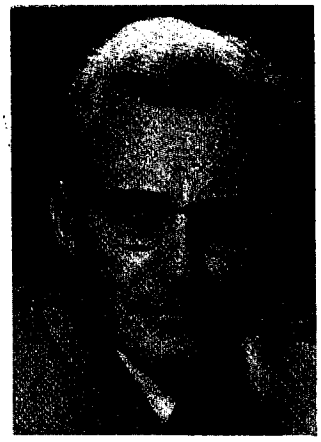
The Author and the Articles



The flood of newly discovered Jewish and Christian documents that are changing the complexion of religious studies in our time has been matched by equally significant, if less spectacular, developments in an area of no less interest to Latter-day Saints—that of the religious practices and beliefs of the Egyptians.

Recent challenges that question the authenticity of many statements in one of the standard works of the Church, the Pearl of Great Price, have reopened an old discussion at a time when fresh discoveries and interpretations are putting an entirely new face on the whole problem. Brother Hugh Nibley, who for many years has been gathering data relevant to the study of the Facsimiles in the Book of Abraham, presents in this fascinating series some of the materials that must be considered in the reappraisal of certain Egyptological aspects of the Pearl of Great Price for which the time is now ripe.

The reader is warned to be prepared for surprises. Although Dr. Nibley pulls no punches, he is still animated by a healthy respect for all qualified

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

Part I. Challenge and Response

Unsettled Business—The recent reissuing of Bishop Franklin S. Spalding's little book, *Joseph Smith, Jr., as a Translator,*[1] though not meant to revive an old discussion but rather to extinguish any lingering sparks of it, is nonetheless a welcome invitation, or rather challenge, to those who take the Pearl of Great Price seriously, for long experience has shown that the Latter-day Saints only become aware of the nature and genius of their modern scriptures when relentless and obstreperous criticism from the outside forces them to take a closer look at what they have, with the usual result of putting those scriptures in a much stronger position than they were before. We have all neglected the Pearl of Great Price for too long, and should be grateful to those who would now call us to account.

In this introductory study we make no excuse for poking around among old bones, since others have dug them up to daunt us; but we should warn them that if they insist on bringing up the ghosts of the dead, they may soon find themselves with more on their hands than they had bargained for. A lot of water has gone under the bridge since

Egyptologists, including his own revered instructors, in the rudiments of the mysteries of hieroglyphics, and promises to proceed with such caution and discretion that even they will approve of his methods, however much they may disagree with his conclusions.

Dr. Nibley, who is professor of history and religion at Brigham Young University and who has been a contributing editor of The Improvement Era *for 22 years, is eminently qualified for the project he has undertaken. In addition to his familiarity with things Egyptian, he actively uses the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Babylonian, Russian, French, German, Arabic, and Coptic languages. He is at home with primary documents and original sources.*

Dr. Nibley's writings include nine extended series of articles in The Improvement Era. *His ability has also received continued recognition in a wide variety of scholarly journals, including the* Classic Journal, Western Political Quarterly, *the* Jewish Quarterly Review, *and the* Jewish Encyclopedia.

Dr. Nibley received his B.A. in history and the classics in 1934 from the University of California at Los Angeles, where he was graduated with high honors. In 1938 he received his Ph.D. degree from the University of California at Berkeley, where he also has done post-doctoral work. He has been a university fellow in historical research at the University of California at Berkeley, lecturer in history and social philosophy at Claremont College, and visiting professor in classical rhetoric at the University of California.

"A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price" promises to be one of the most significant series of articles to appear in the pages of The Improvement Era *in recent years.* D.L.G.

One of 11 fragments of papyrus presented to the Church by New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The papyri, once in Joseph Smith's possession, are being studied.



1912, and of course many things that were said and written then with great confidence and finality would have to be revised today.

On the other hand, a careful survey of the journals will, we believe, show that the year 1912 saw more significant studies published in the field than any other year before or since; Egyptology reached a peak in 1912—it was the age of the giants. So if it should now turn out that the giants were anything but infallible, that should teach us to be wary of the scholarly dogmatism of our own day.

Nothing could be more retrograde to our desire than to call up the bearded and frock-coated savants of 1912 to go through their pompous paces all over again. But it is others who have conjured up the ghostly jury to testify against the Prophet; and unless they are given satisfaction, their sponsors can spread abroad, as they did in Bishop Spalding's day, the false report that the Scholars have spoken the final word and "completely demolished" (that was their expression) for all time the Pearl of Great Price and its author's claim to revelation.

"Of all the attacks on Mormonism, the great campaign of 1912 . . . was the one that should have succeeded

The silence of the Latter-day Saints in a matter that concerns them so vitally can only be interpreted as an abashed silence, leading many of the world and of the Saints to conclude that there is nothing to be said in Joseph Smith's behalf, than which nothing could be further from the truth. And so the sorry little saga of 1912 must needs be retold if only to forestall indefinite repetitions of what happened then as well as in 1845, 1865, and 1903.

The situation today is essentially the same as it was on all those occasions, with the Mormons, untrained in Egyptology, helpless to question on technical grounds the assertions of such experts as Deveria and E. A. W. Budge, who grandly waved their credentials for all to see, impatiently stated their opinions, and then gingerly decamped, refusing to be led into any discussion with the ignorant opposition.

And so the debate has never really come to the floor, the challengers being ever satisfied that the mere sight of their muscles should be sufficient to settle the issue without a contest. "These 'experts' have given us a lot of opinions," wrote the outsider, R. C. Webb, of the 1912 affair, "which they have not attempted to prove by authoritative demonstration. . . . We are concerned wholly with opinion, pure and simple, and not with anything that may be proved conclusively."[2]

For the benefit of those readers who may have forgotten some of the details of 1912, it may be recalled that Bishop Spalding asked eight Egyptologists what they thought of Joseph Smith's interpretation of the Facsimiles in the Pearl of Great Price. You can imagine what their answers were. Now let us take it up from there.

The Appeal to Authority—Of all attacks on Mormonism undertaken beneath the banners of science and scholarship, the great campaign of 1912 conducted by the Right Reverend F. S. Spaulding, Episcopal bishop of Utah, was the one that should have succeeded most brilliantly. Carefully planned and shrewdly executed, it enlisted the services of the most formidable roster of scholars that have ever declared against Joseph Smith as a prophet, while at the same time loudly professing feelings of nothing but affection and esteem for the Saints and a real desire to help them find the light in a spirit of high-minded dedication to truth at all costs.

Bishop Spalding's grand design had all the ingredients of quick and sure success but one, and if in spite of it the Pearl of Great Price is still being read, it is because the bishop failed to include in his tremendous barrage a single shell containing an item of solid and relevant evidence. If he has any other ammunition than names and credentials, he never uses it—he hurls at the Mormons a cannonade of titles and opinions, and nothing more. "The authority of experts in any line of research is always to be accepted without question, unless there is grave reason to doubt their conclusion. There is no such reason here."[3] And who is talking? Spalding's No. 1 expert, a young man who had just got his degree (*not* in Egyptology)—*he* tells us that we must accept his verdict "without question" because he is an expert and sees no reason to doubt his conclusions. This is what we mean by authoritarianism.

But then, who would ever have thought in 1912 that any other kind of ammunition would be necessary? What was there to say after the official voice of Scholarship had spoken? The Mormons did what they could. They pointed out that equally great authorities had been proven wrong about the Bible time and again.[4] They called attention to the brevity and superficiality of the experts' comments: "This 'inquiry,'" wrote Webb, "has been no inquiry at all in any real sense. . . . [It] presents merely a medley of opinions. . . . It furnishes absolutely no assistance to [the] reader. . . ."[5] They noted that the judges approached their task in a thoroughly hostile state of mind.[6] When an editorial in the Church newspaper pointed out in the most reserved and respectful language that there were indeed some rather obvious contradictions and discrepancies in the views of the experts, and that the Mormons might at least be permitted to ask for "a stay of final judgment," since (as B. H. Roberts expressed it) "these questions that depend on special scholarship are questions that require time and research . . . and the conclusions of the learned in such matters are not as unchangeable as they seem,"[7] the *New York Times* exploded with indignation: ". . . the Deseret Evening News spent its entire editorial page reviling scholars and scholarship."[8] One did not talk back to recognized scholars—it just wasn't done.

The *Deseret News* editorial in question pointed out that the Mormons had some years before already anticipated Bishop Spalding's investigations by making inquiries on their own among leading British Egyptologists, which "at least serves to show that we have not been lax, nor afraid to learn from whatever light the wisdom of the world might throw upon the illustrations of the Book of Abraham and their translation by the Prophet Joseph."[9]

succeeded most brilliantly."

Two days earlier an editorial in the *Deseret News* made a clear statement of policy: "The Latter-day Saints court inquiry, such as this. They want to know the truth, and only the truth. There is no important issue that they are not glad to face, whether presented by friend or foe."[10] And in the discussion that followed, the Mormons proved their good faith and sincerity by printing in the pages of *The Improvement Era* the letters of Bishop Spalding and his supporters, without deletion and without comment, along with those of the Latter-day Saints defending Joseph Smith.

There was no such dialogue in the non-Mormon periodicals in which Dr. Spalding published, including his own Utah newspaper, *The Utah Survey;* in spite of his constant protests of impartiality and intellectual integrity, only his own and like opinions ever appeared there.[11]

The Mormon writers, moreover, never claimed any such religious immunity as might have been conceded to Joseph Smith as a spiritual leader, but always insisted on arguing the case on its merits: "I allow the bishop all his claims to the dire results to 'Mormonism'" wrote B. H. Roberts, "if he can, to the point of demonstration, make his case good against Joseph Smith as a translator."[12] Bishop Spalding's scholarly band, on the other hand, most emphatically *did* claim immunity—to question them was to "revile" that noble thing called Scholarship, and that was the secret of their strength.

When Dr. S. A. B. Mercer, a hustling young clergyman who ran interference for the bishop throughout the game, summed up the case for the prosecution, his argument made a perfect circle: "The failure of the Mormon replies," he wrote, "is explained by the fact that the unanimous opinion of the scholars is unassailable. In the judgment of the scholarly world, therefore, Joseph Smith stands condemned of self-deception or imposition."[13]

Who said that the Mormon reply had "failed"? Mercer did, to be sure. Here we see the great convenience of permitting the attorney for the prosecution to act as judge. Dr. Mercer announces that the Mormon replies to him and his colleagues have failed—because he says so. And what he says must be so because his colleagues agree with him.

When the Mormons pointed out that there was anything but unanimous agreement among the colleagues, Mercer sternly overruled them, explaining that where any ordinary person might find the disagreements rather obvious, "to the expert there is here no discrepancy."[14] Only one had to be an Egyptologist to see it that way. That is why when B. H. Roberts was pressing Dr. Mercer pretty hard, the latter overruled him too, with the observation that the source of the difficulties in the case of Mr. Roberts, "is to be found in the fact that the writer is a layman in things Egyptian."[15] What Mercer's explanation amounts to, as R. C. Webb observes, is the argument "in effect, that scholars in his department can make no mistakes,"[16] or, in Mercer's own words, that their opinions are "unassailable." How can one discuss an "unassailable" opinion? One can't—that is just the point; the issue is closed; no debate is intended or possible.

In his final letter, Dr. Mercer divides the opposition into three classes: "First, intelligent and fair-minded Mormons," namely, those who do not challenge the scholars in any way; "secondly biased Mormons (perhaps unconsciously)," that is, Mormons guilty of pro-Mormon leanings, including B. H. Roberts, John A. Widtsoe, John Henry Evans, and J. M. Sjodahl—in fact, all who have presumed to question the verdict of the experts. Fortunately for Mercer, all their remarks can be summarily stricken from the record, since they are "very ignorant in respect to the subject they pretend to criticise"—it is not for them under *any* circumstances to talk back; they are all out of order. Dr. Mercer's third class is "biased and ignorant gentiles," being any such as may be inclined to give ear to the Mormon replies.[17]

And so the doctors must be allowed to sit in judgment on their own case because no one else is qualified; and if they should happen to decide in favor of themselves, why, there is just nothing we can do about it, since their expertise is far beyond the reach of the layman, placing them in fact "at the intellectual summit of the universe" by the ancient professional mystery of "autodeification in the order of knowing."[18]

This arrangement is basic to the prosperity of most of the learned professions. Long ago the Jesuits devised a special vocabulary and a special discipline of theology which, they announced, only one of their faith could really understand; for any outsider to risk criticism of anything they chose to propound in that recondite jargon could only be the sheerest folly, as Arnold Lunn reminded the great scientist J. B. S. Haldane when the latter ventured to point out certain weaknesses in his theology.[19] But then the scientists have played the same game for all it is worth. Thus, when "the main objections [to the evolutionary hypothesis] were clearly stated in its very early days," they were quickly overruled because "most of them came from people who were not trained biologists. . . . Their objections could be

countered summarily on the grounds of ignorance, despite the fact that Darwin's hypothesis appealed so largely to the evidence of common observation and experience."[20] Common observation and experience, no matter how clear and convincing, were no match for official credentials.

Even while Sir Gavin de Beer boasts that "the foundation principle of science is that it concerns itself exclusively with what can be demonstrated, and does not allow itself to be influenced by personal opinions or sayings of anybody. . . . The motto of the Royal Society of London is *Nullus in verba*: we take no man's word for anything,"[21] he is guilty of seeking to overawe or at least impress us with the authority of men of "science" in general and of the Royal Society of London (all stand, please) in particular.

Just so, in the Spalding discussion "the prosecution rests its case on the reputations and standing of its witnesses. . . ."[22] "In compiling the pamphlet," wrote the bishop in his summing-up, "I made no claim to a knowledge of Egyptology. I merely wrote an introduction to the opinions of scholars. In a matter of this kind most of us must form our judgment from the opinion of competent experts."[23] Thus he echoes the opinion of his No. 1 expert, cited above, who gracefully returns the compliment, noting that after all, it was the good bishop's opinion that in the end would settle all disputes: "The advisers of the Bishop proved to his satisfaction" that glaring contradictions of the judges did not really exist, "that there were no such differences. The apparent discrepancies were proved not to be real." Thus Spalding's chief adviser declares that his advisers, by satisfying the bishop that all was well, had brought the issue to its final and satisfactory conclusion, binding all thinking men to accept and share his opinion.[24]

Thus reassured, Bishop Spalding proceeded to demolish R. C. Webb: "We feel that we should be in a better position to judge the value of the opinions of Robert C. Webb, PhD . . . if we were told definitely who he is. . . . If Dr. Talmage . . . would inform us what the author's real name is, where he received his degree, and what academic position he holds, we should be better able to estimate the value of his opinions."[25] Here it is again: The bishop is not interested in Webb's arguments and evidence, but in his status and rank—considerations that are supposed to bear no weight whatever with honest searchers after truth—*Nullus in verba!* What on earth have a man's name, degree, academic position, and, of all things, opinions, to do with whether a thing is true or not?

In this case the answer is—everything. Dr. Mercer frankly admits that he and the other scholars "did not seem to take the matter very seriously," and devoted very little time to it indeed: ". . . the haste was justified in the minds of the scholars by the simplicity of the task. Even less time could be expected."[26]

Elsewhere he explains the perfunctory treatment of the whole thing: "They probably felt as I did, that their time was too valuable to spend on such scientific work as that of Joseph Smith's guesses."[27] Whatever the reason, they never intended to do any real work, but depended entirely on their credentials to see the thing through.

A word from such great men should be enough to settle anything, but still *we* insist on appealing to the slogan of the Royal Society. Many eminent scientists, in fact, are today calling attention to the crippling effect of appeal to authority and position in science, a professional complacency that "may in fact be the closing of our eyes to as yet undiscovered factors which may remain undiscovered for many years if we believe that the answer has been already found."[28] Thus a great biologist reminds us that "it is important to combat the assumption" that we know what primitive conditions of life were like (every scientist knew that in 1912), since "as long as this is assumed, insufficient effort will be put into the attempt to find ways to obtain genuine evidence."[29]

Now, part of the secret of the unusual productivity of the Egyptologists of 1912 was a buoyant adolescent confidence in their own newly found powers, which present-day scholars may envy, but which they can well do without—there is something decidedly sophomoronic in their lofty pretensions to have plumbed the depths of the human past after having taken a few courses, read a few texts (bristling with question marks), and broken bread with the learned at a dig or two. Their inexpressible contempt for Joseph Smith as an ignorant interloper is a measure of their pride in their own achievement.

In 1912 the Egyptologist T. E. Peet took to task all laymen who "mistrust a process in which they see a critic assign half a verse to Source E and the other half to Source J." Time has more than vindicated the skeptical laymen, but in those days Dr. Peet laid it on the line: "Have these people followed the developments of modern philology and do they realize that the critics . . . are men whose whole lives are devoted to the study of such problems, and whose knowledge of Hebrew and of the Semitic languages in general is so great that the differences of style . . . are as patent



Coffins similar to these may have housed mummies bought by Joseph Smith.

to them as they would be in English to a layman?"[30] Professor Peet would have done well to harken to what Bishop Spalding's own star witness, Professor A. H. Sayce, had written some years before:

"How then is it possible for the European scholars of today to analyse an old Hebrew book into its component parts . . .? Hebrew is a language that is very imperfectly known; it has long ceased to be spoken; only a fragment of its literature has come down to us, and that often in a corrupt state; and the meaning of many of the words which have survived, and even of the grammatical forms, is uncertain and disputed. In fact, it is just this fragmentary and imperfect knowledge of the language which has made the work and results of the higher critics possible. The 'critical' analysis of the Pentateuch is but a measure of our ignorance and the limitations of our knowledge. . . . With a fuller knowledge we would come to a recognition of the futility of the task."[31]

Subsequent discoveries have proven him quite right, but Sayce's early protest was a voice in the wilderness. Soon the higher critics were having it all their own way, and none ran more eagerly with them than Sayce himself. B. H. Roberts, a personal friend of Spalding's, admitted that the bishop held the whip handle: "I think the bishop is entitled to have it known by those reading these 'remarks' how eminent is the jury pronouncing in the case against the 'Mormon' Prophet. . . . One who can lay no claim to the learning of Egypt at first hand, . . . may well pause before such an array of Egyptologists. . . . In their presence it is becoming in me, and all others unschooled in ancient Egyptian lore, to speak with modesty and behave with becoming deference."[32]

One may wonder how an admittedly unqualified party could pass on such recondite qualifications in others, but it is the credentials of the specialists that impress Brother Roberts, not their knowledge, which he is in no position to judge. Faced by a solid phalanx of PhD's, the Mormons were properly overawed; they had no David to go against these Goliaths, and for that they had only themselves to blame.

