on the project and others who claimed knowledge of the process provided only vague or general reminiscences. Smith's journal suggests that he and his clerks saw their study of the papyri as being divided into two separate but related projects: their attempts to decipher and systematize the Egyptian language and their work on the Book of Abraham text.⁸⁵ The journal did not, however, specify the mechanics of either project or how the two projects related to one another. Warren Parrish, who worked with some of the manuscripts, stated: "I have set by his [Joseph Smith's] side and penned down the translation of the Egyptian Hieroglyphicks as he claimed to receive it by direct inspiration from Heaven."⁸⁶ Cowdery, another scribe, wrote a lengthy letter giving a history and description of the papyri, but he did not relay any detail of the translation process, stating only, "When the translation of these valuable documents will be completed, I am unable to say." Cowdery did state, however, that Smith had an understanding of the "comprehensiveness of the language."⁸⁷ John Whitmer, who is not known to have been involved in the process but was close to all those who were, stated in his history that "Joseph the Seer saw these Record[s] and by the revelation of Jesus Christ could translate these records, which gavee an account of our forefathers."⁸⁸

A few sources state that Smith used "the Urim and Thummim"—apparently his seer stone—during his Nauvoo-era work on the Book of Abraham.⁸⁹ Apostle Wilford Woodruff wrote in his journal in February 1842 that Smith was translating the Book of Abraham "through the Urim & Thummim."⁹⁰ Parley P. Pratt, another member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, published an article in England a few months later reporting to the Saints there that the Book of Abraham was "in course of translation by the means of the Urim and Thummim."⁹¹ In a reminiscence several years later, though, fellow apostle Orson Pratt seemed to imply that Smith's method for translating the Book of Abraham was similar to his process for creating the Bible revision and delivering his later revelations—inspiration without the use of a seer stone. Orson Pratt stated that he saw Smith's "countenance lighted up as the inspiration of the Holy Ghost rested upon him, dictating the great and most precious revelations now printed for our guide. I saw him translating, by inspiration,

the Old and New Testaments, and the inspired book of Abraham from Egyptian papyrus.”⁹² Differences in these accounts suggest that if Smith used a seer stone during the translation of the Book of Abraham, he did not use it at all times.

The Egyptian-language manuscripts created by Smith and his associates while they worked with the papyri from July through about November 1835 give the only firsthand, contemporaneous evidence of how they understood the Egyptian language. Textual evidence in the manuscripts indicates Smith and his clerks closely scrutinized the papyri, copying characters from the papyri into notebooks or onto loose sheets but adding little or no commentary.⁹³ Other characters were copied into the Egyptian Alphabet documents and then into the Grammar and Alphabet volume.⁹⁴ But like many similar efforts of the time to unravel the mysteries of the Egyptian language, these attempts are considered by modern Egyptologists—both Latter-day Saints and others—to be of no actual value in understanding Egyptian.⁹⁵

It is unclear when in 1835 Joseph Smith began creating the existing Book of Abraham manuscripts or what relationship the Book of Abraham manuscripts have to the Egyptian-language documents. While some of the documents are clearly textually dependent upon others, there is also evidence of overlapping creation, false starts, and building upon previous work. The sequence of the creation of the Kirtland-era Book of Abraham manuscripts and the various manuscripts of the Egyptian-language project is unknown. Considerable overlap of themes exists between the Book of Abraham and the Egyptian-language documents. Both have information concerning Abraham, Egypt, the Creation, Adam and Eve, Eden, astronomy, and Kolob and other stars, among other topics. Some evidence indicates that material from the Grammar and Alphabet volume was incorporated into at least one portion of the Book of Abraham text in Kirtland.⁹⁶ But most of the Book of Abraham is not textually dependent on any of the extant Egyptian-language documents. The inverse is also true: most of the content in the Egyptian-language documents is independent of the Book of Abraham.

Beyond the clues in the manuscripts themselves, little evidence exists to provide a timeline for the Kirtland-era work on the Egyptian-language documents or

translation of the Book of Abraham. A late July 1835 letter from William W. Phelps to his wife, Sally Waterman Phelps, confirms that Joseph Smith connected the papyri to the patriarch Abraham soon after first encountering them. According to Phelps, Smith “soon knew what they were and said they, the ‘rolls of papyrus,’ contained the sacred record kept of Joseph in Pharaoh’s Court in Egypt, and the teachings of Father Abraham.” Phelps further implied that Smith was planning to translate the papyri, if he had not already begun to do so.⁹⁷ Some years later, Willard Richards wrote in Joseph Smith’s history that Smith, Phelps, and Cowdery “commenced Translation of some of the Characters” presumably soon after the papyri and mummies were purchased.⁹⁸ According to Richards, the work of “translating an alphabet to the Book of Abraham, and arranging a grammar of the Egyptian language as practiced by the ancients” continued through the end of July.⁹⁹ But the work quickly dropped off. In mid-September, Phelps declared, “Nothing has been doing in the translation of the Egyptian Record for a long time, and probably will not for some time to come.”¹⁰⁰

By October, the efforts had recommenced. Joseph Smith’s second journal, which began 22 September 1835, mentioned work on the decipherment of the papyri seven times from October through November 1835. On 1 October, the journal recorded that Smith, Cowdery, and Phelps “labored on the Egyptian alphabet.”¹⁰¹ One week later, the journal states that Smith had “recommenced translating the ancient records.”¹⁰² Five more times in late November, Smith and likely Phelps and Parrish were occupied either in “translating” or in “transcribing Egyptian characters from the papyrus.”¹⁰³ The work, however, seemed to end during winter 1835–1836 as other activities apparently took precedence, including setting up a school to study Hebrew.¹⁰⁴

While no evidence exists that Joseph Smith and his clerks worked on either the Egyptian-language documents or the Book of Abraham between late 1835 and early 1842, Smith showed the mummies and papyri to visitors and preached to audiences on doctrine from the Book of Abraham.¹⁰⁵ Following the dedication of the House of the Lord in Kirtland in spring 1836, the papyri and mummies were housed in the attic of that building.¹⁰⁶ Several attempts were made in Kirtland to publish

“the Egyptian records,” even though the Book of Abraham text was apparently not yet complete.¹⁰⁷