The Mormons Default—From the first the Latter-day Saints had good reason to expect the Pearl of Great Price to come in for some rough treatment. "Here, then," wrote Parley P. Pratt in 1842, "is another subject for the Gentile world to stumble at, and for which to persecute the Saints. . . ."[33] Within three years of that remark the world was firing the same scholarly blasts against the Facsimiles and demolishing their claims with the same devastating finality as was to delight the intellectuals again in 1865, 1912, and today.

The figures in the Facsimiles, it was announced in 1845, were "familiar and now understood," and it served Joseph Smith right for "confidently defying inevitable exposure," now that "the Champollions of the Bibliotheque de Rei [*sic*] and the British Museum" had the subject well in hand. It was already apparent to the learned that "the whole thing is too gross to bear patiently, too painful to laugh at. . . ."[34] That should have settled the matter, but the Mormons were not convinced and would have done well in undertaking some study of Egyptian on their own.

Again and again Joseph Smith and Brigham Young had pointed the way for the Latter-day Saints to prepare themselves for just such eventualities, pleading with them to take heed to themselves and use their brains. Even during the grim days of December 1844, the leaders of the Church "advise[d] the Elders to get up schools, that all . . . might be taught in the branches of education, and prepare themselves, that the least might be fully competent, to correspond with the wise men of the world."[35] They were to meet the scholars of the world on their own grounds; but instead of that, human nature saw fit to expend its energies elsewhere: "There are hundreds in this community," said Brigham Young in 1860, "who are more eager to become rich in the perishable things of this world than to adorn their minds with the power of self-government, and with a knowledge of things as they were, as they are, and as they are to come,"[36] and he rebukes the Saints for being satisfied "to remain fixed with a very limited amount of knowledge, and, like a door upon its hinges, move to and fro from one year to another without any visible advancement or im-

provement, lusting after the grovelling things of this life which perish with the handling."[37]

Those Latter-day Saints who have gone on to higher studies have either pursued the physical and biological sciences or coveted bread-and-butter certificates that have rendered them all the more subservient to mere office and authority. To this day no one has engaged in the type of study necessary to come to grips with the Pearl of Great Price, though that great book openly invites such study: "If the world can find out these numbers, so let it be. Amen."

Up to the present, all studies of the Pearl of Great Price without exception have been in the nature of auxiliary studies—compendiums, historical background, etc.—or preliminary surveys.[38] In 1879 George Reynolds noted that in spite of all provocation, "very little has ever been said by the Elders of the Church in advocacy of its claims as an inspired record," and that while "outsiders have vigorously attacked it . . . styled its language 'gibberish,' and classed it among the 'pious frauds' . . . the people of God have said or written little in its defense. . . ."[39] His own book furnishes a clear demonstration of just why the Saints had never been able to get off the ground—they just didn't have the knowledge.

The authors of a long procession of articles in the *Era* in 1912, 1913, 1914, and 1917 frankly admitted their ignorance, and pleaded that they had been caught by surprise. Their studies are nonetheless by far the best to appear to date; the books, articles, and master's theses turned out since then have largely repeated what they had to say, with perhaps an item or two added to the bibliographies where it was felt necessary to justify a degree in the seven arts. Even the extensive labors of James R. Clark, valuable as they are, are all of an introductory nature, clearing the decks as it were for the real action to come.

Full-scale college and extension courses, graduate seminars, Churchwide lecture series, stately public symposiums, books, pamphlets, monographs, newsletters, and articles, all done up in fancy bindings usually adorned with reproductions of the Facsimiles from the Pearl of Great Price or with faked Egyptian symbols to intrigue and beguile the public, have all failed to get beyond the starting point of the race, which after all must be run on the long hard obstacle course of Egyptian grammar and epigraphy and not on the lecture platform. The Mormons, it seems, have gone all out for the gimmicks and mechanics of education, but have never evinced any real inclination to tackle the tough, basic questions of evidence raised by the Pearl of Great Price.

A new school of interpretation some years ago attempted to meet the challenge to and of the Pearl of Great Price by the face-saving thesis that the Book of Abraham was not written in Egyptian after all, but in "some Semitic language," and hailed this shifting of the discussion to more familiar grounds as putting "Book of Abraham investigation on a more sound and scholarly basis."[40] But no studies were forthcoming on the new foundation save a few "primarily for the laymen . . . making no claim of being . . . learned or scientific."[41] How, the ingenuous student may ask, can any study hope to be "sound and scholarly" without being at least a little learned and scientific? One should not enter the arena unless one is willing to meet more formidable opposition than the gullible student and tractable layman.

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[1]Franklin S. Spalding, *Joseph Smith, Jr., As a Translator* (Salt Lake City: The Arrow Press, 1912); reprinted by the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church (New York: Church Missions House, 1915); photomechanical reprint, Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1965.

[2]Robert C. Webb (J. C. Homans), in *The Improvement Era*, Vol. 16 (1913), p. 1077.

[3]S. A. B. Mercer, *The Utah Survey* (published monthly by the Social Service Commission of the Episcopal Church in Utah), Vol. 1 (September 1913), No. 1, p. 30.

[4]e.g., an editorial in the *Deseret Evening News*, Dec. 17, 1912, p. 4, and J. M. Sjodahl, in *The Improvement Era* (hereafter designated as *Era*), Vol. 16 (1913), p. 326. The high critics erred egregiously especially where Egypt was concerned: "Dr. Von Bohlen, the honored co-laborer with Gesenius and De Wette, gave long chapters to the easy task of proving from overwhelming classical testimony that the Bible blundered almost every time it mentions an Egyptian custom. According to this great scholar, the statement that the Egyptians built with brick in ancient times, used asses, cultivated the vine, and used costly materials in such constructions as the ark and the tabernacle, proved that the author of the Pentateuch was 'an absolute stranger to Egypt.' " C. H. S. Davis, *Ancient Egypt in the Light of Modern Discoveries* (Meriden, Conn., 1892), p. 311.

[5]Robert C. Webb, in *Era*, Vol. 17 (1914), p. 313, commenting on an article in the *Survey* magazine of November 1913. Webb notes, in the *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 435, that after the great promises made before its publication, Spalding's book has turned out disappointingly thin and skimpy.

[6]N. L. Nelson, in the *Era*, Vol. 16, pp. 606f, was more outspoken than the others: ". . . a jury of Gentiles, prejudiced, ill-tempered and mad with the pride of human learning."

[7]B. H. Roberts, in *Deseret News*, Dec. 19, 1912, p. 11; cf. Junius F. Wells. *ibid.*, p. 4. The editorial to which the *Times* referred was of Dec. 17, 1912, p. 4.

[8]*The New York Times Magazine*, Part 5, Sunday, Dec. 29, 1912.

[9]J. F. Wells, in *Deseret News*, Dec. 19, 1912, p. 4.

[10]*Deseret News*, Dec. 17, 1912, p. 4.

[11]Bishop Spalding's attacks in *The Spirit of the Mission*, October 1912, are cited by R. C. Webb in the *Era*, Vol. 17, pp. 565ff; S. A. B. Mercer's long attack in Spalding's own paper, *The Utah Survey*, Vol. 1 (Sept. 1913), pp. 3-36, has been reprinted photomechanically along with the Spalding book, Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Co., 1965.

[12]B. H. Roberts, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 310.

[13]Samuel A. B. Mercer, *Utah Survey*, Vol. 1, p. 36.

[14]*Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 25.

[16]Robert C. Webb, *Era*, Vol. 17, p. 316: "In the Spalding literature the public has been thoroughly indoctrinated on the sufficiency of scholarly opinions, which, as we read, are 'always accepted *without question* unless there is grave reason to doubt.' " Italics added.

[17]Mercer, *The Utah Survey*, Vol. 1 (1913), pp. 12-13.

[18]C. R. Dechert, in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 5 (1965), pp. 32f.

[19]Arnold Lunn, *Science and the Supernatural; A Correspondence Between Arnold Lunn and J. B. S. Haldane* (New York, 1935), and *The Flight from Reason* (New York: Dial Press, 1931), Ch. xi.

[20]R. Good, *The Listener*, May 7, 1959, p. 797.

[21]Sir Gavin de Beer, *The Listener*, July 3, 1958.

[22]Robert C. Webb, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 435.

[23]F. S. Spaulding, *Utah Survey*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

[24]Mercer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 30.

[25]Spalding, *loc. cit.*

[26]Mercer, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 30.

[27]Samuel A. B. Mercer, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 613.

[28]G. A. Kerkut, *Implications of Evolution* (Oxford, New York: Pergamon Press), p. 195.

[29]N. Pirie, in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1959, p. 373.

[30]T. E. Peet, *Egypt and the Old Testament* (Liverpool University Press, 1922), p. 30.

[31]A. H. Sayce, *Monuments, Facts and Higher Critical Fancies* (4th ed., London, 1910), p. 19. The first edition was 1894.

[32]B. H. Roberts, *Era*, Vol. 16, pp. 310-11.

[33]Parley P. Pratt, *The Millennial Star*, Vol. 3 (1842), p. 47.

[34]Editorial in *Warsaw Signal*, Sept. 19, 1845, p. 2.

[35]*Brigham Young History*, Dec. 15, 1844 (ms. in the Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City).

[36]Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8 (1860), p. 9.

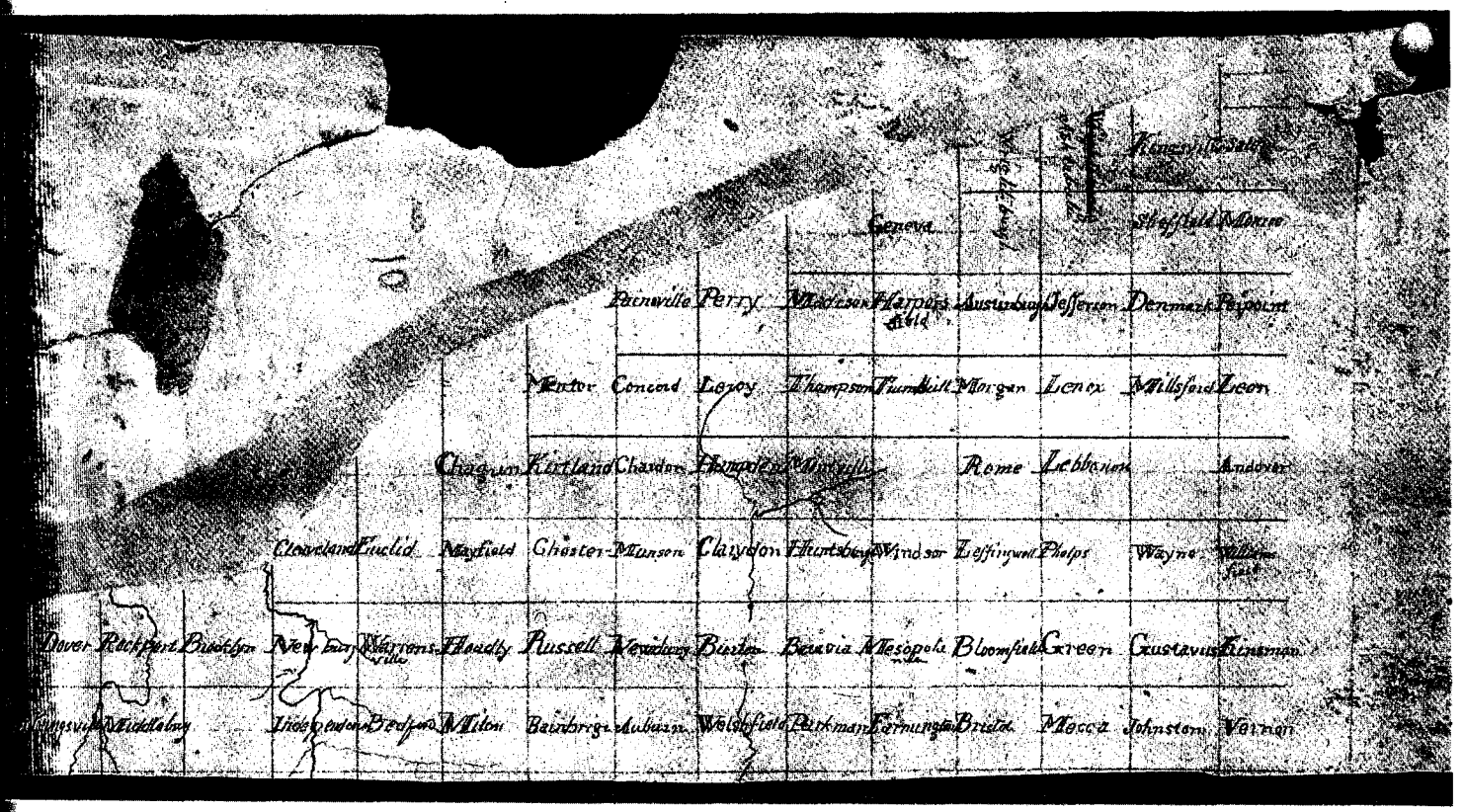
[37]*Ibid.*, Vol. 10 (1863), p. 266.

[38]This will become immediately clear to one inspecting James R. Clark's *Pearl of Great Price Bibliography* (Provo: BYU Extension Publications, 1965), every single item of which deals only incidentally and peripherally with the basic issues of authenticity raised by the Facsimiles.

[39]George Reynolds, *The Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Co., 1879), p. 1.

[40]Charles E. Haggerty, *A Study of the Book of Abraham* (BYU Thesis, 1946), pp. 83-84.

[41]*Ibid.*, p. 82.



Photograph above shows an apparent map that was drawn on backing paper to which was attached one of pieces of papyrus recently rediscovered in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and presented to the Church.

Eternal Gifts

By Susan Broschinsky
Age 19

If I were an inventor
And I could invent,
The thing I'd invent would be

Something as deep and as strong and as
pure as the tide coming in from the sea.

If I were a painter
And I could paint,
The painting that I would do

Is to blend all the beauty of God's lovely
Earth with the radiant freshness of dew.

If I were a musician
And I could compose,
The music I would bring

Is the joy from the birds and the babbling
brook and the chapel bells when they ring.

If I were a speaker
And I could speak,
The words that I would say

Would come from the soft whispering breezes
at the tender waking of day.

And all of these things that I would have,
even though they be so few,
I'd carefully wrap in eternal truth, and
then I would give them to you.

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

Part I. Challenge and Response (Continued)

Amateurs All

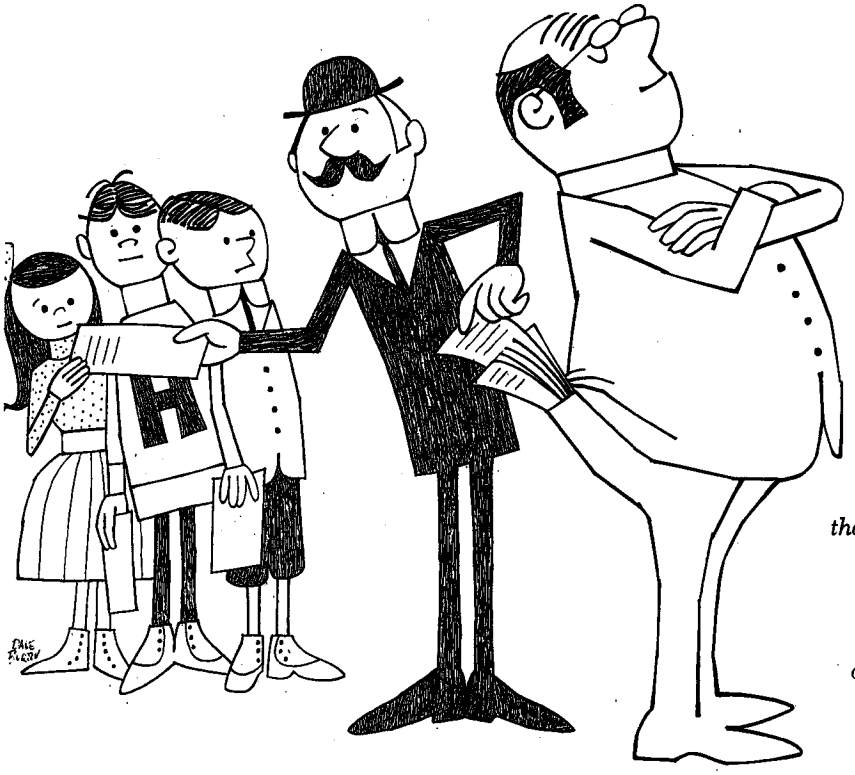
● The ever-increasing scope of knowledge necessary to cope with the great problems of our day has led to increasing emphasis on a maxim that would have sounded very strange only a few years ago: "There are no fields—there are only problems!"—meaning that one must bring to the discussion and solution of any given problem whatever is required to understand it: If the problem calls for a special mathematics, one must get it; if it calls for three or four languages, one must get them; if it takes 20 years, one must be prepared to give it 20 years—or else shift to some other problem. Degrees and credentials are largely irrelevant where a problem calls for more information than any one department can supply or than can be packaged into any one or a dozen degrees.

Now the Pearl of Great Price presents a number of big problems with which no Egyptologist has ever coped. A knowledge of Egyptian is the first step toward a solution of such problems, but it is by no means the last. Still, first things come first: "Ancient Egypt," wrote one of the earliest modern researchers in the field, "is accessible only to a small number, because of the length and the difficulties of the initiation into the language of the hieroglyphs. . . . But can a historian . . . renounce the direct examination of the original documents, which become every day more varied and more numerous, without violating the first rule of his discipline?"[42]

Like it or not, we are stuck with Egyptian, and it is only fair to note, in defense of the specialists, that if authoritarianism can be a great mischief, the quackery to which it gives rise can be even worse, a quack being anybody posing as an authority—a shadow of a shadow. There is a place in the world for professionalism and even for "authority" in science, as Thomas S. Kuhn has explained at great length; every field has its "paradigms" that must be mastered thoroughly so that they can be used as tools, quickly, deftly, with unconscious skill, in the processes of problem solving. The expert is one who knows how to use those tools, and because the Doctors have not chosen to *use* their knowledge in a serious study of the Pearl of Great Price, it does not follow that such knowledge is not important for such study—rather, it is indispensable.

Any ancient text is utterly without meaning to one who does not know the language in which it is written. Egyptian, however, being written in pictures, has been held to enjoy a unique status among the mysteries. Away back in the fifth century Horapollon had the idea that by attributing a symbolic meaning to each little picture and putting the symbols together, one could discover the meaning of any Egyptian text. This theory was adhered to by would-be translators of Egyptian right down to the time of Champollion, and it still has its advocates among Latter-day Saints who would discover ever-new secrets in the Facsimiles and identify battered Indian rock-carvings with Egyptian glyphs.