In the wake of financial crisis, legal threats, and internal dissent, Joseph Smith abruptly fled Kirtland in early 1838, leaving the mummies, the papyri, and the Egyptian language and Book of Abraham manuscripts in Kirtland for others to transport to Missouri.¹⁰⁸ When the mummies and the documents arrived in Missouri a few months later, Smith “was much pleased,” and a group of roughly ten people then read aloud from the records for two hours.¹⁰⁹ Despite Smith’s apparent desire to continue the translation in Missouri, the burden of developing a new church headquarters in Far West, Missouri, while also establishing new Mormon settlements in northwestern Missouri consumed most of his time in spring and summer 1838.¹¹⁰ And by fall 1838, Smith and the Saints were embroiled in a violent conflict with other Missourians. The conflict ended with Joseph Smith’s arrest and the violent expulsion of thousands of Latter-day Saints from Missouri. By the time of the expulsion, each clerk who had assisted Smith in the translation of the Book of Abraham and Egyptian-language project had either left the church or been subject to church discipline.¹¹¹ After spending the winter of 1838–1839 in state custody, Smith arrived in Illinois in early 1839.¹¹² After a year, he was actively seeking time to “engage, more particularly, in the spiritual welfare of the Saints & also, to the translating of the Egyptian Records.”¹¹³ By 1841, Smith had still not realized his wish to continue the work and stated that the “twelve should be called upon to stand in their place next to the first presidency,” to conduct business so that “he might attend to the business of translating.”¹¹⁴ Though he apparently was not translating, Smith welcomed visitors to view the papyri, the mummies, and the associated manuscripts in Nauvoo.¹¹⁵

Joseph Smith officially took over the editorship of the church-owned newspaper *Times and Seasons* starting with the 1 March 1842 issue, about the same time that he resumed his translation of the Book of Abraham. Wilford Woodruff, who assisted in the *Times and Seasons* office, wrote in his journal in mid-February 1842, “Joseph has had these records in his possession for several years, but has never presented them before the world in the english language untill now. But he is now about to publish

it to the world or parts of it by publishing it in the *Times & Seasons*.¹¹⁶ In a letter written in early March 1842, Smith stated, “I am now very busily engaged in Translating, and therefore cannot give as much time to Public matters as I could wish.”¹¹⁷ During this period, Willard Richards created a copy of one of the Kirtland-era Book of Abraham manuscripts (what is now Abraham 1:1–2:18) and apparently acted as scribe for the creation of an additional Book of Abraham manuscript (the remainder of the extant text) and the extant explanations of the vignettes that were published as Facsimiles 1, 2, and 3.¹¹⁸

The Book of Abraham text was published in two issues of the *Times and Seasons* (dated 1 March 1842 and 15 March 1842); those two issues and the 16 May 1842 issue also contained facsimiles of the vignettes, or illustrations, found on the papyri.¹¹⁹ After those three issues, publication of the Book of Abraham ceased. Almost a year later, the *Times and Seasons* noted that Joseph Smith had promised “to furnish us with further extracts from the Book of Abraham,” but no more excerpts were published in the *Times and Seasons* or elsewhere.¹²⁰ Smith and others also had conversations about finishing and printing the Grammar and Alphabet volume, but it was never published.¹²¹

Latter-day Saints received the Book of Abraham eagerly. Wilford Woodruff wrote to fellow apostle Parley P. Pratt in 1842, declaring, “The Saints abroad manifest much interest in the Book of Abraham in the T[imes] & Seasons[.] it will be continud as fast as Joseph gets time to translate.”¹²² James Gordon Bennett published in the *New York Herald* an excerpt from the Book of Abraham, which he wrote was “set down as a revelation among the Mormons.” In addition to the excerpt, Bennett published a wide-ranging commentary on the Book of Abraham and on Joseph Smith’s prophetic claims. “While modern philosophy, which believes in nothing but what you can touch, is overspreading the Atlantic States,” Bennett wrote, “Joe Smith is creating a spiritual system, combined also with morals and industry, that may change the destiny of the race.”¹²³

After Joseph Smith’s death in 1844, the mummies and most of the papyri remained with Smith’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith, while the majority of the extant

manuscripts of the Book of Abraham and the Egyptian-language project remained with Brigham Young and the church he led to Utah. Following Lucy Mack Smith's death in 1856, Joseph Smith's widow Emma Smith sold the mummies and papyri to Abel Combs, who divided the collection.^[124] Some of the artifacts went to the Chicago Museum (renamed Wood's Museum in 1864), where they were destroyed in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Other fragments made their way to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, which transferred the papyrus fragments to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1967.^[125] In the 1930s, Mormon collector Wilford C. Wood acquired several pages of a Book of Abraham manuscript, which Wood later donated to the church, from the son of Emma Smith's second husband, Lewis C. Bidamon.^[126] While the extant manuscripts and fragments of papyrus are currently housed in the Church History Library, it is certain that the majority of the papyri originally purchased in 1835 are missing.^[127] It is also clear that other manuscripts related to the Book of Abraham and perhaps the study of the Egyptian language were created by Smith or his associates but are no longer extant.^[128]

The Book of Abraham typifies Joseph Smith's experience as revelator and translator—Smith sought divine truth from his own age and from ancient documents, recorded that truth in a scriptural text, and imparted it to his people and the world. Understanding his efforts to decipher the Egyptian language adds nuance and detail to the complex story of the translation of the Book of Abraham.

[1] For an overview of Joseph Smith's various translation projects, see "Joseph Smith as Revelator and Translator."

[2] When first published, the Book of Abraham was called "A TRANSLATION Of some ancient Records." (Book of Abraham and Facsimiles, 1 Mar.–16 May 1842; see also Warren Parrish, Kirtland, OH, 5 Feb. 1838, Letter to the Editor, *Painesville [OH] Republican*, 15 Feb. 1838, [3].)

Painesville Republican. Painesville, OH. 1836–1841.

[3] Woodruff, Journal, 19 Feb. 1842.

Woodruff, Wilford. Journals, 1833–1898. Wilford Woodruff, Journals and Papers, 1828–1898. CHL. MS 1352.

[4] "Egyptian Papyri, ca. 300–100 BC."

[5] “Notebooks of Copied Egyptian Characters, ca. Early July 1835”; “Copies of Egyptian Characters, ca. Summer 1835”; “Egyptian Alphabet Documents, ca. Early July–ca. Nov. 1835”; Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language, ca. July–ca. Nov. 1835. Hieratic was a cursive system of hieroglyphs.

[6] “Book of Abraham Manuscripts, ca. July–ca. Nov. 1835”; “Book of Abraham Manuscripts, ca. Feb.–ca. 15 Mar. 1842”; Book of Abraham and Facsimiles, 1 Mar.–16 May 1842.

[7] Most scholars who have studied the Book of Breathing for Horos, one of the papyrus rolls purchased in 1835, estimate that it originally measured between 150 and 156 centimeters, though one scholar posits that the roll could have been as long as about 1,300 centimeters. The extant portion is roughly 66 centimeters long. Scholars have estimated that the other roll purchased in 1835, the Book of the Dead for Semminis, was either about 300 or about 700 centimeters long; only 92 centimeters survive. (Cook and Smith, “Original Length of the Scroll of Hôr,” 36; Rhodes, *Hor Book of Breathings*, 4; Ritner, *Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri*, 87; Gee, “Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri,” 121–122; Gee, *Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 10, 12; Rhodes, *Books of the Dead*, 11; Gee, “Formulas and Faith,” 61.)

Cook, Andrew W., and Christopher C. Smith. “The Original Length of the Scroll of Hôr.” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 43, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 1–42.

Rhodes, Michael D. *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary*. Studies in the Book of Abraham, edited by John Gee. Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2002.

Ritner, Robert K. *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition, P. JS 1–4 and the Hypocephalus of Sheshonq*. Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2011.

Gee, John. “Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri.” *FARMS Review* 20, no. 1 (2008): 113–137.

Gee, John. *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*. Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2000.

Rhodes, Michael D. *Books of the Dead Belonging to Tshemmin and Neferirnub: A Translation and Commentary*. Studies in the Book of Abraham 4. Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, 2010.

Gee, John. “Formulas and Faith.” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 21, no. 1 (2012): 60–65.

[8] See “Egyptian Papyri, ca. 300–100 BC.”

[9] Fragment of Book of Breathing for Horos–A and –B, between 238 and ca. 153 BC.

[10] Fragments of Book of the Dead for Semminis–A, –B, and –C, ca. 300–100 BC; Miscellaneous Scraps of Book of the Dead for Semminis, ca. 300–100 BC.

[11] Fragment of Book of the Dead for Nefer-ir-nebu, ca. 300–100 BC. Horos and Semminis are the Greek versions of the Egyptian *Hr* and *Ti-šr.t-Min*, respectively. Nefer-ir-nebu is a transliteration of *Nfr-ir(.t)-nbw*. (See Gee, *Introduction to the Book of Abraham*, 58; Ritner, *Joseph Smith Egyptian*

Papyri, 205; and Rhodes, *Hor Book of Breathings*, 1.)

Gee, John. *An Introduction to the Book of Abraham*. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2017.

Ritner, Robert K. *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition, P. JS 1–4 and the Hypocephalus of Sheshonq*. Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2011.

Rhodes, Michael D. *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary*. Studies in the Book of Abraham, edited by John Gee. Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2002.

[12] “Valuable Discovery,” ca. Early July 1835; Notebook of Copied Egyptian Characters, ca. Early July 1835; Copies of Egyptian Characters, ca. Summer 1835–A, –B, and –C; Copy of Hypocephalus, between ca. July 1835 and ca. Mar. 1842.

[13] Egyptian Alphabet, ca. Early July–ca. Nov. 1835–A, –B, and –C.

[14] Egyptian Counting, ca. Early July–ca. Nov. 1835.

[15] Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language, ca. July–ca. Nov. 1835.

[16] See “Egyptian Alphabet Documents, ca. Early July–ca. Nov. 1835”; “Valuable Discovery,” ca. Early July 1835; and Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language, ca. July–ca. Nov. 1835.

[17] Book of Abraham Manuscript, ca. July–ca. Nov. 1835–A [Abraham 1:4–2:6]; Book of Abraham Manuscript, ca. July–ca. Nov. 1835–B [Abraham 1:4–2:2]; Book of Abraham Manuscript, ca. July–ca. Nov. 1835–C [Abraham 1:1–2:18].

[18] Book of Abraham Manuscript and Explanation of Facsimile 1, ca. Feb. 1842 [Abraham 1:1–2:18]; Book of Abraham Manuscript, 8–ca. 15 Mar. 1842 [Abraham 3:18–26]; see also Explanation of Facsimile 2, ca. 15 Mar. 1842.

[19] Book of Abraham and Facsimiles, 1 Mar.–16 May 1842; “A Fac-simile from the Book of Abraham, No. 2,” Second Issue, between ca. 15 Mar. 1842 and 1 Apr. 1843.

[20] Printing Plate for Facsimile 1, ca. 23 Feb.–ca. 2 Mar. 1842; Printing Plate for Facsimile 2, ca. 4–ca. 19 Mar. 1842; Printing Plate for Facsimile 3, ca. 16 May 1842.

[21] For more on Western culture’s fascination with all things Egyptian, see Irwin, *American Hieroglyphics*; Wilson, *Signs and Wonders upon Pharaoh*; Curl, *Egyptomania*; and Day, *Mummy’s Curse*.

Irwin, John T. *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980.

Wilson, John A. *Signs and Wonders upon Pharaoh: A History of American Egyptology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Curl, James Stevens. *Egyptomania. The Egyptian Revival: A Recurring Theme in the History of Taste*. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1994.

Day, Jasmine. *The Mummy's Curse: Mummymania in the English-Speaking World*. London: Routledge, 2006.

[22] Iversen, *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs*, 38–145; Irwin, *American Hieroglyphics*.

Iversen, Erik. *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Irwin, John T. *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980.

[23] Iversen, *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs*, 102–103; Thompson, *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*, 16, 19; see also Brown, “Joseph (Smith) in Egypt,” 54–55.

Iversen, Erik. *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Thompson, Jason. *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992.

Brown, Samuel. “Joseph (Smith) in Egypt: Babel, Hieroglyphs, and the Pure Language of Eden.” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 78, no. 1 (Mar. 2009): 26–65.

[24] Iversen, *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs*, 71–73; Pope, *Story of Decipherment*, 25.

Iversen, Erik. *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Pope, Maurice. *The Story of Decipherment: From Egyptian Hieroglyphs to Maya Script*. Rev. ed. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999.

[25] Athanasii Kircheri, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, 3 vols. (Rome: Vitalis Mascardii, 1652–1654); see also Findlen, *Athanasius Kircher*, 31–34; and Stolzenberg, *Egyptian Oedipus*, 123–124.

Findlen, Paula, ed. *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Stolzenberg, Daniel. *Egyptian Oedipus: Athanasius Kircher and the Secrets of Antiquity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

[26] Iversen, *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs*, 94–99. Kircher’s work on the Egyptian hieroglyphs “represent[s] one of the last deliberate efforts to combine the total religious, philosophic, and scientific knowledge of a whole period into a grandiose vision of a living cosmology, still governed by the doctrines of Christianity.” Some scholars have recognized as important Kircher’s work on the relationship between the Egyptian language and Coptic. (Iversen, *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs*, 97; see also Pope, *Story of Decipherment*, 28–30, 37–39.)

Iversen, Erik. *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Pope, Maurice. *The Story of Decipherment: From Egyptian Hieroglyphs to Maya Script*. Rev. ed. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999.

[27] Stolzenberg, *Egyptian Oedipus*, 29–31.

Stolzenberg, Daniel. *Egyptian Oedipus: Athanasius Kircher and the Secrets of Antiquity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

[28] Pope, *Story of Decipherment*, 60–84; Iversen, *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs*, 124–145; Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code*, 66–68, 117–124, 128–130.