The attempt to give one's own interpretation to picture-writing is hard to resist. At the general conference in April 1967, for example, somebody circulated a mimeographed document bearing the frank and forthright title,



And though he denied
that his brochure was "circulated
especially among the students of Latter-day
Saint high schools,"
he did admit putting it in the hands
of those who would see
that it got there.

"Why Would Anyone Want to Fight the Truth?" The "truth" in this case consisted of the author's common-sense observations on the nature of Egyptian, such as, that an Egyptian symbol written with four elements "could be no more than a single Egyptian word." But ancient languages have a way of ignoring our modern common-sense rules; the Egyptians in particular had an incurable weakness for abbreviations, omissions, transpositions, puns, and cryptograms, and their writings are full of signs which, even when we know their meaning (which is by no means always the case), require at least a sentence or two to explain them. Anyone is free to guess at the meaning of any Egyptian phrase, and one of the most picturesque aspects of the discipline is a process that never ceases, day and night, year in and year out, by which Egyptologists are constantly altering and improving on each other's translations. But one is *not* free to present his interpretation as "The Truth," and then ask in hurt and accusing tones, "Why Would Anyone Want to Fight the Truth?" "I have acted upon a principle to which I attach the greatest importance," wrote A. H. Gardiner, the dean of Egyptian grammarians; "even a wrong idea is better than no idea at all, and progress in translation can only come by presenting to the critics some definite objective to tilt at."[43] So far was he from thinking that the experts ever have a corner on truth!

The specialists, however, can hardly be blamed for hesitating to become involved in arguments with just anybody, for they are daunted by a peculiarly insidious occupational hazard.[44] The air of mystery and romance that has always surrounded things Egyptian has never failed to attract swarms of crackpots, cultists, half-baked scholars, self-certified experts, and out-and-out charlatans. The poor Egyptologist, constantly confronted with such characters and their antics, is understandably on his guard, quick to suspect and ever alert to the slightest signs of wishful thinking or free and easy logic. At the same time every Egyptologist is something of a crusader who feels bound to foster and encourage interest in his important but neglected field; he is naturally and humanely hesitant to give any sincere seeker the brushoff, or to offend any possible future donor or patron of his art. In addition, the Egyptologist is himself a romantic at heart, or else he would never have chosen such a field for himself, and has a secret and sometimes rather obvious kinship with the glamor hunters. That, of course, makes him even more circumspect in his behavior; he can't afford to get involved or identified with such creatures, he shies like a thoroughbred horse at every rag and tatter of nonsense in the breeze, and he avoids religious controversies like death itself. To expect a sympathetic word for Joseph Smith from such people is, of course, asking too much—a serious Egyptologist just can't risk it. Even to display too lively an interest in the Pearl of Great Price or the Book of Mormon has been known to jeopardize one's professional standing.

Bishop Spalding Prepares His Surprise

Bishop Spalding is described by those who knew him as a charming man, a convincing speaker, "a controversialist by nature,"[45] an enthusiastic intellectual who "follows

those who go to the farthest frontiers of research in modern, or higher, criticism . . . and fearlessly accepts the results of that school of thought,"[46] an ardent social reformer who, while urging the Mormons to come over to his one "historie faith," regrets that the same Mormons are actually doing what he only wishes his own people would do in the way of organized activity, while he labors "to help 'sweep and garnish' the house of faith with the whisk broom of Marxian sophistries."[47]

This man simply could not square the supernaturalist claims of Joseph Smith with the enlightened thinking of 1912. He made such a show of fair play and was so diligent in procuring the support of the most eminent scholars in putting the Prophet to the test that even B. H. Roberts felt constrained to confess, "his method . . . is entirely legitimate, and the spirit of it [is] irreproachable."[48]

But others, taking a closer look, were not so sure: ". . . while the bishop appears to treat his subject with fairness," wrote Osborne J. P. Widtsoe, "[and] while he tries to impress his reader with his openness, his frankness, his candor, his honesty, yet his every argument is based upon some unfair implication, some false premise. . . . His fairness is but surface deep."[49] This grave charge is fully borne out in an interview published in the *New York Times*, in which the bishop's magnanimous spirit of love and affection for the Mormons takes on a decidedly greenish tinge:

"The breaking up of Mormonism through the desertion of the intellectual part of its membership is the failure for the Prophet Smith's church which Bishop Spalding foresees. It is for that reason that he prefers to address the Mormons as his friends rather than to attack them."[50]

Spalding's friend, Dr. Frederick J. Pack, perceived the wily stratagem thus freely admitted by Bishop Spalding when he was far away from Utah, and commented on its effectiveness: ". . . the apparent fairness shown by Dr. Spalding made far into the ranks of the Latter-day Saints a well prepared path along which the conclusions of his article might readily follow."[51] And when a banker friend from the East asked the good bishop, "Why not leave the Mormons alone?" he replied, "Well, I must feel about their acceptance of what is intellectually and morally untrue, just as you would feel if you knew a group of people were coining . . . counterfeit money."[52] If Dr. Spalding had ever heard of the Constitution, which explicitly provides that holding a wrong opinion about anything is not a crime, as counterfeiting is, he still could not, for all his vaunted liberalism, stand the thought that a religion whose teachings he believed to be false should be permitted to stay in operation.

As he went about with his sweet strategic smile ("He writes to the Mormons in a kindly mood," says the *Times*), the bishop was working hard on his demolition project. "Much of Bishop Spalding's work," according to the interview in the *Times*, "was done in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in this city."[53] This suggests that the final scheme took shape only after a number of other approaches had proven ineffectual. Many a better scholar than Dr. Spalding has discovered that the revelations of Joseph Smith that look so delightfully vulnerable at first sight become more difficult to refute the more carefully one studies them. "The Bishop, it is said, gave a liberal portion of his time and thought for some years to this literary production, fully expecting that when it should appear in print, it would signal the end of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."[54] To compile the little book of but eight very brief letters would take no very great amount of time or effort—what was Dr. Spalding doing all those years? That his long and zealous labors should have brought forth so little is in itself a strong point in Joseph Smith's favor.

But Spalding made the best psychological use of the little that he had (an old game with ministers), catching the Mormons completely off guard when he finally "fired [his] broadside at us," as Professor N. L. Nelson put it: ". . . think, man," he wrote to his old friend, the bishop, "of the 'imprudence' of it! without a declaration of war, and in a time of profound peace." Dr. Spalding was counting on just that surprise to spread dismay and confusion, but though the burst was impressive, "as regards three-fourths of us, the effect was purely spectacular—a compound of smoke and noise."[55]

Spalding's avowed purpose was to save "thousands of young men and women" from "the hopelessly illogical, untruthful, unspiritual, and immoral system of Joseph Smith, Jr."[56] And though he denied that his brochure was "circulated especially among the students of the Latter-day Saint high schools," he did admit putting it in the hands of those who would see that it got there.[57] The appeal to intellectual honesty without any insistence on hard study can always count on having some effect among those who wish to be thought intellectual, and R. C. Webb noted that the Spalding plan capitalized on that snob appeal which is never lost in academic circles.[58] Hence it was not surprising that when a valedictory speaker at the University of Utah two years later issued the routine call for greater freedom of thought, his boldness was nationally advertised by a visiting professor to the university as the direct fruit of Spalding's demonstration to the Mormons that "one of their sacred books is spurious."[59] Miffed when the Mormons refused to lie down because he said "bang," Bishop Spalding declared that his project "has become not only a test of the competency of the First Presidency of the Church, but also of the reliability of the present head of the church," since the latter had been unwise enough to believe Joseph Smith instead of Spalding's experts.[60] But it is high time to take a closer look at the famous test.

"Just the Test We Need"

The Reverend Spalding's book is dedicated "To my many Mormon friends—who are as honest searchers after the truth" as he hopes he is himself. This humane and generous approach caught the Mormons off guard, as it was meant to do. "The manifest fairness of the inquiry and the apparently well founded conclusions," wrote Professor Pack, "came as somewhat of a surprise to the 'Mormon' people," who were not accustomed to the soft sell.[61] The book opens with the magnanimous admission that others have been impetuous, ill-informed, discourteous, and unfair in judging the Mormons, and that the time has come for a cool, fair-minded, objective testing of the claims of the Prophet. In particular, the Book of Mormon "has never had the serious examination which its importance demands."[62] To correct this oversight, the author then launches into as rigged and spurious a test of prophetic inspiration as was ever devised by the Scribes and Pharisees.

Beginning with the statement, "If the Book of Mormon is true, it is, next to the Bible, the most important book in the world," Spalding notes that no definitive test of that book's authenticity is possible at this time, but suggests that it would be quite possible to test Joseph Smith's competence as a translator by examining not the Book of Mormon but another of his translations, that contained in the Pearl of Great Price under the title of the Book of Abraham. In this document, according to Bishop Spalding, "we have just the test we need of Joseph Smith's accuracy as a translator."[63]

And he is right. Here we have at our disposal all the necessary resources for making an almost foolproof test. Moreover, it was Joseph Smith himself who first proposed and submitted to the test. When the papyri of the Book of Abraham first came into his hands, the Prophet, having learned that their owner, Michael H. Chandler, had gone out of his way to solicit the opinions of the experts in the big cities where he had exhibited his mummies, went into a room by himself and wrote out his interpretation of some of the symbols; then he invited Mr. Chandler to compare what he had written with the opinions of "the most learned." Chandler did so, and was properly impressed, voluntarily giving Joseph Smith a signed statement:

". . . to make known to all who may be desirous, concerning the knowledge of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., in deciphering the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic characters in my possession, which I have, in many eminent cities, showed to the most learned; and, from the information that I could ever learn, or meet with, I find that of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., to correspond in the most minute matters. [Signed:] Michael H. Chandler."[64]

Parley P. Pratt suggests that Chandler might have "on one occasion met with an individual who was enabled to decipher a small portion, or, at least, to give an opinion of what he supposed its meaning to be," since nobody in America could really read the stuff.[65] Orson Pratt put it differently: "Mr. C[handler] had also obtained from learned men the best translation he could of some few characters, which however, was not a translation, but more in the shape of their ideas with regard to it, their acquaintance with the language not being sufficient to enable them to translate it literally."[66]

Strangely enough, this last statement exactly fits Dr. Spalding's own eight experts, as we shall see. But whatever the competence of the informants, in Chandler's day or Spalding's, the point here is that it is Joseph Smith who actually suggests and carries out the very test the bishop devised. It was also Joseph Smith's idea, it will be recalled,

> "We have at our disposal
> all the necessary resources
> for making
> an almost foolproof test."

to submit copies of the original writing from the plates of the Book of Mormon to the best scholars in America for their frank opinion. Granted again that nobody could read the "Anthon Transcript" either then or today, it was still very important for the leading antiquarians in the country to be given a chance to speak their piece, lest the world say forever after: "Joseph Smith never dared to show his mythical manuscript to *real* scholars; he never gave the experts a chance to express an opinion about it!" Whatever opinions Professor Anthon expressed about the transcript, his letters show that he was indeed given ample opportunity to study the characters and express an opinion about them.

The Prophet Joseph, then, is willing enough to undergo the most objective tests, but Bishop Spalding will not let him! The least the latter could have done would have been to follow the classic procedure used in the vindication of the cuneiform scholars many years before. In 1857 that same Ernest Renan who was loudly declaring Jesus to be a myth was telling the public that nobody could read cuneiform—that the Assyriologists were simply fooling themselves and others. So to put everyone's mind at ease, Sir George Grote sent a cuneiform text to four scholars, requesting each one to give *his* interpretation of the thing; then it was a simple matter to compare the answers and let the public decide whether these men really knew what they were doing or not.[67]

This was obviously the procedure indicated for dealing with the Facsimiles. Joseph Smith had given his interpretation of the three ancient Egyptian documents and had challenged the world to give its own interpretation of the

same. So one had only to do what Sir George did, that is, send the three Facsimiles from the Pearl of Great Price to various Egyptologists without comment, requesting each one to give *his* interpretation of them. Then Bishop Spalding could open the envelopes publicly and invite the world to compare the readings of the experts with each other *and* with Smith's ideas. What could be fairer and simpler? Joseph Smith had put all the ingredients for a clear and foolproof test into Spalding's hands, and even shown him how to go about it—and Spalding threw it all away! R. C. Webb observed, ". . . it might have occurred to an 'honest searcher after truth,' . . . to have removed the captions from these figures. . . . Such an 'honest searcher' should have known perfectly well that 'scholars' would object to and denounce Smith as a 'scab translator.' "[68] That is, it was absolutely imperative to get the experts' opinions *before* showing them Smith's answer, just as the Prophet had handed his interpretations to Chandler *before* he knew what the others had said, leaving it to Mr. Chandler to compare them.

But instead of calmly asking each scholar for his reading and then letting the public judge for itself, Bishop Spalding, as he reports it, sent "the original texts, together with his [Smith's] interpretations . . . to competent scholars," with the idea that "if they declared his translation to be correct, then it must be accepted as true."[69] The question put to the specialists was not "What is your interpretation of these things?" but instead, "Here is what the notorious Joseph Smith says about these Egyptian documents; is he right or wrong?" Stating the question thus not only made it very easy for the doctors to answer with a terse "yes" or "no," but also carefully set the stage to avoid any possible danger that one of the correspondents might in an unguarded moment drop a word in favor of Smith. Professor Pack observed that since Bishop Spalding "has evidently written for opinions to a large number of scholars" it might be in order to ask whether any replies more or less favorable to Joseph Smith had been withheld, "whether any disharmonious statements may have been received and not published," since the published letters are very few and very brief.[70] Even with such precautions, the bishop does not trust his jury, but prefaces their remarks with 17 pages of elaborate argument to demonstrate the impossibility of Joseph Smith's being a true prophet no matter *what* the experts may say.

Of the letters that make up his book, Dr. Spalding reports: "It seemed necessary . . . to copy in full the letters from the experts exactly as I secured them."[71] With such meticulous and commendable care to see that the reader knows just what is going on, it is strange indeed that the most important letter of all is missing, namely, the covering letter that went with the request for an opinion from each of the authorities. For that is the letter to which they are replying, the letter that set up the experiment and determined the state of mind in which each of the participants approached the problem. "This inquiry you claim to be of transcendent importance to the world," wrote Dr. John A. Widtsoe to Bishop Spalding later. "If you are sincere in this . . . you certainly would not be ready to pronounce final judgment on the basis of eight or eleven letters written in answer to, only Heaven knows, *what questions you propounded.*"[72] (Italics added.) As a scientist, Dr. Widtsoe knew that the most important thing in writing up an experiment is a minute and accurate account of the exact procedure followed —and that is precisely the part of the report that Dr. Spalding chose to omit.

Whatever the covering letter said (and none was ever made public), it or they completely destroyed that atmosphere of cool and detached impartiality which Dr. Spalding declared himself so anxious to achieve. Dr. Mercer, the leader of the band, admits that "ill-temper was shown" and that "several of the scholars were disgusted at what they sincerely believed to be an imposition—'righteous wrath,' perhaps."[73] But he insists that religion has nothing to do with this righteous wrath—"the letters were not prejudiced,"[74] and he testifies as one of the jury "that Bishop Spalding did not in any way, either intentionally or unintentionally, prejudice the witnesses."[75] All he had to do to prejudice the whole company was simply to mention the name of Joseph Smith, but no, these men, though three of them are ministers of Spalding's church, expressed only "a scorn which was due to the crudeness of the linguistic work of the Prophet. . . . They condemned it purely on linguistic grounds."[76] To labor the point, since Mercer admits that it is a very important one, "the animus evident in the communications of Sayce and Petrie is purely because of linguistic, and not because of religious reasons."[77] Why linguistic *animus* in a field in which the experts are constantly correcting each other's translations? Is scientific animus any less prejudiced than religious animus? Mercer isn't kidding anybody: by bringing Joseph Smith into the picture from the very first, Bishop Spalding effectively loaded the dice—from then on only one game was possible.

> ". . . it is strange indeed that the most important letter of all is missing. . . ."

Some Basic Misconceptions

Not only do all of Spalding's jury labor under certain serious misconceptions, but their verdict is in every case

determined by those misconceptions. ". . . all the learned doctors," wrote Osborne J. P. Widtsoe, ". . . seem to have labored under the impression that the original manuscript of the Book of Abraham was available, that the three fac-similes . . . constitute that original manuscript, and that the inscriptions on those fac-similes were 'written by his [Abraham's] own hand.' To one who is acquainted with Church history, there could be made no representation farther from the truth than this of Bishop Spalding's concerning the Book of Abraham."[78] Yet it was on these three incorrect assumptions that the experts based all their arguments against Joseph Smith. Consider the three points.

First of all, Joseph Smith did *not* draw the Facsimiles; they were the work of a professional wood engraver, Reuben Hedlock, who undertook the job on February 23, 1842, at the Prophet's request, and finished it just a week later.[79] It was, as we shall see, a very creditable piece of work, but the miserable copies that Bishop Spalding circulated among his jury of experts made a very poor impression, and their raw clumsiness was in every case attributed to the Prophet himself. Some critics have noted that some of the numbers that have been added to Facsimile 2 are upside down, and have again assumed that Joseph Smith put them that way; but as R. C. Webb points out, "There is no evidence before us that Smith is responsible for it."[80]

The commonest objection to the authenticity of the Facsimiles is that they are of too late a date to have been drawn by Abraham. But Joseph Smith never claimed that they were autographic manuscripts or that they dated from the time of Abraham. ". . . with W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes," he writes as of July 1835, "I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that *one* of the rolls contained the *writings* of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt."[81] (Italics added.) It is and was common to refer to any author's works as his writings, whether he penned them himself or dictated them to others. The Book of Mormon and the Pearl of Great Price itself, for example, are both writings of Joseph Smith, though written down entirely by the hands of other men and women.