Pope, Maurice. *The Story of Decipherment: From Egyptian Hieroglyphs to Maya Script*. Rev. ed. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999.

Iversen, Erik. *Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Robinson, Andrew. *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

[29] See Wilson, *Signs and Wonders upon Pharaoh*, 11, 19–20.

Wilson, John A. *Signs and Wonders upon Pharaoh: A History of American Egyptology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

[30] Champollion's most extensive treatments were published posthumously in 1836 and 1841 as Jean-Francois Champollion, *Grammaire Égyptienne, ou Principes Généraux de L'écriture Sacrée Égyptienne Appliquée a la Représentation de la Langue Parlée* (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1836) and Jean-Francois Champollion, *Dictionnaire Égyptien en Écriture Hiéroglyphique* (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1841). For an overview of the state of Egyptology during Joseph Smith's lifetime, see Gee, "Joseph Smith and Ancient Egypt," 428–436.

Gee, John. "Joseph Smith and Ancient Egypt." In *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, edited by Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges, 427–448. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015.

[31] See Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language, ca. July–ca. Nov. 1835.

[32] See Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America*, 7–54; and Irwin, *American Hieroglyphs*, 3–14.

Wolfe, S. J. With Robert Singerman. *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America: Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009.

Irwin, John T. *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980.

[33] *Aurora General Advertiser* (Philadelphia), 26 Apr. 1824, quoted in Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America*, 29–30; see also "The Egyptian Mummy," *Salem (MA) Gazette*, 26 Mar. 1824, [3]; and *Gazetteer* (Philadelphia), 5 May 1824, quoted in Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America*, 30.

Wolfe, S. J. With Robert Singerman. *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America: Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009.

Salem Gazette. Salem, MA. 1825–1888.

[34] "A Few Reflections Suggested by a View of the Egyptian Mummy," quoted in Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America*, 57.

Wolfe, S. J. With Robert Singerman. *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America: Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009.

[35] Oliver Cowdery, Kirtland, OH, to William Frye, Lebanon, IL, 25 Dec. 1835, in Cowdery, Letterbook, 75.

Cowdery, Oliver. Letterbook, 1833–1838. Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

[36] See Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, 83–87.

Brown, Samuel. *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

[37] Wilson, *Signs and Wonders upon Pharaoh*, 14–16, 24–37; Thompson, *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*, 23–25.

Wilson, John A. *Signs and Wonders upon Pharaoh: A History of American Egyptology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Thompson, Jason. *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992.

[38] Peterson, *Story of the Book of Abraham*, 46–47, 54; see also Count Carlo Vidua, Cairo, Egypt, to Count Pio Vidua, 28 June 1820, in Balbo, *Lettere del Conte Carlo Vidua*, 176; and Guichard, *Lettres de Bernardino Drovetti*. For more information on Carlo Vidua, see Rossi, “American Myth in the Italian Risorgimento,” 227–235.

Peterson, H. Donl. *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995.

Balbo, Cesare, ed. *Lettere del Conte Carlo Vidua*. Vol. 2. Torino, Italy: Presso Giuseppe Pomba, 1834.

Guichard, Sylvie. *Lettres de Bernardino Drovetti consul de France à Alexandrie (1803–1830)*. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003.

Rossi, Joseph. “The American Myth in the Italian Risorgimento: The Lettere from America of Carlo Vidua.” *American Association of Teachers of Italian* 38, no. 3 (Sept. 1961): 227–235.

[39] Gee, *Introduction to the Book of Abraham*, 2.

Gee, John. *An Introduction to the Book of Abraham*. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2017.

[40] Peterson, *Story of the Book of Abraham*, 67–85; Giovanni Meuta to Pietro Lebolo, Power of Attorney, 30 July 1831, photocopy, H. Donl Peterson, Research Collection on the Book of Abraham Papyri, BYU.

Peterson, H. Donl. *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995.

Peterson, H. Donl. Research Collection on the Book of Abraham Papyri, 1964–1994. BYU.

[41] Giovanni Meuta to Pietro Lebolo, Power of Attorney, 30 July 1831, photocopy, H. Donl Peterson, Research Collection on the Book of Abraham Papyri, BYU; see also Pietro Lebolo to Bertola Francesco, Power of Attorney, 5 Oct. 1833, photocopy, H. Donl Peterson, Research Collection on the Book of Abraham Papyri, BYU; and Peterson, *Story of the Book of Abraham*, 78–79.

Peterson, H. Donl. Research Collection on the Book of Abraham Papyri, 1964–1994. BYU.

Peterson, H. Donl. *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995.

[42] Giovanni Meuta to Pietro Lebolo, Power of Attorney, 30 July 1831, photocopy; Pietro Lebolo to Bertola Francesco, Power of Attorney, 5 Oct. 1833, photocopy, H. Donl Peterson, Research Collection on the Book of Abraham Papyri, BYU; Peterson, *Story of the Book of Abraham*, 78–87.

Peterson, H. Donl. Research Collection on the Book of Abraham Papyri, 1964–1994. BYU.

Peterson, H. Donl. *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995.

[43] Oliver Cowdery, Kirtland, OH, to William Frye, Lebanon, IL, 22 Dec. 1835, in Cowdery, Letterbook, 69–70.

Cowdery, Oliver. Letterbook, 1833–1838. Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

[44] Joseph Coc, Kirtland, OH, to JS, Nauvoo, IL, 1 Jan. 1844, JS Collection, CHL.

[45] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America*, 98–107. For instance, in early 1834 Junius Brutus Booth, a famous stage actor and the father of John Wilkes Booth, purchased two of the mummies for an unknown price.

Wolfe, S. J. With Robert Singerman. *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America: Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009.

[46] “Egyptian Mummies,” *Cleveland Daily Advertiser*, 26 Mar. 1835.

Cleveland Advertiser. Cleveland. 1831–1838.

[47] William W. Phelps stated that Chandler entered Kirtland “the last of June.” John Whitmer stated that he came “about the first of July.”

(William W. Phelps, Kirtland, OH, to Sally Waterman Phelps, Liberty, MO, 19 and 20 July 1835, in Phelps, “Letters of Faith from Kirtland,” 529; Whitmer, History, 76.)

Phelps, Leah Y. “Letters of Faith from Kirtland.” *Improvement Era* 45, no. 8 (Aug. 1942): 529.

[48] “History of Provo City,” 283. John Riggs recalled that his father sent him to retrieve Joseph Smith to view the mummies and papyri. Riggs “was present when the Prophet first saw the papyrus from which is translated the Book of Abraham.” Chandler likely stayed at the Kirtland Hotel run by Jacob Bump. In the F. G. Williams & Co. cash book kept by Oliver Cowdery, an entry dated 3 July 1835 documents that someone spent 68½ cents “to see the mummies.” (“History of Provo City,” 283; F. G. Williams & Co., Account Book, 2 [second numbering]; see also Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 413.)