Men of such importance as Abraham and Joseph in Egypt would surely have followed the accepted custom and dictated their "writings" to scribes. The system is clear in the book of Jarom, verse 14, where we are referred to "the writings of the kings, or those which they caused to be written," and elsewhere in the Book of Mormon we are told of writings even "by the hand of" Mormon, Nephi, Moses, Omni, and others, and even "by the finger of God" (Alma 10:2), and also of a letter of Giddianhi sealed with his own hand—yet the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated were largely the work of Mormon and were never seen by some of the men whose very hands supposedly had written them. As George Q. Cannon explained, "These constituted the writings of Abraham—the text by Abraham's own hand; though there is nothing to show that this text had not been widely copied, and that this particular [manuscript] may not, in fact, have been a copy 500 years after Abraham's day."[82] J. M. Sjodahl assumes that it was a copy: "As the work proceeded, he [Joseph Smith] became convinced that one of the rolls of papyrus contained a copy of a book written by Abraham."[83] And Osborne Widtsoe opined that "this particular roll [the Book of Abraham] may or may not have been written by Abraham's own hand. Possibly it was a copy of Abraham's original manuscript."[84]

From the way the expression is used in the scriptures and by the brethren, it is clear that when a piece was said to be by its author's "own hand," what is meant is that

> "Joseph Smith never claimed they were autographic manuscripts . . . of Abraham."

he originally wrote or dictated it. Even when Wilford Woodruff reports in his journal for February 18, 1842, that "Joseph the Seer has presented us some of the Book of Abraham, which was written by his own hand . . . ," it means that the Book of Abraham is not merely a book *about* Abraham, of which many are known in the apocryphal literature, but one actually written *by* him. Actually, what the Prophet "presented" to the Saints, who had seen the papyri a hundred times, was his own rendering of the book, which of course was not *literally* written by the hand of Abraham.

It was only to be expected, human nature being what it is, that the announcement that the writings of Abraham and Joseph had been found with some mummies should have promptly given rise to the rumor that Joseph Smith was in possession of "the bodies of Abraham, Abimelech, (the king of the Philistines), Joseph, who was sold into Egypt, &c., &c." And it was just as natural that the enemies of the Prophet should circulate the charge "that the purchasers of these antiquities" were spreading such rumors "for the purpose of attracting the attention of the multitude, and gulling the unwary." These reports, the Prophet wrote in December 1835, were "utterly false. Who these ancient inhabitants of Egypt were, I do not at present say."[85] He was not leaping at conclusions or claiming revelations on all things; indeed, the mummies did not particularly interest him, and he only consented to let Chandler have the high price he asked for them because he could procure the papyri in no other way: ". . . Mr. Chandler told him that he would not sell the writings, unless he could sell the mum-

mies. . . ."[86] The mere sight of the mummies did not excite Joseph Smith, and neither did the rolls of papyri before he knew what was on them: they were just "something rolled up . . . which, when examined, proved to be two rolls of papyrus." It was only after the mummies had been bought and the rolls examined that the brethren discovered, "much to our joy," how important they were.[87] "The characters," Joseph Smith reported, "are such as you find upon coffins of mummies—hieroglyphs, etc.," that is, quite ordinary stuff, to look at them.[88] It is amusing to see how the Spalding specialists petulantly declare the Facsimiles, which they confess themselves unable to read, to be to all appearances nothing but perfectly ordinary Egyptian documents. Joseph Smith could have told them that.

The Prophet made no dogmatic statement as to how the writings got in with the mummies, and Church members speculated freely on the subject. "It is supposed," wrote Parley P. Pratt, "they were preserved in the family of the Pharaoh and afterwards hid up in the embalmed body of the female with whom they were found."[89] The reporter of a local newspaper, after being shown the mummies by Mother Smith, wrote a satirical account of how Joseph in Egypt had a roll of papyrus, delivered to him in a wooden box—by an angel, of course—"which was to be buried by him with the family of one of the patriarchs . . . Joseph . . . depositing the case on the Queen's breast, where it lay until the discovery of the 'brass plates'. . . ."[90] Behind the usual garbling of the familiar motifs, one may detect another version of Brother Pratt's speculation.

Actually, ancient Egyptian documents have been found buried with mummies of later date. The manuscript of the famous Ramesseum Dramatic Text, written to be buried with a king, was found laid away on the mummy of a private citizen 200 years after the time it was written—and even then it was copied down from still older sources. "How this manuscript . . . came into the private library of the . . . Theban in whose grave it was found," wrote Professor Sethe, "is a question which of course can never be answered."[91] It may not be without significance that our Pearl of Great Price mummies were also found in Thebes, and that some other mummies found there, notably those accompanied by those rare and peculiar documents known as hypocephali (Fac. 2 is a hypocephalus), had lying on their breasts just such rolls of papyri, apparently documents of considerable importance, but not well enough preserved to be read.[92] Mummies themselves were "often re-embalmed by the priests and toted from tomb to tomb—for centuries."[93] Furthermore, when documents became worn out from age or use it was quite proper to make a copy, which was thenceforth regarded exactly as if it were the original writings.[94]

Bishop Spalding's announcement that he submitted to the specialists "the original text," and that "the original texts with the Prophet's translation are available for our investigation" is simply not true. It makes all the difference in the world what particular text a scholar has to work with, as a comparison of the recently discovered original of Facsimile 1 with the copies of it that Spalding sent to the critics should make clear to anyone. ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[42]Maxence de Rochemonteix, *Bibliotheque Egyptologique* (Paris, 1894), Vol. 3, p. 3.
[43]A. H. Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 9 (1924), p. 6.
[44]This theme was often discussed by G. Maspero, e.g. in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 29, pp. 269-276; Vol. 1 (1893), pp. viff, in which Maspero discusses his own changing ideas. On the dangerous appeal of Egypt to amateurs, A. Weigall, *Tutankhamen and Other Essays* (London, 1923), Ch. 3, and *The Glory of the Pharaohs* (London, 1923), Ch. 5.
[45]R. C. Webb, *Era*, Vol. 17, p. 565. Webb paints an intellectual portrait of Spalding in this long article, pp. 565ff.
[46]B. H. Roberts, *Deseret News*, Dec. 19, 1912, p. 11.
[47]Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 568ff, 577; the quote is from p. 569.
[48]Roberts, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 310.
[49]Osborne J. P. Widtsoe, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 594, illustrating this by examples on pp. 595-97.
[50]*New York Times*, Magazine Section, Dec. 29, 1912, p. 3.
[51]Frederick J. Pack, *Era*, Vol. 16, pp. 333-34.
[52]R. C. Webb, *Era*, Vol. 17, p. 566, quoting from Spalding's *Utah Survey*.
[53]*New York Times, loc. cit.*, p. 1.
[54]J. M. Sjodahl, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 1100.
[55]N. L. Nelson, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 603.
[56]Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 565.
[57]Editorial in *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 378; *cf. New York Times, loc. cit.*, p. 1.
[58]R. C. Webb. See the remarks of E. J. Banks, *Literary Digest*, July 10, 1915, p. 67.
[59]The Banks article (see above) is fully discussed by Sterling B. Talmage in *Era*, Vol. 16, pp. 770-76.
[60]F. S. Spalding, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 611.
[61]Pack, *op. cit.*, p. 334.
[62]Spalding, *Joseph Smith as a Translator*, p. 4.
[63]*Ibid.*, p. 18.
[64]*Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 235, from *The L.D.S. Messenger & Advocate*, Vol. 3 (Dec. 1835), p. 235.
[65]Parley P. Pratt, *Millennial Star*, Vol. 3 (July 1842), p. 46.
[66]Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 20 (1878), p. 65.
[67]*Encyclopedia Britannica*, XI Edition (1910), Vol. 6, p. 308 (s.v. "Chronology").
[68]Webb, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 1078.
[69]Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[70]Pack, *op. cit.*, p. 335.
[71]Spalding, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 611.
[72]John A. Widtsoe, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 617.
[73]S. A. B. Mercer, *The Utah Survey*, Vol. 30, p. 12.
[74]*Ibid.*, p. 10.
[75]*Ibid.*, p. 7.
[76]*Ibid.*, p. 9.
[77]*Ibid.*, p. 9.
[78]Osborne J. P. Widtsoe, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 599.
[79]*DHC*, Vol. 4, p. 518.
[80]Webb, *Era*, Vol. 17, p. 324.
[81]*DHC*, Vol. 2, p. 236.
[82]George Q. Cannon, quoted by N. L. Nelson, *op. cit.*, p. 606.
[83]Sjodahl, *op. cit.*, p. 1103.
[84]Osborne J. P. Widtsoe, *op. cit.*, p. 600.
[85]*DHC*, Vol. 2, p. 348.
[86]Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 20, p. 65.
[87]*DHC*, Vol. 2, p. 236.
[88]*Ibid.*, p. 348.
[89]Parley P. Pratt, *Millennial Star*, Vol. 3 (July 1842), p. 46.
[90]*Warsaw Signal*, Sept. 19, 1845, p. 2, cited by C. D. McOmber, *A Study of the Criticism of the Book of Abraham* (unpublished Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, 1960), pp. 17f.
[91]K. Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen* (Leipzig, 1928), Vol. 2, p. 99.
[92]This is discussed below.
[93]C. W. Ceram, *A Picture History of Archaeology* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1959), p. 138.
[94]A classical instance is found in the introduction to the famous Shabaka Stone, where the king "orders a copy to be made which should be better than the earlier [original] one [lit., 'than its earlier condition']."—K. Sethe, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 4, 8, 21f. "Many very ancient books appeared in later transcriptions throughout Egyptian history," e.g., the Admonitions of Ptah-Hotep; "if, then, in similar fashion, Abraham also wrote a book, there is no essential absurdity in the supposition that a copy of it was found in the tomb of some persons who died even 1,000 or 1,500 years after his day."—R. C. Webb, *Era*, Vol. 17, p. 314. Whatever others, such as Wilford Woodruff, may have thought as to the age of the Facsimiles, Joseph Smith left no clear pronouncement.

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

Part I. Challenge and Response (Continued)

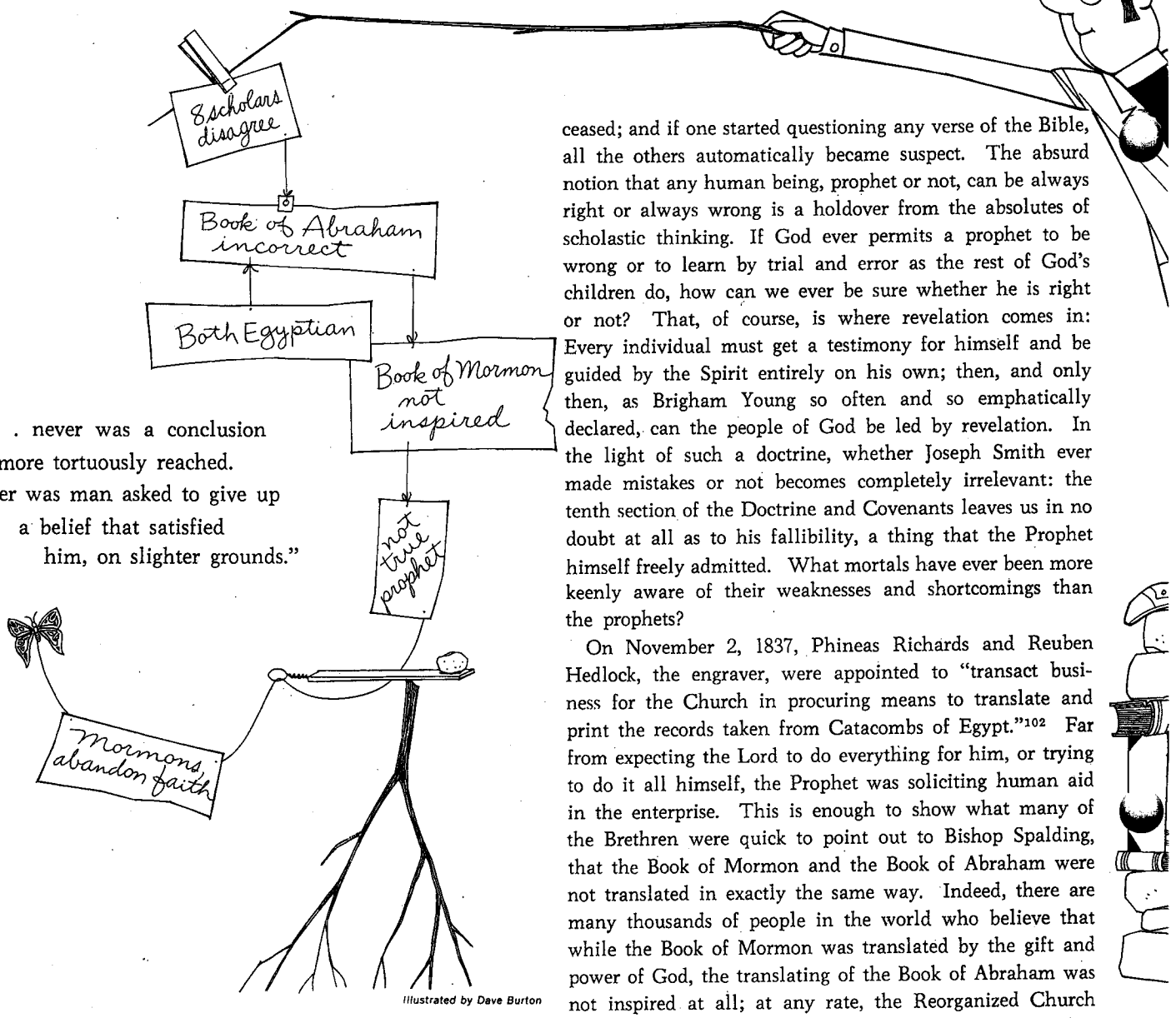
● **Some Spurious Propositions:** (1) While the experts judged the Facsimiles in light of certain basic misinformation, the general public was also beguiled by a number of specious propositions. The first of these was that the test of the engravings in the Pearl of Great Price effectively destroyed all claims of the Book of Mormon to authenticity.

It may seem rather odd that Spalding's purpose in his great campaign against the Facsimiles was to discredit not them but the Book of Mormon. Yet such is the case, as the first sentence of his book proclaims. In going about his work in such a devious way, our author pays high tribute indeed to the Book of Mormon, a purportedly historical work of over 500 pages in length in which, it would seem, he can discover no direct or obvious proof of fraud to save him all this trouble.

Devious is the word: The Mormons must abandon their faith, so ran the argument, because Joseph Smith was not a true prophet; he was not a true prophet because the Book of Mormon was not divinely inspired; it was not divinely inspired because it was not translated correctly; we know it was not translated correctly because Joseph Smith could not read Egyptian; we know this because he translated the Book of Abraham incorrectly, and both it and the Book of Mormon "were translated from the same Egyptian, and if the translator be found to have completely failed in the translation of one book, our faith in his translation of the other must necessarily be impaired";[95] we know he translated the Book of Abraham incorrectly because he did not understand the Facsimiles in the Pearl of Great Price; we know that he did not understand the Facsimiles because eight scholars gave interpretations that differed from his. "Here is a string of inference for you!" wrote John Henry Evans; ". . . never was a conclusion more tortuously reached. Never was man asked to give up a belief that satisfied him, on slighter grounds."[96]

Concealed in the Spalding syllogism are yet more spurious propositions. Take his main argument, for example: "If the translation of the 'Book of Abraham' is incorrect, then no thoughtful man can be asked to accept the Book of Mormon, but, on the other hand, honesty will require him, with whatever personal regret, to repudiate it and the whole body of belief, which has been built upon it. . . ."[97] Now it is not just the Book of Mormon that must be thrown out because eight men fail to see what Joseph Smith saw in three ancient engravings, but everything the Prophet ever taught. By the same token the good Bishop has no choice—when he learns from the higher critics, whom he so ardently endorses, that the Old and New Testaments are not what they pretend to be, but laborious compilations swarming with historical and philological misconceptions—but to renounce the Bible as a whole (for after all, if one verse is faulty, must not our faith in the others "necessarily be impaired"?) and with it "the whole body of belief, which has been built upon it."

We are further asked to believe that if Joseph Smith could have made a wrong translation on one occasion, it would follow inevitably that he had never at any time had a true gift of translation. But as an editorial in the *Deseret News* pointed out, "If a mistake should be proved in the translation of the Egyptian documents, that would not in any way affect the translation of the Book of Mormon."[98] Spalding insisted, as Professor Pack noted, under what is termed the spirit of fairness, that Joseph Smith be declared a false prophet if he makes a single failure: all his successes must be repudiated.[99] Pack further observed that "the Latter-day Saints should not, and for that matter do not, maintain that Joseph Smith was infallible."[100] And J. M. Sjodahl explained that the Prophet like any other mortal was free to make "mistakes in the translation of the Egyptian documents."[101] Indeed, Mormonism was intro-



". . . never was a conclusion more tortuously reached. Never was man asked to give up a belief that satisfied him, on slighter grounds."

Illustrated by Dave Burton

duced to the world with the unheard-of announcement, on the title page of the Book of Mormon, that it is quite possible for a book of holy scripture to contain "the mistakes of men."

Here we touch upon a basic misunderstanding that is at the root of most criticism of Joseph Smith. The sectarian world simply cannot understand how it is possible for a prophet of God to make a mistake. They could never see, for example, why Brigham Young, if he was really a prophet, would need to experiment with sugar beets or silkworms: why should a prophet experiment? Shouldn't God reveal to him exactly what to do in every instance, so that he need never, never make a mistake? A glance at the Bible would have shown any searcher that that is not the way God works. But for conventional Christianity the Bible itself was an all-or-nothing proposition, absolutely perfect and complete, devoid of the slightest suspicion of human error. It had to be that way, since revelation had ceased; and if one started questioning any verse of the Bible, all the others automatically became suspect. The absurd notion that any human being, prophet or not, can be always right or always wrong is a holdover from the absolutes of scholastic thinking. If God ever permits a prophet to be wrong or to learn by trial and error as the rest of God's children do, how can we ever be sure whether he is right or not? That, of course, is where revelation comes in: Every individual must get a testimony for himself and be guided by the Spirit entirely on his own; then, and only then, as Brigham Young so often and so emphatically declared, can the people of God be led by revelation. In the light of such a doctrine, whether Joseph Smith ever made mistakes or not becomes completely irrelevant: the tenth section of the Doctrine and Covenants leaves us in no doubt at all as to his fallibility, a thing that the Prophet himself freely admitted. What mortals have ever been more keenly aware of their weaknesses and shortcomings than the prophets?

On November 2, 1837, Phineas Richards and Reuben Hedlock, the engraver, were appointed to "transact business for the Church in procuring means to translate and print the records taken from Catacombs of Egypt."[102] Far from expecting the Lord to do everything for him, or trying to do it all himself, the Prophet was soliciting human aid in the enterprise. This is enough to show what many of the Brethren were quick to point out to Bishop Spalding, that the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham were not translated in exactly the same way. Indeed, there are many thousands of people in the world who believe that while the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, the translating of the Book of Abraham was not inspired at all; at any rate, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has never accepted it as scripture.[103] Some of Joseph Smith's contemporaries claimed that he used the Urim and Thummim in translating the Book of Abraham, but others denied it.[104] Who can draw the line between insight and inspiration, believing, as the Latter-day Saints do, that all knowledge comes from God at various levels of revelation? "Joseph studied diligently and worked the figures over, bit by bit, quite as an uninspired translator might have done," wrote N. L. Nelson.[105] "He now redoubled his efforts," wrote Sjodahl, a Church historian, "to understand them, . . . and in seven years his translation of the Book of Abraham was ready for the press."[106] The idea that "the translation came to him very largely as the result of persistent study"[107] is borne out in a story that the late Preston Nibley used to tell of how in 1906 he visited the Nauvoo House in company with President Joseph F. Smith. President Smith (as Elder Nibley recollected with his remarkable memory) recalled with tears the familiar sight of "Uncle Joseph" kneeling on

"The Prophet's work on the Egyptian alphabet was never presented as revelation."

the floor of the front room with Egyptian manuscripts spread out all around him, weighted down by rocks and books, as with intense concentration he would study a line of characters, jotting down his impressions in a little notebook as he went.

"This afternoon," the Prophet reported, "I labored on the Egyptian alphabet, in company with Brothers Oliver Cowdery and W. W. Phelps, and during the research, the principles of astronomy as understood by Father Abraham and the ancients unfolded to our understanding."[108] Here the Prophet received information on two different levels, according to a procedure prescribed by revelation: ". . . you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right. . . ." (D&C 9:8.) The revelation may or may not confirm one's studied conclusions. Joseph Smith's work, here mentioned, on the Egyptian alphabet was never accepted or even presented to the Church as revelation, and no one is bound by it;[109] but the zeal and application of the brethren was rewarded by a revelation that far transcended any intellectual efforts of man. It is this revelation that is comprised in the Pearl of Great Price, and it is by it and others like it that one may judge the Prophet Joseph, and *not* by such preliminary gropings as the so-called Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar, which was never completed, never released for publication, and, so far as we have been able to discover, never even mentioned in public. Granted that diligent searching and study may be a preliminary to receiving revelation, the revelation when it comes is certainly not to be judged by them. We are not only permitted but also instructed to cast about for possible solutions in our minds before the real solution is given us, and if we find Joseph Smith doing just that, we should not rush to point out possible flaws in his preliminary speculations as proof that he was not inspired.

Where translation is concerned, Joseph Smith also operated on two levels, with no danger of confusing the two. At no time did he claim that the gift of tongues is constant or permanent; like all gifts of the Spirit, it is bestowed when and as God chooses. The Prophet stated publicly more than once that he had to study languages the hard way, like anyone else, when not actually receiving revelation.[110] And so we must allow him the luxury of having his own ideas about things, and making his own mistakes and his own translations as long as he plays the game fairly and never presents them as binding on others.

Since Bishop Spalding's avowed purpose is to test the Book of Mormon with the strictest objectivity and scientific rigor, he is off to a poor start in asking us to judge it entirely on the merits of another translation, undertaken under different circumstances and by a different method, and in turn to judge that *other* translation solely on the basis of a third source, the three Facsimiles, which were *not* an integral part of the Book of Abraham. But what has all this got to do with translating anyway? This brings us to—

(2) Bishop Spalding's second spurious proposition, which is that he is testing the Prophet's competence as a *translator*; indeed, the title of his book is *Joseph Smith Jr. as a Translator*. His whole object, as he explains it, is to show that "the whole body of belief" based on Joseph Smith's teachings must be "repudiated" because "the *translation* of the 'Book of Abraham' is incorrect."[111] What, then, are we to think when we search through the interpretations of Joseph Smith that Spalding submitted to the authorities, and also the interpretations that they sent back to him in reply, and discover that in all of them *there is not a single word of translation!* "It may be said," wrote S. A. B. Mercer in summing up the position of the critics, "that not one of the jury pretended to translate the poorly copied hieroglyphics," instead of which they "interpreted the figures," a very different thing, as Mercer admits.[112]

Dr. Spalding's experts, with Dr. Mercer in the lead, insist from first to last that the whole issue is a linguistic one. "I speak as a linguist," wrote Mercer, "when I say that if Smith knew Egyptian and correctly interpreted the facsimiles . . . then I don't know a word of Egyptian, and Erman's Grammar is a fake, and all modern Egyptologists are deceived."[113] As for the others, they "did not condemn the Prophet's translations because of religious prejudices. . . . They condemned it purely on linguistic grounds," expressing "a scorn which was due to the crudeness of the linguistic work of the Prophet."[114] Almost everyone, including the Mormons, has been fooled here,[115] taking it for granted that we have a band of learned linguists carefully examining the work of Joseph Smith as a translator. We have nothing of the sort. There is a serious discrepancy here between the claims of the experts and their performance.

In the first place, it is claimed that Egyptologists (and Spalding's experts are supposed to be tops) can read Egyptian with the greatest of ease. Professor E. J. Banks, who spent some time in Salt Lake City in 1915 in a mopping-up operation for Bishop Spalding, made much of this. "At the time Smith's translation was made," he wrote in *The Christian Herald*, "no man could prove that it was not correct, for the hieroglyphics could not then be read; but now they are as easily read by scholars as the page of an English book."[116] "The Book of Abraham was Smith's weak point," he wrote elsewhere, propounding a thesis that was to be repeated in our own day: "He did not foresee that in time the Egyptian hieroglyphics . . . would become as clear as English characters; that the Egyptian drawings would be perfectly intelligible, and that the deception would become like an open book."[117] And then comes the announcement: "Since then the Egyptian language

"Only B. H. Roberts took the experts to task for not translating the hieroglyphics."

has become perfectly intelligible."[118] One member of Spalding's jury declared that "Egyptian characters can now be read almost as easily as Greek,"[119] and another (Mercer) could say, "We have many documents from all Egyptian periods, from earlier than 3,000 B.C. down, and they can all be read with comparative ease."[120]

Well, then, why didn't they translate the hieroglyphics on the Facsimiles? Only B. H. Roberts took them to task on this. "It should also be remembered," he wrote, "that these savants in their interpretation of the facsimiles . . . give us no translation of what might be thought, by the layman, to be the 'script' of the text, namely, the small characters around the border. . . ."[121] "If, as one of the jury declares, 'Egyptian characters can now be read almost as easily as Greek,' one wonders how it is that one or the other of the plates was not completely translated and its story exhaustively told. Can it be that the Egyptologists are not as sure of their knowledge of ancient Egyptian script as . . . Dr. Mace would lead us to believe they are?"[122]

Professor Mercer's angry reply to this was to accuse Roberts of being an amateur: as "a layman in things Egyptian, he confuses the interpretation of figures with the translation of hieroglyphs. . . ."[123]—which is exactly what Mercer did when he repeatedly declared, on the basis of the interpretation of figures alone, that the experts had proven that Joseph Smith had failed as a translator of hieroglyphics. Mercer went on to explain that "while the translation of ignorantly copied hieroglyphs is a precarious proceeding, the interpretation of Egyptian figures is a comparatively simple matter."[123] Precisely, and that is exactly why we are pleased that Dr. Spalding has called upon the world's foremost authorities, the few men who *can* master the more "precarious proceeding" while leaving the "comparatively simple" guessing games to the less magnificently endowed. "It would be an excellent move," R. C. Webb suggested, "if some of these experts should make a translation of these inscriptions, of which they know so much, but which, according to others again, are illegible."[124] He also pointed out the interesting fact that Joseph Smith did not rush into giving a translation of any of the hieroglyphs —why not, since in his day they were perfectly meaningless anyway, and no one could call him to account? This, combined with the exceedingly *un*obvious interpretations that the Prophet gave to many of the more obvious figures, suggests to Webb that Smith was neither one of those naive enthusiasts who interpret Egyptian inscriptions like simple picture-writing, nor a sly deceiver who could easily have exploited those illegible little squiggles that made no sense even to Spalding's experts.[125]

But why didn't any of the Spalding jury translate any of the hieroglyphics on the Facsimiles? It was an embarrassing question. Of course they protested that the figures were too badly copied to be legible[126]—that was their escape hatch; but unfortunately they were very careless about locking it, for there was no agreement as to what was legible and what was not. "Did you not notice in the letters received by you," Dr. John A. Widtsoe asked Bishop Spalding, "that some of the scholars were unable to read the characters surrounding the main picture, while one declares them to be the usual funeral inscriptions? Did you not know that M. Deveria seemed able to decipher many of them? As a scientific investigator, why did you not satisfy us on this point?"[127] "How can it be," he asked elsewhere, "that from Mr. Deveria to Dr. Barton some imply that they are able to read the hieroglyphics easily; others only with difficulty, and some not at all? . . . Why is such Egyptian darkness hovering over the translation of Plate 2? Is it probable that Egyptologists cannot read it? Some have so stated."[128] Mr. Webb struck close to home when he said, ". . . we may judge of the finality of the 'scholarly' conclusions, which are now being featured as the 'death warrant' of Smith's reputation as a translator, by the ability of these scholars to translate on their own account. . . . I want to call your attention to the Professor's [Mercer's] easy avoidance of . . . the question of whether the hieroglyphic figures on Plates 2 and 3 are really legible or not." And he goes on to point out that whereas Sayce and Petrie declared the characters totally illegible, Professor Breasted believed they could be readily identified.[120]

The Mormons were well within their rights when they chided the critics for giving up so easily: to ask them to give up their religion on the authority of a test which the experts themselves were unwilling or unable to carry through to the end was too much. After all, "ignorantly copied" hieroglyphs are nothing new in the experience of any Egyptologist—they are the rule rather than the exception,

an occupational hazard with which the specialist must live on familiar terms. "Scholars should not shrink from translating difficult texts," Sir Allan H. Gardiner admonishes his colleagues. "At the best they may be lucky enough to hit upon the right renderings. At the worst they will have given the critics a target to tilt at."[130] But to set themselves up as targets was the one thing that the Spalding jury was determined to avoid. They placed themselves in a very awkward position by speaking with great confidence, even arrogance, of documents they could not read; they would flunk Joseph Smith in a test they could not pass themselves. They could not very well refuse to take the test, either, because in claiming intimate familiarity with the material they provided the solution to the problem of the badly copied hieroglyphs.

If the hieroglyphics were so badly copied as to be totally illegible, B. H. Roberts asked, "how may the learned gentlemen pronounce upon them with such certainty . .?"[131] " . . . none of them offers an interpretation of the inscriptions [of Facsimile 2]," J. M. Sjodahl observed. "This is all the more remarkable because they all agree that the object is very familiar to Egyptian scholars."[132] The experts weren't so helpless after all. In fact, the solution was staring them in the face: the pictures could be easily interpreted, Dr. Mercer observed, "because the *same* figures are to be found on many similar Egyptian papyri where the text can be easily read."[133] If a scene is badly drawn, we have only to go to many better-executed drawings of the same scene to discover how it should look and how it should be interpreted. And the same, of course, holds true of the hieroglyphics that go along with the pictures. Many important Egyptian writings occur in numerous copies found in tombs or on the walls of temples; literary classics, copied over and over again as exercises by schoolboys, have often come down to us in a variety of hands. So every Egyptologist is bound at some time in his life to spend a good deal of time comparing badly written or damaged texts with better ones to find out what the clumsier scribe is trying to convey.

Hence, Bishop Spalding's learned jury hardly needed Dr. Widtsoe to suggest that since "the museums on both sides of the water" are stocked with papyri identical to those in the Pearl of Great Price, "they might have been examined to secure the counterparts of Joseph Smith's 'hieroglyphs.' "[134] Isaac Russel, another layman and a non-Mormon, suggested the same procedure in cracking the code of the hypocephalus (Fac. 2): "Another worthwhile phase of the matter would perhaps be now to turn to hypocephali and collect and compare *all* of them."[135] That, after all, would be the sensible way to go about it. Since Professor Breasted had stated as his principal objection to the claims of Joseph Smith that the scene in Facsimile 1 occurs "unnumbered thousands of times" and that of Facsimile 3 "is depicted innumerable times" in Egyptian art,[136] it was only fair of the Mormons to ask him to supply them with just *one* such identical scene for study: "If the doctor would kindly refer such to any books or museum collections in which a few of these 'scores' could be found and studied, he would confer a distinct favor."[137] But no such assistance was forthcoming, though Breasted had declared himself to be immensely interested in the subject. Dr. Mercer gives himself away when he announces that "while the *figures* are copied fairly well, the *hieroglyphs*, with the exception of some simple signs, are incorrectly copied . . . the unusual and complicated signs are always wrongly copied."[138] This means that Mercer is in a position to give us the correct version of the badly copied texts since he knows what the proper characters should be, and with it, of course, a translation. Why doesn't he? Here a word is in order on the translation of Egyptian in general.

"They never did get around to testing Joseph Smith as a translator."

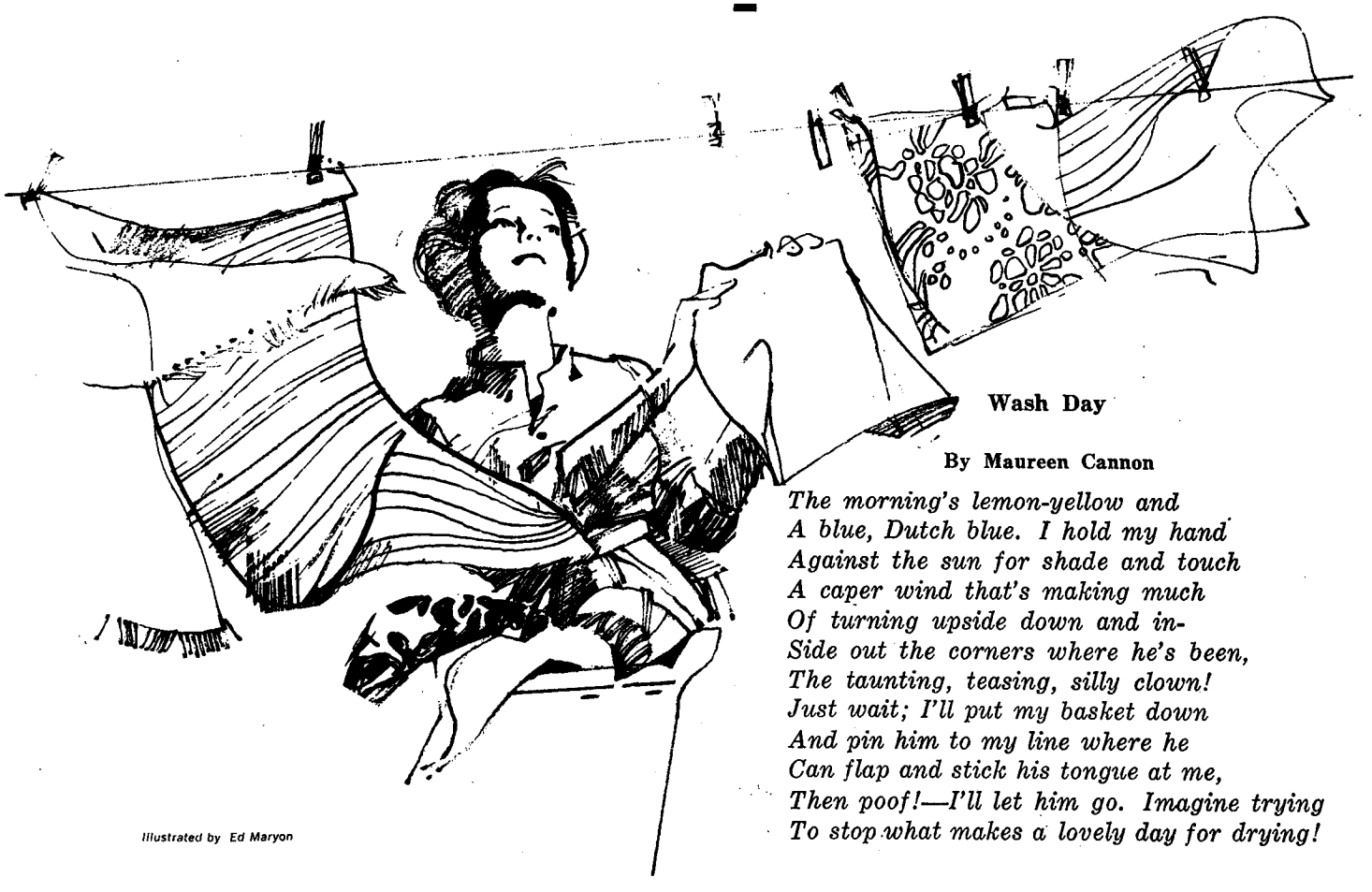
". . . it is unsafe," writes Professor Albright, "to rely on any translations of Egyptian historical texts which appeared before Breasted's *Ancient Records* (1906), since Breasted was the first historian to take full advantage of the tremendous progress in the knowledge of Egyptian achieved by Erman and Sethe after 1880. It is equally unsafe to depend on any translations of Egyptian religious texts made before about 1925, since that year marked the publication of the first volume of the great Berlin dictionary. . . . The first reliable English translations of Egyptian religious texts appeared in Blackman's *Literature of the Ancient Egyptians* (1927), and Breasted's *Dawn of Conscience* (1933)."[139] Since that was written there have been more important changes, but where does that leave our experts of 1912? Elder Richard W. Young pointed to the current issue of the *Britannica*, which stated that the Egyptologist who has long lived in the realm of conjecture