Tullidge, Edward W. “History of Provo City.” *Tullidge’s Quarterly Magazine* 3, no. 3 (July 1884): 233–285.

F. G. Williams & Co. Account Book, 1833–1835. CHL.

Staker, Mark L. *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting of Joseph Smith’s Ohio Revelations*. Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2009.

[49] Oliver Cowdery mentioned that Smith also showed Chandler the characters that were copied from the Book of Mormon plates. (Oliver Cowdery, Kirtland, OH, to William Frye, Lebanon, IL, 22 Dec. 1835, in Cowdery, Letterbook, 72.)

Cowdery, Oliver. Letterbook, 1833–1838. Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

[50] O. Cowdery to W. Frye, 22 Dec. 1835, 69.

Cowdery, Oliver. Letterbook, 1833–1838. Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

[51] O. Cowdery to W. Frye, 22 Dec. 1835, 71; see also “Notebooks of Copied Egyptian Characters, ca. Early July 1835.”

Cowdery, Oliver. Letterbook, 1833–1838. Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

[52] Certificate from Michael Chandler, 6 July 1835. This exchange took place within a week of Chandler’s arrival in Kirtland but “previous to the purchase of the antiquities.” (O. Cowdery to W. Frye, 22 Dec. 1835, 72; see also “History of Provo City,” 283.)

Cowdery, Oliver. Letterbook, 1833–1838. Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Tullidge, Edward W. “History of Provo City.” *Tullidge’s Quarterly Magazine* 3, no. 3 (July 1884): 233–285.

[53] See John Redman Coxe, E. H. Rivinus, Richard Harlan, J. Pencoast, William P. C. Barton, and Samuel G. Morgan, Certificate of Authenticity, no date, quoted in O. Cowdery to W. Frye, 22 Dec. 1835, 71; and Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America*, 42, 88.

Cowdery, Oliver. Letterbook, 1833–1838. Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Wolfe, S. J. With Robert Singerman. *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America: Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009.

[54] See Certificate from Michael Chandler, 6 July 1835.

[55] See Historical Introduction to Certificate from Michael Chandler, 6 July 1835; and MacKay and Dirkmaat, *From Darkness unto Light*, 44.

MacKay, Michael Hubbard, and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat. *From Darkness unto Light: Joseph Smith’s Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon*. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015.

[56] Joseph Coe, Kirtland, OH, to JS, Nauvoo, IL, 1 Jan. 1844, JS Collection, CHL; see also Lewis C. Bidamon, Emma Smith Bidamon, and Joseph Smith III to Abel Combs, Certificate of Sale, Nauvoo, IL, 26 May 1856, CHL; and Albert Brown to “Dear Parents,” 1 Nov. 1835, Amos L. Underwood, Correspondence, CHL. The purchasers did not pay Chandler in full at the time of sale. In spring 1836, Chandler agreed to take a \$1,000 note from JS in order to surrender the remainder of Coe’s notes. According to Coe, the financial settlement was not resolved by the time Smith and his family left Kirtland in early 1838. Coe wrote to Smith in January 1844, still trying to settle the arrangement in exchange for land or use of JS’s Kirtland farm. JS responded to Coe stating that he (Coe) held no claim on the mummies because JS held a deed, executed by Coe, turning over Coe’s interest in them. (J. Coe to JS, 1 Jan. 1844; JS, Nauvoo, IL, to Joseph Coe, Kirtland, OH, 18 Jan. 1844, copy, JS Collection, CHL.)

Bidamon, Lewis C., Emma Smith Bidamon, and Joseph Smith III. Certificate of Sale to Abel Combs, Nauvoo, IL, 26 May 1856. CHL.

Underwood, Amos L. Correspondence, 1831–1853. CHL.

[57] Coe told Joseph Smith that the mummies “wer valued at some 2 or 300 dollars, but they [the owners in Philadelphia] sued him [Chandler] and was allowed the sum which he sold them to me for viz. \$2400.” Establishing the market value of mummies at the time is difficult. In 1829, a court awarded \$1,200 to three men whose mummy had been destroyed. But the market fluctuated. Philadelphia newspapers acknowledged that the price of mummies was falling, explaining that a mummy had sold for \$1,800 in 1826 but was only worth about \$450 in 1833. As late as 1850, one of these “most valued specimens” was estimated to be worth \$1,500. Thus, four mummies could have reasonably sold for between \$400 and \$500 each. (J. Coe to JS, 1 Jan. 1844; Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America*, 59; Advertisement, *Philadelphia Daily Chronicle*, 20 May 1833; Advertisement, *Philadelphia Saturday Courier*, 25 May 1833, quoted in Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America*, 101–102; “Unrolling a Mummy,” *State Gazette* [Trenton, NJ], 13 May 1850, [4]; for the significant drop in value, both monetarily and culturally, of the Egyptian mummies, see Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America*, 173–200.)

Wolfe, S. J. With Robert Singerman. *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America: Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009.

Daily Chronicle. Philadelphia. 1828–1834.

State Gazette. Trenton, NJ. Jan. 1840–Dec. 1898.

[58] Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 25 Aug. 1878, 20:65. Coe later remembered that Smith’s reason for purchasing the Egyptian artifacts was to produce a translation of the papyri. (J. Coe to JS, 1 Jan. 1844.)

Journal of Discourses. 26 vols. Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–1886.

[59] Albert Brown to “Dear Parents,” 1 Nov. 1835, Amos L. Underwood, Correspondence, CHL.

Underwood, Amos L. Correspondence, 1831–1853. CHL.

[60] “Another Humbug,” *Cleveland Whig*, 5 Aug. 1835, [1], italics in original.

Cleveland Whig. Cleveland. 1834–1836.

[61] Book of Mormon, 1830 ed., 538 [Mormon 9:32]; see also Book of Mormon, 1830 ed., 5 [1 Nephi 1:2].

[62] JS, “Church History,” *Times and Seasons*, 1 Mar. 1842, 3:707; JS History, 1839, [9]. This passage was later revised to read “same as all Hebrew wr[i]ting in general.”

[63] Oliver Cowdery, Kirtland, OH, to William Frye, Lebanon, IL, 22 Dec. 1835, in Cowdery, Letterbook, 72.

Cowdery, Oliver. Letterbook, 1833–1838. Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

[64] Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845, bk. 6, [3].

[65] Besides scriptural works—the Book of Mormon, Bible revision, and Book of Abraham—Smith translated an account in the voice of the biblical apostle John in 1829 and prepared a document in 1832 containing words from a “pure language.” (See Account of John, Apr. 1829–C [D&C 7]; and Sample of Pure Language, between ca. 4 and ca. 20 Mar. 1832.)

[66] For more information on Joseph Smith’s interest in antiquity, see Blumell et al., *Approaching Antiquity*.