"is too prone to consider any series of guesses good enough to serve as a translation," and forgets to insert the notes of interrogation which would warn workers in other fields from implicit trust.[140] Implicit trust in his eight Egyptologists is exactly what Dr. Spalding had and what he demanded of all others: with anything less than implicit trust his whole project collapses. And they never did get around to testing Joseph Smith as a translator. ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[96]S. A. B. Mercer, in *The Utah Survey,* Vol. 1 (Sept. 1913), p. 5.
[97]John Henry Evans, in *Era,* Vol. 16 (1913), p. 346.
[98]F. S. Spalding, *Joseph Smith as Translator,* p. 18.
[99]*Deseret News,* Dec. 17, 1912, p. 4.
[100]F. J. Pack, in *Era,* Vol. 16, pp. 337-39.
[101]F. J. Pack, in *Deseret News,* Dec. 21, 1912, p. 105.
[102]J. M. Sjodahl, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 327.
[103]*Documentary History of the Church,* Vol. 2, pp. 520-21.
[104]C. E. Haggerty, *A Study of the Book of Abraham* (BYU Thesis, 1946), p. 21.
[105]See Wilford Woodruff's *Journal* for February 19, 1842.
[106]N. L. Nelson, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 604.
[107]J. M. Sjodahl, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 604.
[108]F. J. Pack, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 335.
[109]*DHC,* Vol. 2, p. 286.
[110]We have treated this theme in *BYU Studies,* Spring 1968.
[111]See Hugh Nibley, *The Myth Makers* (Salt Lake: Bookcraft, 1961), pp. 271-72. The whole Caswall story was an attempt to discredit Joseph Smith as a translator.
[112]F. S. Spalding, *op. cit.,* pp. 12-13, 18.
[113]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 612.
[114]*Ibid.,* p. 615.
[115]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Utah Survey,* Vol. 1, p. 7.
[116]See C. H. Haggerty, *op. cit.,* p. 22. T. E. Lyon, *Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: LDS Department of Education, 1948), p. 221, holds that since the engraver of the facsimiles was "unfamiliar with the Egyptian language," the inaccurate results attest only "the reality of the existence of the manuscript and the translation" rather than the authenticity of the one and the correctness of the other.
[117]E. J. Banks, in *The Literary Digest,* July 10, 1915, p. 66.
[118]E. J. Banks, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 774.
[119]*Ibid.,* p. 775.
[120]A. C. Mace, quoted by B. H. Roberts, in *Deseret News,* Dec. 19, 1912, p. 10.
[121]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 612.
[122]B. H. Roberts, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 321.
[123]B. H. Roberts, in *Deseret News,* Dec. 19, 1912, p. 10.
[124]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Utah Survey,* Vol. 1, p. 25, and *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 612.
[125]R. C. Webb, in *Deseret News,* July 5, 1913, p. 4.
[126]R. C. Webb, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 436.
[127]Mercer, *Utah Survey,* Vol. 1, p. 24. We treat this theme later.
[128]John A. Widtsoe, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 457.
[129]*Ibid.,* p. 618.
[130]R. C. Webb, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 1078.
[131]A. H. Gardiner, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology,* Vol. 32 (1946), p. 58.
[132]B. H. Roberts, in *Salt Lake Tribune,* Dec. 15, 1912, reprinted in *Deseret News,* Dec. 19, 1912, p. 10.
[133]J. M. Sjodahl, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 329.
[134]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Utah Survey,* Vol. 1, p. 9.
[135]John A. Widtsoe, in *Era,* Vol. 16, pp. 456-57.
[136]J. Russell, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 1099.
[137]Spalding, *Joseph Smith as Translator,* p. 26.
[138]R. C. Webb, in *Deseret News,* July 5, 1913, Section 3, p. viii, Col. 4.
[139]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Utah Survey,* Vol. 1, pp. 8-9.
[140]W. F. Albright, in G. E. Wright and F. V. Filson, *Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible,* 1945 ed., p. 12.
[141]R. W. Young, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 462, citing *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 1910 ed., s.v. "Egypt," p. 55.

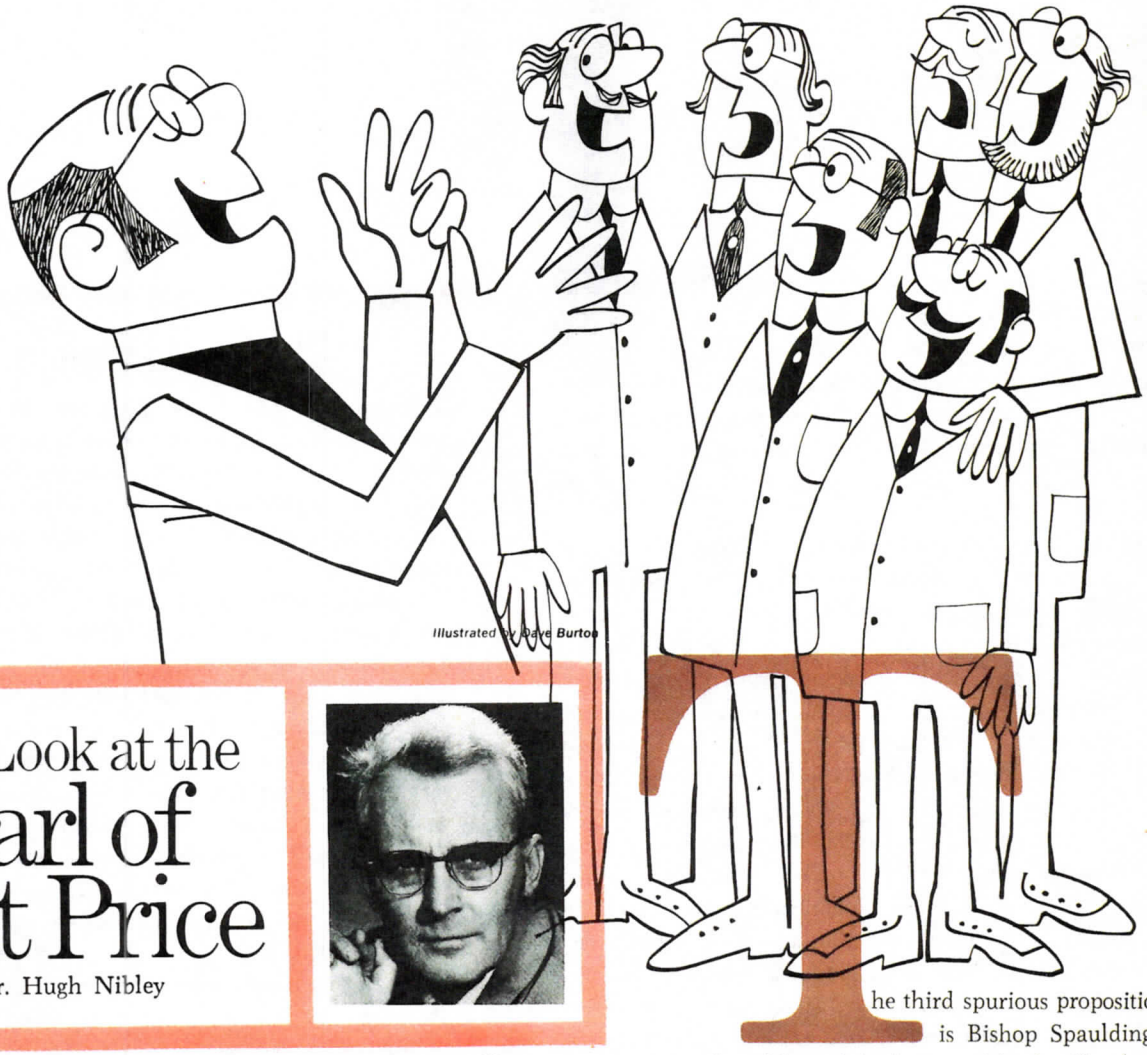


Illustrated by Ed Maryon

Wash Day

By Maureen Cannon

The morning's lemon-yellow and
A blue, Dutch blue. I hold my hand
Against the sun for shade and touch
A caper wind that's making much
Of turning upside down and in-
Side out the corners where he's been,
The taunting, teasing, silly clown!
Just wait; I'll put my basket down
And pin him to my line where he
Can flap and stick his tongue at me,
Then poof!—I'll let him go. Imagine trying
To stop what makes a lovely day for drying!



Illustrated by Dave Burton

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

Part I. Challenge and Response (Continued)

The third spurious proposition is Bishop Spaulding's announcement that "the original text with the Prophet's translation are [sic] available for our investigation."[141] This statement, as Professor Pack noted, "is a very misleading one. In the first place, we do not have the original text, at most only three small fragments of it. . . . In the second place these fragments cannot be considered as forming part of the text of the Book of Abraham."[142] But Dr. Pack has overlooked the most important point of all, which is that the "three small fragments" themselves are by no means the *original* text. And that is an all-important point, since if our experts are to pass judgment on Smith's understanding of any document, they must absolutely see what it is that he is interpreting or translating. As we shall see, the experts accused Joseph Smith and the Mormons of making significant alterations in their reproductions of the Facsimiles, and even of out-and-out invention of some of the figures: without the originals we cannot test these very grave charges. Professor E. J. Banks, discoursing at the University of Utah, pontifically declared that "the Mormon elders made a fatal mistake" when they talked about papyri, because "the inscriptions are not upon papyrus, but upon small clay objects . . . ," which news went abroad to the

Spalding leads them in a
chorus of denunciation of the Prophet sung in
perfect unison, but when the parties undertake to sing solo
without his direction, strange things begin to happen.

world in the pages of the eminent *Literary Digest*.[143] Again, only if we have the originals can we give a definitive reply to such wild accusations. In 1842 an article in the *New York Herald* actually declared that the papyri did not come from Egypt at all, but were "discovered, we presume by Joseph Smith's grandfather."[144] Only the original documents could prove to the world that they were not forgeries.

When we come to discuss the Facsimiles one by one, we shall have occasion to note what drastic alterations they have suffered through the years at the hands of their various copyists. Here let us briefly indicate by way of illustration the sort of indignities that these much-reproduced documents have had to put up with. To cite a recent example, the 1965 printing of George Reynolds' and J. M. Sjodahl's valuable *Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price* is adorned by a dust jacket depicting in greatly magnified form the impressive figure of a lion-headed deity seated on a throne in a boat—obviously Figure 3 in Facsimile 2. But in earlier engravings of the facsimile, as well as in other hypocephali resembling it, the figure has not a lion's head, which makes no sense, but the head of an ibis, which makes very good sense. Again, the crocodile that lurks at the bottom of Facsimile 1 was actually turned into a *cat* in the official English reproduction of 1842! In earlier reproductions Figure 2 in Facsimile 2 is seen holding a long staff, surmounted by the well-known jackal standard, but in later editions of the Pearl of Great Price, including the one in use today, the staff has disappeared with the result that many Latter-day Saints insist on seeing in the jackal (turned upside down!) the figure of a bird. It is as if the Mormons had felt that these drawings, since they are mere symbols anyway, may be copied pretty much as one pleases.

But when Bishop Spalding sent by far the worst copies of all to his eight judges with the announcement that they were in a position to criticize "the original text," he was way out of bounds. As recently as 1963 an eminent Egyptologist mistook the *wdjat*-eye of Figure 7 in Facsimile 2 for a *fan*—an egregious blunder justifiable solely on the grounds of bad copying. Until scholars have access to the original documents, their conclusions based on the old engravings can only be regarded as tentative.

(4) Another mistaken premise, and one by which almost everybody is taken in, is, in the words of the *New York Times*, that "the sacred Mormon text was susceptible of accurate and complete analysis," and had actually received the "thoughtful consideration of the world's foremost Orien-

We Should Explain

● The first draft of this series of articles was written some years before the Church came into possession of the recently acquired papyri, and had already been slated to appear in the Era when big news broke. They were never meant as an examination of the new evidence, though they do provide a necessary approach to it. Since the new problems could not be dealt with instantly, and the preliminary material was already at hand, it was decided to release the historical background material while working on the other.

Many people have asked impatiently why the Church has not put the papyri into the hands of the learned. The answer is simple: it is because they have already been in the hands of recognized scholars for many years, although no Latter-day Saint was even aware of their existence until about two years ago. At no time have the manuscripts not been just as available to Egyptologists as they are now to members of the Church. Since the Church obtained them, they have been made available to everyone. It is not the Mormons who have kept the documents out of the hands of the scholars but the other way around. If it had not been for Professor Aziz S. Atiya, we should still know nothing about the papyri; he is in a very real sense their discoverer.

With the sudden appearance of the long-lost papyri and the great surge of popular interest in the Pearl of Great Price and in things Egyptian, it was necessary, before everything else, to take precautions against certain basic misunderstandings. First of all, a preliminary notice was in order—just enough to make it clear that we were quite aware that some of the fragments were obviously from the Book of the Dead and that Joseph Smith had engaged in extensive speculation about some of the writings which, in the present state of our knowledge, no one is obligated to accept as scripture. Along with this we took the calculated risk of offending both defenders and critics of the Book of Abraham in order to forestall premature speculations and hasty conclusions.

The critics of the Pearl of Great Price, like those of the Book of Mormon, have always had a weakness for instant solutions. As soon as anyone starts putting a long equation on the blackboard or begins to demonstrate the steps in the solution of an involved problem, these students cry out, "Never mind all that—you are only stalling; give us the

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Many proofs of the experts' conclusions were promised—

but none ever came.

answer!" They would prefer to have the teacher say, "Students, I am a mathematician, and the answer is zero because I say so. Class dismissed." This has been the ingratiating method of the Pearl of Great Price critics from the beginning. But it is not enough to tell people what we think the answer is to this particular problem; we want them to see why we believe our answer is right, and to understand how it has been derived. We have been taken to task for quoting in reply to the Egyptologists of 1912 the observations of Mormons who were not Egyptologists. We quoted them because what they said was to the point, and the Egyptologists never answered them. One does not have to be a meteorologist to report that the sky is clear or that it is snowing.

As an example of how complicated the issues can become, we call attention to the March 1968 issue of a privately but widely circulated news sheet, "The Salt Lake City Messenger," announcing in characteristically sensational headlines "The Fall of the Book of Abraham." At last!

The publishers of the news sheet were kind enough to provide the reader with a demonstration of their Egyptology at work, in the form of a transcription and translation by a Mr. Hewards of a section of one of the LDS papyri. The picture of a swallow on the fragment makes it possible for even the rankest amateur like this writer to spot at once the corresponding passage in Budge's much-published translation as Chapter 86 of the Book of the Dead. The student who takes the pains to compare Budge's translation of Ani, Mr. Hewards' purported translation of the LDS fragment, and the LDS fragment itself will soon discover that Mr. H. is not translating the LDS fragment at all, but simply paraphrasing Budge. The papyrus of Ani and the LDS fragment are much alike, but they are far from identical, and whenever the two differ it is the text of Budge that Mr. H. translates, in the language of Budge, and NOT the LDS manuscript, which he claims to be reading. Space will not allow here the presentation of the many passages in the translation in which this is glaringly apparent.

This is another example of a principle that has been only too fully illustrated in Pearl of Great Price criticism, namely, that it is easy to fool the public on matters of which the public knows nothing. No one is more eager than this writer to get out of the critical Slough of Despond and start discussing the wonderful discoveries that are now casting a strange new light on the Book of Abraham. But before we can do that, we must deal with a lot of preliminary questions that others have raised.—H.N.

talists."[145] How much thoughtful consideration they gave is apparent in the exceeding brevity of their letters, in which they still had time to drop such revealing tags as, "It is difficult to deal seriously with Joseph Smith's impudent fraud . . ." (Sayce); ". . . notes to his facsimiles cannot be taken seriously by any scholar . . ." (Mercer); "The 'Book of Abraham,' it is hardly necessary to say, is a pure fabrication . . ." (Mace); "His interpretations are of course all rubbish!" (H. Woodward, 1903); ". . . the professed explanations are too absurd to be noticed . . ." (Petrie); ". . . rather comical . . . amusing ignorance . . ." (Peters).

If such individuals could not take the thing seriously, they should have turned the assignment over to others who would be willing to do so if only for the sake of argument. When the Mormons objected to the offhanded and contemptuous treatment this very important subject was getting, Dr. Mercer replied by admitting that "ill-temper was shown," that "animus [was] evident," and that "several of the scholars were disgusted with what they sincerely believed to be an imposition. . . ."[146] He also admitted that "the reply of each scholar was brief, very little time being devoted to a study of the Prophet's work in general." He could, however, readily explain both their haste and their superficiality: as to the first, "it required only a glance to find out that the interpretation and the translation were absolutely wrong in every detail." As to the second, "the scholars felt that linguistically . . . the subject was not worth much of their valuable time. Hence their brief replies."[147] However, the Mormons could rest assured that they had received the full treatment, since the final estimate, presented by Mercer himself, was given "as sincerely and as scientifically as possible."[148]

How strange then, that Bishop Spalding, joining his voice with Mercer's in the final benediction, defends himself by declaring that his "pamphlet makes no pretention of being a scientific treatise."[149] Widtsoe the scientist was properly amazed. Here, surely, is a strange turn of things after all that talk of "thoughtful consideration" and "accurate and complete analysis." "I was amazed, therefore, to read in your letter, your vigorous refusal to become classed as scientific, and your denial of any intent to conduct such an inquiry." This opens the panel of judges to the charge of "careless superficiality. Your work has only begun. You must either admit defeat or you must carry on to the end."[150] Again the impulsive Mercer admitted that there was more to be done, but met the challenge only with clumsy evasion in the declaration "that many proofs of the

correctness of his conclusions could be furnished if desired."[151] But when the Mormons were most outspoken in their desire, none of the many proofs were forthcoming.

The Spalding party cannot have it both ways. They cannot claim a calm, thorough, scientific investigation while admitting ill-temper, haste, and indifference. We are not interested in the reasons, however valid, for denying "accurate and complete analysis" to the Facsimiles; we are only interested in the fact that it was denied. Granted that the experts had the best reasons in the world for not bothering to give thoughtful consideration to the documents, by discussing those reasons Mercer has effectively refuted Bishop Spalding's claim that thoughtful consideration *was* given. Also, we are not interested in *why* the authorities could not read the hieroglyphs; their excuses are perfectly legitimate, and what they amount to is an admission that the problem is too hard for them—they have flunked the test. Very well, we may dismiss them without prejudice; they cannot be held responsible if they are given a text to read that is, for whatever reason, beyond their capacity. But in leaving the room, let them not boast of their triumphs, and gloat over what they consider the manifest incapacity of others. After Mercer's long reply, the experts absolutely refused to discuss the matter any further; even Professor Breasted, "who seems very much interested in the matter," according to Mercer, ". . . thinks that there is nothing further to add. . . . thinks it almost useless to reply."[152] "Almost" is not good enough with so much at stake; Dr. Widtsoe could make allowances for the scholars, "busy men who are anxious to get back to their work," but hardly for Bishop Spalding, who had started and engineered the whole thing: "It was your investigation, not theirs."[153] Just when the Mormons "hoped for an exhaustive discussion" after the very brief preliminaries, Spalding banged the door, deftly evading all the real questions, as Sjodahl observed, while "at the same time the pamphlet is being circulated, and the impression goes out with it that it is unanswered and unanswerable. . . . This, we say, is the impression which the Bishop permits to go forth, by ignoring the other side of the argument."[154]

(5) Another basic proposition of Dr. Spaulding, and one that is vital to his case, is that among the experts there is practically complete agreement as to the real meaning of the hieroglyphics.[155] Aside from the fact that none of the hieroglyphics had been read is the not minor consideration that the experts agreed on one point only—and they were agreed on that before they ever heard from Bishop Spalding. They "join without a dissenting paragraph in the condemnation" of Smith.[156] That is easy enough to explain without even any reference to religion: Joseph Smith as a rank outsider was bound to call forth "sundry expressions of contempt at the efforts of a non-professional translator,"[157] for, as R. C. Webb observes, it is only natural "that a person trained in any given line should view with impatience the efforts of one not so trained."[158] This is particularly so in the case of Egyptologists, for reasons already noted; also, they are incurable individualists, and even more impatient of each other's ignorance than most professionals—the one thing that could make them close ranks and agree was the intrusion of an outsider.[159] "They agree, to be sure, in denouncing Smith's captions," wrote Webb, "but this is not surprising—denouncing Smith is a sort of habit—but they disagree on all other points."[160]

Presidents Francis M. Lyman and Joseph J. Cannon in the British Mission had commented on this interesting phenomenon some years before, when some English Egyptologists had given their opinion of the interpretation of the Facsimiles: "We were very much struck by their unity in declaring the Prophet's interpretations bosh, rubbish, and the extremely wide differences between their own interpretations."[161] It was the same in 1903 as in 1912: perfect unanimity in denouncing Joseph Smith, and disagreement in everything else. Here we see the wisdom of having no collusion among the experts—Spalding leads them in a chorus of denunciation of the Prophet sung in perfect unison, but when the parties undertake to sing solo without his direction, strange things begin to happen.

Professor George Barton innocently gave the game away when he wrote: "In reality these disagreements are simply marks that the scholars wrote without collusion."[162] Precisely; on particular points on which they comment without collusion and without reference to Joseph Smith, they fail signally to agree; but when they mention Joseph Smith, it is in a context of prior understanding in which they have seen eye to eye all their lives.

The Mormon amateurs had a field day listing the points of disagreement that emerged every time the authorities ventured to give scholarly opinions of their own—apart from their one common article of faith about Joseph Smith. In reply, the Spalding party was forced to fall back on the most desperate and bankrupt authoritarianism, insisting that while to the amateur the differences might appear glaring enough, "the expert sees no discrepancy,"—"an argument [writes Webb] unworthy of him [Mercer] or of

"On not a single point do all the authorities agree, and no two of

any other person professing to be a careful scholar."[163] We need not list all the points of disagreement here;[164] it will be enough to give a sampling of opinions regarding Facsimile 1:

Deveria (whose authority is later accepted by Spalding): ". . . the soul of Osiris in the form of a hawk . . . Osiris reviving on the funeral couch. The god Anubis bringing about the resurrection of Osiris."

Petrie: ". . . the well known scene of Anubis preparing the body of a dead man. Figure 1 is the hawk Horus. Figure 2 is the dead person. Figure 3 is Anubis."

Breasted: "Number 1 depicts a figure reclining on a couch, with a priest officiating. . . . The reclining figure . . . represents Osiris rising from the dead. Over his head is a bird, in which form Isis is represented."

Peters: "Apparently the plate . . . represents an embalmer preparing a body for burial. At the head the soul (Kos) is flying away in the form of a bird. . . . In the waters below the earth I see a crocodile waiting to seize and devour the dead if he be not properly protected by ritual embalming."

Meyer: ". . . the body of the dead lying on a Ba' (bier) . . . the soul in the shape of a bird flying above it, and a priest approaching it."

Lythgoe: ". . . merely the usual scene of the mummy upon its bier. The idolatrous priest . . . was [Dr. Lythgoe explained] merely the familiar figure of the god Anubis, 'protector of mummies' . . . leaning over it in a position as if to keep it from harm."

Professors Sayce, Mace, and Mercer have nothing whatever to say about Facsimile 1, which made the Mormons wonder, since precisely these three were the most outspoken of all in denouncing Joseph Smith, thus seeming to confirm the rule that the less real knowledge one has, the more one must rely on bluster and invective.

This leaves us with six brief statements (one by the outsider Deveria) pointing out only the salient and obvious features of a thoroughly familiar scene. On not a single point do all the authorities agree, and no two of them agree on all points. What to some is just a dead man is to others Osiris himself; what to some is an ordinary priest or embalmer about to cut open a cadaver is to others Anubis himself, leaning over the body to protect it; what to some is a body being laid away is to others a man rising from the dead; what to some is a man's soul flying away is to another the Horus hawk approaching and to yet others the lady Isis.

It was entirely fitting and proper for the Mormons to make the most of these discrepancies, for they are by no means minor ones. The scholars go out of their way to hammer home the point that the things which Joseph Smith had misinterpreted were painfully obvious to any scholar. The learned jury had been allowed to make the problem as easy as possible for themselves—and us—and had chosen to interpret only the easiest, most familiar, and most important figures in the drawings, telling us that if Joseph Smith had known the first thing about Egyptian he could not possibly have missed the meaning of everything as he did. They felt as the critics of 1845 felt, that "the whole thing is too gross to bear patiently, too painful to laugh at," in view of the "familiar and now understood ideographic character of Egyptian. . . ." That is why Mercer could write: "It is complained that the scholars did not interpret all the figures of these facsimiles. . . . They probably felt as I did, that their time was too valuable to spend on such scientific work as that of Joseph Smith's guesses [which] . . . cannot be taken seriously by any scholar."[165]

What we have here, the experts assure us, is "a well known scene" (Petrie), "merely the usual scene" (Lythgoe), "a very familiar papyrus . . . (the) true meaning is quite obvious and constant . . ." (Mercer), ". . . available in untold thousands" of copies (Breasted). Since all our authorities have seen untold thousands of reproductions of this very scene, one might suppose that they had long since come to perfect agreement as to just what it represents. Even the layman, we learn, is without excuse in such a simple matter, for "five minutes study in an Egyptian gallery of any museum should be enough to convince any educated man of the clumsiness of the imposture,"[166] while "by comparing his notes with any elementary book of Egyptian language and religion" Smith's folly "becomes unquestionably evident."[167] The whole thing is just too easy for words, and that is why we may be permitted to raise an eyebrow when the authorities start giving their various opinions, or hesitating to give them. "The things that puzzled the inspired Mormon translator," the *Times* article reports, "were no puzzle at all to Dr. Lythgoe."[168] Three cheers for Dr. Lythgoe. Only why do his explanations sound so radically different from that which was propounded by his learned colleagues? *(To be continued)*

FOOTNOTES

[141]F. S. Spalding, *Joseph Smith as Translator*, p. 18.
[142]F. J. Pack, in *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 335.
[143]E. J. Banks, in *The Literary Digest*, July 10, 1915, p. 66.
[144]R. G. Bennett, in the *New York Herald*, April 3, 1842, p. 2.

of

them agree on all points."

[145]*New York Times,* Magazine Section, Dec. 29, 1912, p. 12.
[146]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Utah Survey,* Vol. 1, pp. 9, 12.
[147]*Ibid.,* p. 8.
[148]*Ibid.,* p. 4.
[149]F. S. Spalding, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 611.
[150]John A. Widtsoe, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 616.
[151]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Utah Survey,* Vol. 1, p. 11.
[152]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 611.
[153]John A. Widtsoe, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 458.
[154]J. M. Sjodahl, in *Era,* Vol. 16, pp. 1100-01.
[155]Bishop Spalding labors this point in *Era,* Vol. 16, pp. 615-16. "Their comments do not vary in any consequential particular," *New York Times,* Magazine Section, Dec. 29, 1912, p. 5.
[156]*Ibid.,* p. 4.
[157]R. C. Webb, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 453. As an outsider Joseph Smith could only prejudice the experts by not using their terminology, even when giving the same interpretation as theirs; *ibid.,* p. 1079.
[158]*Ibid.,* p. 1077.

[159]In 1947 an attempt was made to organize an international society of Egyptologists, such a society as exists in almost all professions; the attempt was a complete failure. For an example of Egyptologists speaking of each other in much the same terms in which Spalding's jury spoke of Joseph Smith, see A. Wiedemann, in *Receuil des Travaux,* Vol. 8 (1886), p. 143; A. Piehl, *ibid.,* pp. 74-83, and Vol. 8 (1887), pp. 191ff; also Wiedemann, *ibid.,* p. 196, and E. Chassinat, Vol. 20 (1889), pp. 1-31.
[160]R. C. Webb, in *Era,* Vol. 17 (1914), p. 321.
[161]Report of Junius F. Wells, in *Era,* Vol. 16, pp. 341ff.
[162]G. Barton, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 614.
[163]R. C. Webb, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 1080.
[164]There are lists by B. H. Roberts, in *Era,* Vol. 16, pp. 320f, and Vol. 17, pp. 317-20.
[165]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 613.
[166]*New York Times,* Magazine Section, Dec. 29, 1912, p. 4.
[167]S. A. B. Mercer, in Spalding, *Joseph Smith as Translator,* p. 29.
[168]*New York Times, loc. cit.*

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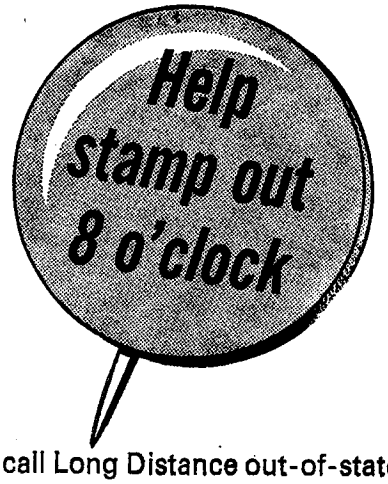

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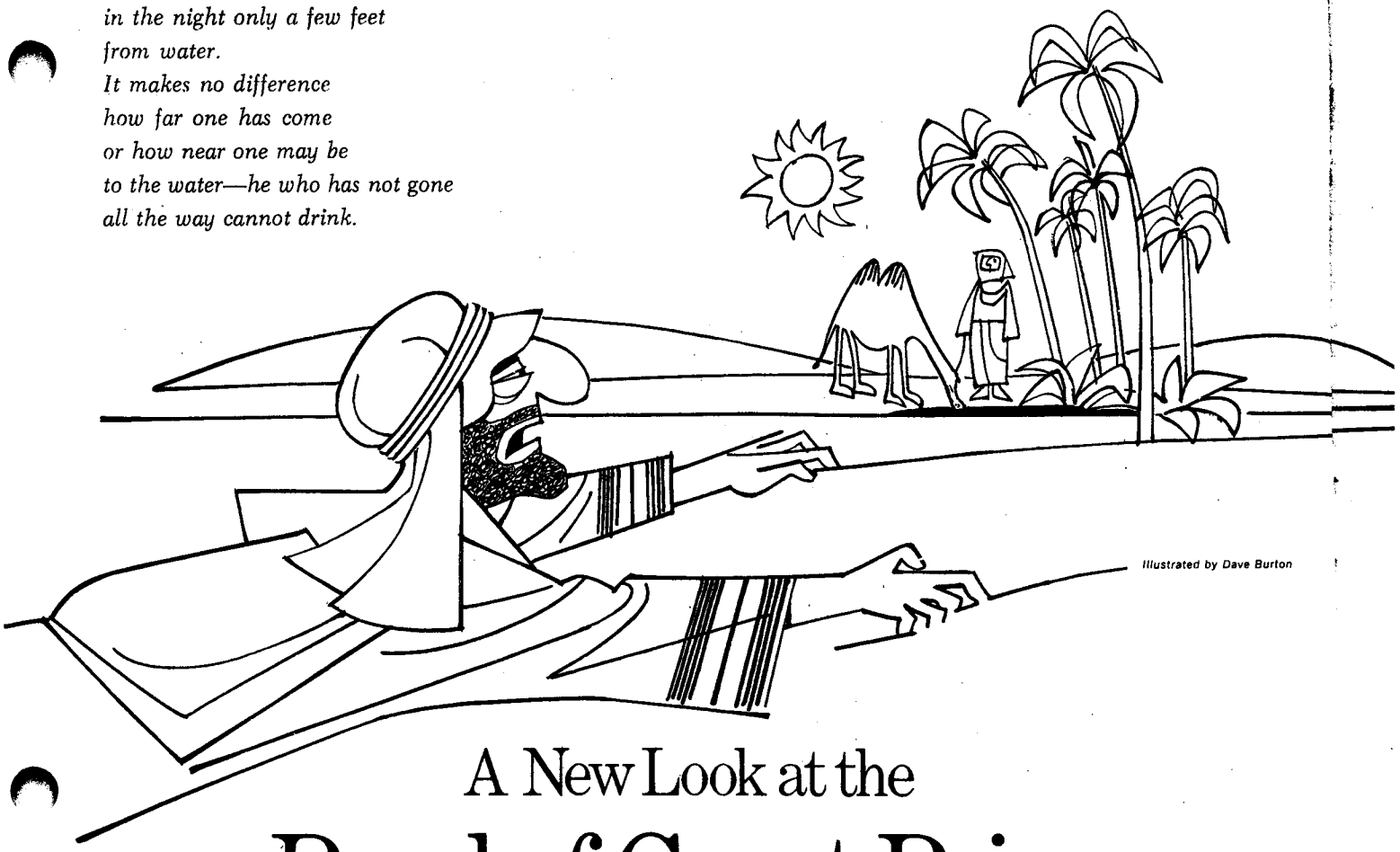


Illustrated by Dave Burton

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

Part 2. May We See Your Credentials?

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

● At this point of the journey some footsore tourists are asking their amateur guide why he insists on leading the party through the Dismal Swamp instead of taking them right to the Giant Redwoods. It is because the Book of Abraham criticism has never gotten out of the bog; we must become familiar with its depressing terrain because we and all the other critics of that book are still stuck in it. The situation today is virtually identical with that of 1912; even the presence on the scene of some of the original papyri, including those used by the Prophet in preparing the text of the Book of Abraham and the Facsimiles with their commentaries, has not raised a single new question, though, as we shall see, it has solved some old ones.[1]

If the knowledge of Egyptologists is greater today than it was in 1912, their authority is less, for it is doubtful whether any living scholar could or should ever hope to enjoy the enormous prestige of a Petrie, Meyer, Breasted, von Bissing, or Sayce. But the appeal is still as much as ever to authority, and that is why it is now high time that somebody ask the question that has never been raised by anybody yet, namely, just how well equipped Dr. Spalding's illustrious jury really were, individually and collectively, to make a pronouncement on the Book of Abraham. That, after all, is the crux of the whole business, and it will remain so as long as it is assumed that whoever knows most about a subject must have all the answers. Bishop Spalding's boast was that he had made "an extensive inquiry among the scholars of the world," and had enlisted the services of "leading scholars throughout the civilized world," his work being thus "an anthology of opinions of authoritative scholars . . . judgments of the world's greatest Egyptologists."[2] At no time did the Mormons or anyone else ever chal-

lenge the right of the committee to its claims to learned preeminence. "I took no issue with the Egyptologists," wrote Dr. John A. Widtsoe. ". . . I shall not allow myself to be drawn into any discussion of the meaning of Egyptian hieroglyphics, which you have agreed to make clear to us."[3]

The big question of the authenticity of the Book of Abraham is one that must be broken down into many smaller questions, and the questions that will occur to various investigators differ greatly, depending on their various lines of approach. An Egyptologist will ask questions that would never occur to a layman, a Bible student will ask questions that one indifferent to the Bible would never think to ask, and a believer will ask questions that mean little or nothing to an unbeliever. Among such questions, that of the competence of any jury to judge of the inspiration of the Pearl of Great Price is entirely irrelevant. Whatever competence any such jury may have is bound to appear inevitably in the nature of the questions *they* ask and the answers they supply. But since in this particular case the board of experts asked no questions (!), and since the professional standing of its members turned out to be not merely the principal but the *only* support for the Spalding thesis, the question of their competence, no matter how impertinent or embarrassing it might be, cannot be avoided. It is the one question that should have been asked before all others, and it so happens that it is also the one question that nobody ever asked.

If "in a matter of this kind [as Spalding puts it] most of us must form our judgment from the opinions of competent experts," the question for all to keep in mind at all times is whether or not the experts have bridged the gap between our world and the world of Abraham. That gap may not be as wide today as it was half a century ago, but it is just as absolute. This is no paradox. Traveling in the "red rock country," one sometimes comes upon an abrupt canyon with sheer walls hundreds of feet high, and must either turn back or seek to find the head of the canyon and go around it. This can make a trip to Canyonlands a very frustrating experience. It makes little difference whether the walls that drop off at our feet are 100 or 1,000 feet high, and it makes no difference at all whether the big gap is 50 feet wide or a mile across—in either case you are stopped cold.

So it is with the Book of Abraham. We either have the knowledge requisite to understanding it all the way or we do not, and we would be just as far from the mark in claiming such knowledge today as the scholars were in 1912. Knowing a lot is not enough: we have heard moving stories of wandering Arabs who have died of thirst in the night only a few feet from water. It makes no difference how far one has come or how near one may be to the water—he who has not gone all the way cannot drink. None have discoursed more eloquently than the Egyptologists themselves on their perennial predicament, which is that though they may be much nearer their goals than they once were, like the benighted Arab they have no means of knowing how much nearer or even whether they have been moving in the right direction or not. Their uncertainty is echoed in a remark of de Rouge: "Champollion had to contend all his life against lively and obstinate opposition. He died, and scholarship stood still for twenty-five years," for the great man's critics "did not even have the courage to profit by his discoveries."[4] The whole history of Egyptology is, as Maspero observed from time to time, a warning against that peculiar overconfidence that is born of a safe and timid conformity. And it is doubtful if any other Egyptologist ever exemplified more fully the predicament of the specialist in that field than Professor S. A. B. Mercer.

As we have seen, the Bishop's right-hand man throughout the controversy was the "Reverend Professor C. A. B. Mercer [Spalding got the initials wrong], Ph.D., Western Theological Seminary, Custodian Hibbard Collection Egyptian Reproductions." The 32-year-old Mercer, with his shiny new two-year-old Ph.D. degree from Munich, had just transferred from a seminary in Kansas to the one in Chicago, there to become "Professor of Hebrew and the Interpretation of the Old Testament."[5] It was Mercer who, after the others had withdrawn, encouraged his superior to carry on: ". . . in this particular case I think you are right in following up what you have already done; and I shall be glad to help you as far as my time will permit. . . ."[6]

Mercer not only spearheaded the attack in 1912 but, interestingly enough, he is the one man who has returned to the fray in our generation, having written as late as 1953 confirming his position of 1912.[7] At last report he was still going strong, and we wish him well, for he was not only a man of great courtesy and kindness but in 1956 sold his splendid Egyptian library, the fruit of a long lifetime of diligent collecting, to the BYU at a price that can only be described as generous. This has put us in possession not only of all of Dr. Mercer's published works, but also of nearly all the Egyptian sources he used in preparing them. Since then we have spent many hundreds of hours among Mercer's books marked with his own countless penciled annotations, and so have come to feel that we know him well, having acquired a very strong and clear impression of the method and depth of his scholarship. Fortunately we can leave all comments on these to authentic Egyptologists whom we quote below.