Blumell, Lincoln H., Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges, eds. *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015.

[67] Book of Mormon, 1830 ed., 539–540 [Ether 1:33–37].

[68] See “Joseph Smith Documents Dating from July 1831 through January 1833.”

[69] Old Testament Revision 1, p. 11 [Moses 6:5]. At least two personal copies of the Bible revision were made by early members, including John Whitmer and Edward Partridge. (Old Testament Revision Manuscript, John Whitmer First Copy, CCLA; Old Testament Revision Manuscript, Edward Partridge Copy, CHL.)

Old Testament Revision Manuscript, Edward Partridge Copy, ca. 1830–1831. CHL.

[70] Old Testament Revision 1, p. 11 [Moses 6:6].

[71] Sample of Pure Language, between ca. 4 and ca. 20 Mar. 1832.

[72] Revelation, Apr. 1829–B [D&C 8:11]. Cowdery was given a similar promise in another revelation: “There are records which contain much of my gospel, which have been kept back because of the wickedness of the people; and now I command you, that if you have good desires, a desire to lay up treasures for yourself in heaven, then shall you assist in bringing to light, with your gift, those parts of my scriptures which have been hidden because of iniquity.” (Revelation, Apr. 1829–A [D&C 6:26–27].)

[73] Letter to Church Leaders in Jackson Co., MO, 25 June 1833.

[74] JS History, vol. A-1, 80.

[75] JS, Journal, 14 Nov. 1835; Revelation, 14 Nov. 1835.

[76] See “Joseph Smith as Revelator and Translator”; and “Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon”.

[77] Preface to Book of Mormon, ca. Aug. 1829. When invited to speak on the “coming forth of the book of Mormon” on one occasion, Smith declined, saying that “it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the book of Mormon.” (Minutes, 25–26 Oct. 1831.)

[78] “Golden Bible,” *Gem, of Literature and Science* (Rochester, NY), 5 Sept. 1829, 70; see also “Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon”. Harris took a copy of the characters from the gold plates to New York City, where he visited prominent scholars Charles Anthon, Samuel L. Mitchell, and

Luthor Bradish; Anthon was a classics scholar, while Mitchill was considered an authority on Native American languages and artifacts; Bradish had visited Egypt and was familiar with several Middle Eastern languages. Harris visited Bradish first because they were already acquainted and Bradish had contacts among other scholars. (Bennett, “Very Particular Friend,” 63–73; see also MacKay, “Git Them Translated,” 85–104; MacKay and Dirkmaat, *From Darkness unto Light*, 41, 44, 47–48, 57n38; Bennett, “Read This I Pray Thee,” 187–189; and Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America*, 47.)

Gem, of Literature and Science. Rochester, NY. 1829–1833.

Bennett, Richard E. “‘Very Particular Friend’: Luther Bradish.” In *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, edited by Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges, 63–82. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015.

MacKay, Michael Hubbard. “‘Git Them Translated’: Translating the Characters on the Gold Plates.” In *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, edited by Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges, 83–116. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015.

MacKay, Michael Hubbard, and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat. *From Darkness unto Light: Joseph Smith’s Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon*. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015.

Bennett, Richard E. “‘Read This I Pray Thee’: Martin Harris and the Three Wise Men of the East.” *Journal of Mormon History* 36 (Winter 2010): 178–216.

Wolfe, S. J. With Robert Singerman. *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America: Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009.

[79] See, for instance, Joseph Smith III, “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald*, 1 Oct. 1879, 290.

Saints’ Herald. Independence, MO. 1860–.

[80] See “Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon”.

[81] Revelation, Apr. 1829–D [D&C 9:8].

[82] See, for example, JS History, vol. A-1, 10; Revelation, 6 June 1831 [D&C 52]; and Letter to the Church, ca. Feb. 1834.

[83] See Matthews, *Plainer Translation*, 252–253.

Matthews, Robert J. “A Plainer Translation”: *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible, a History and Commentary*. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1985.

[84] Wayment, “Intertextuality and the Purpose of Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible,” 94–97; Wayment and Wilson, “Recently Recovered Source,” 2–7. For more information on the Bible revision project, see Faulring et al., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible*, 3–45.

Wayment, Thomas A. "Intertextuality and the Purpose of Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible." In *Foundational Texts of Mormonism*, edited by Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen, and Sharalyn D. Howcroft, 74–100. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Wayment, Thomas A., and Haley Wilson. "A Recently Recovered Source: Rethinking Joseph Smith's Bible Translation." Unpublished paper. Copy in editors' possession.

Faulring, Scott H., Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds. *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts*. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004.

[85] Joseph Smith's journal describes these projects as concerning "the Egyptian alphabet" and "translating the Egyptian records." (JS, Journal, 1 Oct. and 19 Nov. 1835.)

[86] Warren Parrish, Kirtland, OH, 5 Feb. 1832, Letter to the Editor, *Painesville (OH) Republican*, 15 Feb. 1838, [3]. This statement, which was written after Parrish left the church, could refer to Smith's work on either the Book of Abraham translation or the Egyptian-language documents.

Painesville Republican. Painesville, OH. 1836–1841.

[87] Oliver Cowdery, Kirtland, OH, to William Frye, Lebanon, IL, 22 Dec. 1835, in Cowdery, Letterbook, 74.

Cowdery, Oliver. Letterbook, 1833–1838. Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

[88] Whitmer, History, 76.

[89] See, for instance, Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 25 Aug. 1878, 20:65. Joseph Smith and his followers used the term *Urim and Thummim* to refer both to the Nephite interpreters that Smith said he found with the gold plates and to his seer stone. No evidence places the interpreters in Smith's possession following the 1829 experience of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon seeing the gold plates, interpreters, and other Book of Mormon artifacts; this reference, therefore, almost certainly refers to his seer stone. (See [William W. Phelps], "The Book of Mormon," *The Evening and the Morning Star*, Jan. 1833, [2]; "Questions Proposed to the Mormonite Preachers," *Boston Investigator*, 10 Aug. 1832; and E. C. Briggs, Chicago, IL, to Joseph Smith III, 4 June 1884, in *Saints' Herald*, 21 June 1884, 396–397.)

Journal of Discourses. 26 vols. Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–1886.

The Evening and the Morning Star. Independence, MO, June 1832–July 1833; Kirtland, OH, Dec. 1833–Sept. 1834.

Boston Investigator. Boston. 1831–1904.

Saints' Herald. Independence, MO. 1860–.

[90] Woodruff, Journal, 19 Feb. 1842.

Woodruff, Wilford. Journals, 1833–1898. Wilford Woodruff, Journals and Papers, 1828–1898. CHL. MS 1352.

[91] Editorial, *LDS Millennial Star*, July 1842, 3:47.

Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star. Manchester, England, 1840–1842; Liverpool, 1842–1932; London, 1932–1970.

[92] Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 10 July 1859, 7:176.

Journal of Discourses. 26 vols. Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–1886.

[93] See “Notebooks of Copied Egyptian Characters, ca. Early July 1835”; and “Copies of Egyptian Characters, ca. Summer 1835.”

[94] See “Egyptian Alphabet Documents, ca. Early July–ca. Nov. 1835”; and *Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language*, ca. July–ca. Nov. 1835.

[95] See, for example, Muhlestein, “Joseph Smith and Egyptian Artifacts,” 53–81; and Ritner, *Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri*, 3–9.

Muhlestein, Kerry M. “Joseph Smith and Egyptian Artifacts: A Model for Evaluating the Prophetic Nature of the Prophet’s Ideas about the Ancient World.” *BYU Studies* 55, no. 3 (2016): 35–82.

Ritner, Robert K. *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition, P. JS 1–4 and the Hypocephalus of Sheshonq*. Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2011.

[96] See Smith, “Dependence of Abraham 1:1–3 on the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar,” 43–52.

Smith, Christopher C. “The Dependence of Abraham 1:1–3 on the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar.” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 29 (2009): 38–54.

[97] William W. Phelps, Kirtland, OH, to Sally Waterman Phelps, Liberty, MO, 19 and 20 July 1835, in Phelps, “Letters of Faith from Kirtland,” 529. Joseph Coe also remembered the translation was expected to be published in a volume that the Saints would sell to recoup the costs of purchasing of the artifacts. (Joseph Coe, Kirtland, OH, to JS, Nauvoo, IL, 1 Jan. 1844, JS Collection, CHL.)

Phelps, Leah Y. “Letters of Faith from Kirtland.” *Improvement Era* 45, no. 8 (Aug. 1942): 529.

[98] JS History, vol. B-1, 596. Richards likely had input from Phelps when he recorded this portion of Joseph Smith’s multivolume manuscript history. There is no evidence Joseph Smith read, approved, or corrected this passage. (Richards, *Journal*, 15–16 Sept. 1843; see also Vogel, *History of Joseph Smith*, 2:240.)

Richards, Willard. *Journals, 1836–1853*. Willard Richards, Papers, 1821–1854. CHL. MS 1490, boxes 1–2.

Vogel, Dan, ed. *History of Joseph Smith and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: A Source and Text-Critical Edition*. 8 vols. Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2015.

[99] JS History, vol. B-1, 597.

[100] William W. Phelps, Kirtland, OH, to Sally Waterman Phelps, Liberty, MO, 11 Sept. 1835, William W. Phelps, Papers, BYU; see also “Part 4: July–September 1835”.

Phelps, William W. Papers, 1835–1865. BYU.

[101] JS, Journal, 1 Oct. 1835.

[102] JS, Journal, 7 Oct. 1835.

[103] JS, Journal, 19, 24, and 26 Nov. 1835. On 20 and 25 November, Smith simply said he “spent the day in Translating,” which likely indicated work on the Book of Abraham. Some of this translation work would have been dictated to someone else—possibly his scribe Warren Parrish, as Oliver Cowdery was out of town until the evening of 20 November. (JS, Journal, 20 and 25 Nov. 1835.)

[104] The Hebrew school began on 4 January 1836. On 20 November 1835, Oliver Cowdery brought a number of Hebrew books to Kirtland for the planned Hebrew school. The following day, Joseph Smith began studying Hebrew in earnest. Smith may have believed that the Egyptian and Hebrew languages were related. Hebrew words from Smith’s Hebrew manual appear in the portion of the Book of Abraham translated in Nauvoo, as well as in the explanations of the facsimiles. (JS, Journal, 20 and 21 Nov. 1835; 4 Jan. 1836; Book of Abraham and Facsimiles, 1 Mar.–16 May 1842; Book of Abraham Manuscript and Explanation of Facsimile 1, ca. Feb. 1842 [Abraham 1:1–2:18]; Explanation of Facsimile 2, ca. 15 Mar. 1842; see also Grey, “Word of the Lord in the Original,” 249–275; and Brown, “Joseph [Smith] in Egypt,” 26–65.)

Grey, Matthew J. “‘The Word of the Lord in the Original’: Joseph Smith’s Study of Hebrew in Kirtland.” In *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, edited by Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges, 249–302. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015.

Brown, Samuel. “Joseph (Smith) in Egypt: Babel, Hieroglyphs, and the Pure Language of Eden.” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 78, no. 1 (Mar. 2009): 26–65.

[105] See, for example, JS, Journal, 16 Dec. 1835; William Appleby, Journal, 5 May 1841, as published in “Journal of a Mormon,” *Christian Observer*, 10 Sept. 1841, 146; and Kesler, Diary, 18 Apr. 1879. Church member Elizabeth Haven wrote that at the October 1839 general conference, JS discussed “some very interesting facts which he has lately translated from the records which came with the Mummies.” It is likely that JS was referencing the portion of the Book of Abraham that was produced in Kirtland. (Elizabeth Haven, Quincy, IL, to Elizabeth Howe Bullard, Holliston, MA, 21, 28, and 30 Sept. 1839; 6–10, 13, 15, and 17 Oct. 1839, Barlow Family Collection, CHL.)

Christian Observer. Philadelphia. 1840–1861.

Kesler, Frederick. Diary, 1877–1881. Frederick Kesler, Papers, 1829–1985. Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Barlow Family Collection, 1816–1969. CHL.

[106] Foote, Autobiography, 13 May 1837; see also Minutes and Prayer of Dedication, 27 Mar. 1836 [D&C 109].

Foote, Warren. Autobiography, not before 1903. Warren Foote, Papers, 1837–1941. CHL. MS 1123, fd. 1.

[107] At a meeting on 27 September 1837, the subject of “printing the Egyptian records” was brought up, and it was decided that “means might be obtained to carry the same into effect.” A few months later, Willard Richards and Reuben Hedlock were assigned to procure “means to translate & print those records taken from the chatacombs of Egypt, now in the temple.” The support at this meeting was “full & prompt to confirm the same.” Shortly after the dedication of the House of the Lord, the mummies and papyri appear to have been separated for a time, and they were entangled in Joseph Smith’s financial and legal difficulties in Kirtland. Hepzibah Richards wrote to Willard Richards in January 1838, stating that “the Mummies and records have been attached— mummies sold— Records missing.” (Record of Seventies, bk. A, 27 Sept. 1837, 35; Minute Book 1, 5 Nov. 1837; Hepzibah Richards, Kirtland, OH, to Willard Richards, Bedford, England, 18–19 Jan. 1838, Willard Richards, Papers, CHL; see also Mortgage to Mead, Stafford & Co., 11 July 1837; and Agreement, 4 Jan. 1838.)

Record of Seventies / First Council of the Seventy. “Book of Records,” 1837–1843. Bk. A. In First Council of the Seventy, Records, 1837–1885. CHL. CR 3 51, box 1, fd. 1.

Richards, Willard. Papers, 1821–1854. CHL. MS 1490.

[108] For more on conditions in Ohio in early 1838, see “Joseph Smith Documents from February 1838 through August 1839”.

[109] “Copied from the Journal of Anson Call,” 4; see also Swartzell, *Mormonism Exposed*, 9. Church member Anson Call stated that the group read from “the Book of Abraham.” The existing text of the Book of Abraham is relatively short and likely would not take two hours to read. If accurate, therefore, Call’s recollection of reading for two hours would imply either that they read additional Book of Abraham material that is no longer extant or that a lengthy conversation took place along with the reading. It is also possible that Call did not know or failed to state that they were reading from multiple records. He began the anecdote by saying that he brought both the “translation of the Bible and the Egyptian Records” to Joseph Smith. (“Copied from the Journal of Anson Call,” 3.)

Call, Anson. “Copied from the Journal of Anson Call,” 1879. CHL. MS 4783.

Swartzell, William. *Mormonism Exposed, Being a Journal of a Residence in Missouri from the 28th of May to the 20th of August, 1838, Together with an Appendix, Containing the Revelation concerning the Golden Bible, with Numerous Extracts from the ‘Book of Covenants,’ &c., &c.* Pekin, OH: By the author, 1840.

[110] One former member recalled workers building a home for Smith in July 1838 “in which he intends translating the heiroglyphics of the Egyptian mummies.” (Swartzell, *Mormonism Exposed*, 25.)

Swartzell, William. *Mormonism Exposed, Being a Journal of a Residence in Missouri from the 28th of May to the 20th of August, 1838, Together with an Appendix, Containing the Revelation concerning the Golden Bible, with Numerous Extracts from the ‘Book of Covenants,’ &c., &c.* Pekin, OH: By the author, 1840.

[111] Frederick G. Williams was removed from the church presidency in November 1837 and apparently later excommunicated, Warren Parrish was excommunicated from the church in December 1837, William W. Phelps was excommunicated in March 1838, and Oliver Cowdery was

excommunicated in April 1838. (Minutes, 7 Nov. 1837; JS, Journal, 5 Aug. 1838; John Smith and Clarissa Lyman Smith, Kirtland, OH, to George A. Smith, Shinnston, VA, 1 Jan. 1838, George Albert Smith, Papers, CHL; Thomas B. Marsh, Far West, MO, to Wilford Woodruff, Vinalhaven, ME, ca. 18 June 1838, Wilford Woodruff, Journals and Papers, CHL; Minute Book 2, 10 Mar. 1838; Minutes, 12 Apr. 1838.)

Smith, George Albert. Papers, 1834–1877. CHL. MS 1322.

Woodruff, Wilford. Journals and Papers, 1828–1898. CHL. MS 1352.

[112] See “Joseph Smith Documents from February 1838 through August 1839”.

[113] Nauvoo High Council Minutes, fair copy, 20 June 1840, 61.

Nauvoo High Council Minutes, fair copy / Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Oct. 1839–Dec. 1840. In Oliver Cowdery Diary, Jan.–Mar. 1836. CHL. MS 3429.

[114] “Conference Minutes,” *Times and Seasons*, 1 Sept. 1841, 2:521–522.

Times and Seasons. Commerce/Nauvoo, IL. Nov. 1839–Feb. 1846.

[115] William Appleby, Journal, 5 May 1841, as published in “Journal of a Mormon,” *Christian Observer*, 10 Sept. 1841, 146.

Christian Observer. Philadelphia. 1840–1861.

[116] Woodruff, Journal, 19 Feb. 1842.

Woodruff, Wilford. Journals, 1833–1898. Wilford Woodruff, Journals and Papers, 1828–1898. CHL. MS 1352.

[117] JS, Nauvoo, IL, to Edward Hunter, West Nantmeal, PA, 9 and 11 Mar. 1842, JS Collection, CHL.

[118] See “Book of Abraham Manuscripts, ca. Feb.–ca. 15 Mar. 1842.”

[119] Book of Abraham and Facsimiles, 1 Mar.–16 May 1842.

[120] “Notice,” *Times and Seasons*, 1 Feb. 1843, 4:95.

Times and Seasons. Commerce/Nauvoo, IL. Nov. 1839–Feb. 1846.

[121] JS, Journal, 13 and 15 Nov. 1843.

[122] Wilford Woodruff, Nauvoo, IL, to Parley P. Pratt, Liverpool, England, 16 June 1842, Parley P. Pratt, Correspondence, CHL.

Pratt, Parley P. Correspondence, 1842–1855. CHL. MS 897.

[123] “The Mormons—A Leaf from Joe Smith,” *New York Herald*, 3 Apr. 1842, [2].

New York Herald. New York City. 1835–1924.

[124] Lewis C. Bidamon, Emma Smith Bidamon, and Joseph Smith III to Abel Combs, Certificate of Sale, Nauvoo, IL, 26 May 1856, CHL.

Bidamon, Lewis C., Emma Smith Bidamon, and Joseph Smith III. Certificate of Sale to Abel Combs, Nauvoo, IL, 26 May 1856. CHL.

[125] Peterson, *Story of the Book of Abraham*, 203–216, 236–247; Todd, “Egyptian Papyri Rediscovered,” 12; Gee, “Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri,” 115–116.

Peterson, H. Donl. *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995.

Todd, Jay M. “Egyptian Papyri Rediscovered.” *Improvement Era* 71, no. 1 (January 1968): 12–16.

Gee, John. “Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri.” *FARMS Review* 20, no. 1 (2008): 113–137.

[126] Evans, “Illinois Yields Church Documents,” 543, 565; “Documents Obtained by Wilford Wood,” *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), 21 July 1937, 13.

Evans, Richard L. “Illinois Yields Church Documents.” *Improvement Era* 40, no. 9 (Sept. 1937): 543, 565, 573.

Deseret News. Salt Lake City. 1850–.

[127] For instance, only one of the three facsimiles published in Nauvoo has a corresponding extant papyrus fragment. (See “Facsimile Printing Plates and Published Book of Abraham, ca. 23 Feb.–ca. 16 May 1842”; and “Egyptian Papyri, ca. 300–100 BC”.)

[128] For instance, both Nauvoo versions of the Book of Abraham are incomplete, missing portions of the content that was eventually published in the *Times and Seasons*. (See Book of Abraham Manuscript and Explanation of Facsimile 1, ca. Feb. 1842 [Abraham 1:1–2:18]; and Book of Abraham Manuscript, 8–ca. 15 Mar. 1842 [Abraham 3:18–26].)

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