Of all Bishop Spalding's helpers, Dr. Mercer was by far the hardest on the Mormons. Had he taken any other position than that of absolute certainty of his own sufficiency and fierce and unrelenting denunciation of Joseph Smith, to whom he conceded not the slightest glimmer of sense or integrity, Dr. Mercer would not have been the legitimate target he is, or invited by way of rebuttal examination

"Still harping on translation, the 'clear-cut translation' —and nobody had translated a word!"

of his boasted competence, for never was there a man who was more sure of his scholarship, more wholeheartedly dedicated to the learned establishment as such. The young seminarist is quite intoxicated with the importance of being a recognized scholar; he never lets us forget that he is a scholar speaking with the authority of scholarship. Above all, he prides himself on competence as a linguist. "I speak as a linguist," he wrote in 1912, "when I say that if Smith knew Egyptian and correctly interpreted the facsimiles which were submitted to me, then I don't know a word of Egyptian. Any pupil of mine who would show such absolute ignorance of Egyptian as Smith does, could not possibly expect to get more than a zero in an examination in Egyptology."[8] "If he [Dr. Widtsoe] knew anything about linguistic work of the nature of hieroglyphics he would not ask such question, for any ancient linguist knows that the unanimous testimony of eight scholars is the same as that of eighty and eight."[9] Any linguist knows nothing of the sort, but what a production Dr. Mercer makes of it!

When in 1953 a zealous collector of anti-Mormon tidbits asked Professor Mercer whether he still maintained his position as of 1912/13, the Doctor replied by letter, "I am sure that my views on the subject have not changed, because the translation was so clear-cut."[10] Still harping on translation, the "clear-cut" translation—and nobody had translated a word! In dealing with the Mormons Mercer clings to the linguistic issue because it is there alone that he has the Mormons at a complete disadvantage. "This will be a purely literary and scientific test." "The animus evident . . . is purely because of linguistic, and not because of religious reasons. . . . the scholars felt that linguistically . . . the subject was not worth much of their valuable time. . . . They condemned it purely on the linguistic grounds," and the Mormons deserve "a scorn which was due to the crudeness of the linguistic work of the Prophets," etc.[11] "The translations were absolutely wrong in every detail," Mercer had declared, and he should know, since all Egyptian documents "can be read with comparative ease."[12]

The Mormons, whom Mercer dismisses as mere "laymen in things Egyptian," need not feel too badly under the lash of his scorn, however, for Mercer's own colleagues, including the foremost Egyptologists of the time, were not spared his withering rebukes, nay, even fellow members of the Spalding committee do not escape his two-edged sword of science and scholarship.

When the great Breasted, Mercer's teacher, published his *Dawn of Conscience,* one of the freshest and most original works ever written about Egypt, Mercer, as editor and reviewer of the short-lived journal *Egyptian Religion,* could only report, "There is very little that is new revealed in this book," and chided its author for "excessive use of superlatives . . . which cannot fail to irritate a bit, especially when some of the superlatives are not justifiable."[13] Mercer never explains why the superlatives are not justified, unless it is because true, sound, cautious scholars are never guilty of using superlatives. He objects to Breasted's dating of an important document as "an example of too many assumptions by him," justifying his criticism not by contrary evidence but by the sage and learned platitude that "origins and borrowings are very difficult things to determine and establish." He should have thought of that when he so lightly brushed the Facsimiles aside. Dr. Mercer cautions us that in reading the work of Breasted "the student must be on his guard against the results of an enthusiasm, legitimate in itself, but not always helpful in attempting to arrive at sound conclusions." All very patronizing, very much the cautious scientist and scholar. He tells us that Breasted's " 'messiamism' cannot be found in Egyptian texts no matter how sympathetically they may be studied and interpreted. Breasted has done his best to find it, but the reader may be left to judge of his own success."[14]

Again, instead of doing any real work in showing where Breasted is wrong, Mercer leaves the decision with the reader—an odd procedure indeed for one who worships authority and merely tolerates the layman. As in his dealings with the Mormons a decade earlier, Mercer in his reviews in *Egyptian Religion* rarely gives the reader anything to go on but his opinion—but when it is his opinion against that of a giant like Breasted, what are we to think?

In another review Dr. Mercer criticized S. H. Hooke for employing exactly the same method in defense of "patternism" that Mercer himself had recommended in attacking the Pearl of Great Price: "After formulating his theory Hooke gets six scholars, experts in their own department of Oriental research, to try to illustrate or prove his theory." This method he finds al-

together too "imaginative" and untrustworthy.[15] But was it not Mercer himself who only a short time before had insisted that "the unanimous opinion of the scholars is unassailable," and that "the practical agreement of eleven admittedly competent Orientalists" should be final proof, and that "the unanimous testimony of eight scholars is the same as that of eighty and eight"? Speaking exactly as if he were attacking the Mormons, Mercer notes that Professor Blackmann in attempting to support "strikes a deadly blow at the pattern theory of the editor" by suggesting that "the original 'pattern' was not a product of Egypt but an importation thither."[16] Yet Egyptian origin is not an essential condition to the pattern theory at all—Mercer has missed the point, but how familiar his scolding sounds! Shortly before this Mercer had dismissed in two sentences A. Jeremias's truly remarkable work, *Der Kosmos von Sumer,* with crushing finality: "Of course, Dr. Jeremias has his own special and peculiar ways of interpreting ancient cosmic ideas. . . ."[17] Of course, indeed—that is just what made Jeremias a great scholar, but for Mercer it is the unpardonable sin of deviating from the respectable conventions of the establishment: no explanations are indicated; Mercer dismisses Jeremias with a magisterial wave of the hand.

He is even more patronizing in dealing with Arthur Weigall, who had been the inspector-general of antiquities for the Egyptian government since 1905, with an impressive list of important archaeological publications to his credit. "Weigall's academic preparation did not enable him to enter very deeply into more intricate problems of editing and translating texts and commenting upon them. . . . his lack of training in philology led him into serious difficulties."[18] Always the language business. More serious is his casual dismissal of the work on Egyptian religion of one of the greatest of all Egyptologists, Hermann Junker: "But curiously enough," says Mercer, speaking of Junker's fundamental thesis, "he believes he has found evidence to prove a primitive belief in one great world god. This to my mind shows a complete misunderstanding of the nature of primitive thought and understanding."[19] Just where has the great Junker failed? ". . . his idea of a primitive universal god in ancient Egypt [is] an idea which really has no foundation in fact."[20]

This is a very serious challenge indeed, but Dr. Mercer does not bother to show us what the real factual foundation is: against Junker's solid and original work he is content to place the opinions of contemporary anthropology.[21] We may excuse him for thrusting aside W. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson's famous *Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament* as practically worthless;[22] but when he chides the immortal A. Erman for negligence in his specialty we wonder if he may not be going too far: "Like many other Egyptologists who have written on the subject, Erman uses such terms as 'monotheism' in a very loose sense, without defining what he understands by 'monotheism,' "—though Erman had written a whole book on the subject. Mercer is good enough to explain that *he* believes in "modern, *scientific* monotheism," whatever that is.[23]

The last of the auxiliary troops to rush to Dr. Spalding's assistance when he found himself entangled in the contradictory statements of the other experts was Professor George A. Barton. And how does Dr. Mercer deal with Dr. Barton? Of his *Semitic and Hamitic Origins,* the Reverend Mercer writes: ". . . all such collections of deductions, possibilities and probabilities are doomed by nature to be superceded," and this particular book "contains too many fanciful as well as bold deductions for its destiny to be otherwise."[24] In dealing with Egypt in particular, according to Mercer, Dr. Barton "has very often fumbled very badly." "Throughout the book there are far too many hypotheses without adequate foundation . . . the reader must be on guard to check every statement, and especially all words and phrases in Egyptian, Coptic, etc. . . . as for French, German and English the misprints and errors are legion."[25] He recommends that any future edition of the book "should be rigorously revised," and "while for students of Semitic origins the book will be found of considerable value, when used with caution, the same cannot, however, be said of students of Egyptian origins."[26] As ever, Mercer plays up his role as that of super linguist and Egyptologist. Barton's worst offense, however, is that when he comes to treat the Sumerian flood story he does not even refer to Mercer's work on the subject; and though he mentions Mercer's own work on Babylonian religion, "he cannot have read the book which he so lightly brushes aside."[26] ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[1]Even the astonishing disproportion between the bulk of the Book of Abraham and the brevity of the text from which Joseph Smith seems to have derived it was noted as long ago as 1915 by the last of the official Spalding supporters, E. G. Banks, in *The Literary Digest,* July 10, 1915, p. 66: ". . . the hieroglyphic inscription is very short, but Smith's translation of it covers thirty pages of printed matter."

[2]Quoted in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 691.

[3]*Era,* Vol. 16, p. 617.

[4]M. de Rouge, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique,* Vol. 26, p. 228.

[5]For vital statistics, see the *Utah Survey,* Vol. 1 (Sept. 1913), No. 1, p. 3, and *Who's Who* (London), 1967.

[6]Quoted in *Era,* Vol. 16, p. 611.

[7]This letter, dated Feb. 19, 1953, has been circulated by LaMar Petersen along with his own letter to Dr. Mercer, dated Dec. 16, 1952. (BYU File M1268.)

[8]*Era,* Vol. 16, p. 615.

[9]*Era, loc. cit.,* and pp. 455-56, 617; *Utah Survey,* Vol. 1, p. 30.

[10]See above, note 7.

[11]All from the *Utah Survey,* Vol. 1, pp. 7-11.

[12]*Era,* Vol. 16, p. 612.

[13]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Egyptian Religion,* Vol. 2 (1934), p. 70.

[14]*Ibid.,* p. 71.

[15]*Ibid.,* Vol. 1 (1933), p. 84.

[16]*Ibid.,* p. 85.

[17]*Ibid.,* Vol. 1, p. 38.

[18]*Ibid.,* Vol. 2, p. 75.

[19]*Ibid.,* Vol. 3 (1935), p. 64.

[20]*Ibid.,* p. 65.

[21]Dr. Mercer has great confidence in his own capacity to see into the mind of the primitive: ". . . and just as the imagination of children is less restrained than that of grown-ups, so the imagination of primitive men was vastly more active than our own. So the men of Egypt saw heaven as an immense friendly cow standing over them. . . ." S. A. B. Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt* (London: Luzac, 1949), p. 21. In the margin of one of J. Cerny's works on the religion of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, Dr. Mercer has written one eloquent word—"Absurd!" In his own work, Mercer accepts without question the once fashionable but long-outmoded theory of animism as the key to the understanding of early Egyptian religion; *ibid.,* p. 299.

[22]In *Egyptian Religion,* Vol. 3, p. 115.

[23]*Ibid.,* Vol. 3, p. 160.

[24]*Ibid.,* pp. 160f.

[25]*Ibid.,* Vol. 3, p. 161.

[26]*Ibid.,* p. 162.

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

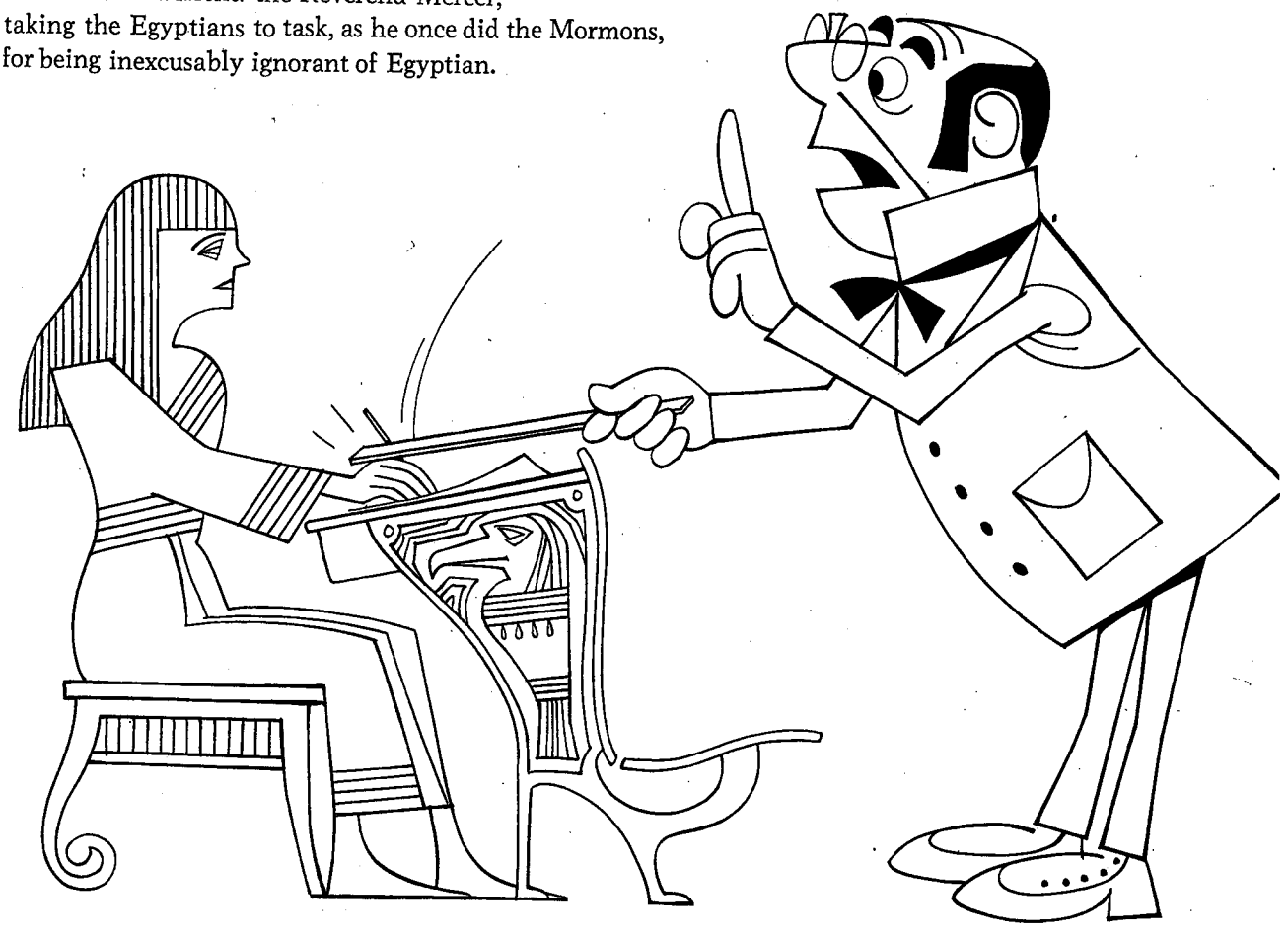
Part 2. May We See Your Credentials?

(*Continued*)

● Shortly after the Spalding affair Dr. Mercer made his first solid contribution to Egyptology. With dramatic detail he reports in the *Receuil de Travaux*[27] how "during the summer of 1912 when the writer was in a quiet New England village," he discovered a collection of Egyptian antiques brought hither by Lt. Commander Gorringe in 1879 but since ignored for lack of "scientific interest in Egyptian antiques." The prize piece was a long inscription, which had been known from another but damaged fragment that had been translated in 1905 by A. B. Kemal.

Mercer's great discovery allowed him to supply the complete text, which Kemal did not have. But in furnishing the missing lines Mercer simply sent in a photograph, without any translation or commentary. This is remarkable. He had understandably begged off where the poorly copied hieroglyphics of the Pearl of Great Price were concerned, but here was his first great chance to shine as a linguist and a scholar. This thing was his discovery, and it was the practice and privilege of Egyptologists who discovered texts to publish them in the *Receuil de Travaux* with their own translations and commentaries. But never a word of translation or commentary from Mercer. He had room for a long description of the document and a picturesque account of how the inscription was found, with the usual pompous references to science and scholarship, but as to the linguistic aspects of the thing—complete silence. In the same spirit of dash and caution, Dr. Mercer, in his last rebuttal against the Mormons, noted in passing: "It might be added also on the basis of the few easier hieroglyphs which were copied correctly, the Prophet's interpretation is found incorrect."[28] But true to form he never indicated what those few correctly copied hieroglyphs were or what they said. Instead, he assures us that "many proofs of the correctness of his conclusion COULD be furnished if desired,"[28] and lets it go at that. Indeed, we have been unable to find a translation by Mercer of any Egyptian writing that had not already been translated and published by someone else.

This is our old friend the Reverend Mercer, taking the Egyptians to task, as he once did the Mormons, for being inexcusably ignorant of Egyptian.



Illustrated by Dave Burton

When Isaac Russell, a non-Mormon, put in a word in defense of the Book of Abraham, Mercer was quick to light into him.

"A man who will . . . jumble up opinions of thirty years ago with the correct views of recent years, cannot escape contradicting himself and being considered by any scholar a dilettante of the worst type."[29] Forty years later the same Mercer was being taken to task by the reviewers for being hopelessly dilettantish and out of date in *his* scholarship, but even in his youth his buoyant confidence in his linguistic powers led him to extend himself far beyond the bounds of prudence. Within a decade of blasting the Book of Abraham, Mercer had published, among other things, translations and commentaries of Egyptian, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin texts bearing on the Bible (1913), an Ethiopian litergy (1915), Sumero-Babylonian sign lists (1918), an Egyptian grammar (1920), an Ethiopian grammar (1920), an Assyrian grammar (1921), and books on the Babylonian and Assyrian religion (1919) and Egyptian religion (1919).

We know of no savant, including even the immortal Athanasius Kircher, who has ever equalled such a performance for sheer daring.

The reader may be interested to know how Mercer's efforts were accepted by the learned world. Only two years after 1912 Mercer brought out a work on an Ethiopian liturgy, of which F. Praetorius, the world leader in the field, wrote: "The writer's knowledge of the Ethiopian language is at present, however, totally inadequate. The numerous errors of translation which he commits provide the reader at times with real comic relief."[30]

If Mercer keeps at it, however, "it may be possible for him at a later date to get out a critical edition instead of just a photograph . . . and to answer some of the questions which he has here dealt with prematurely." In other words, Mercer bites off more than he can chew.[30]

Fifteen years later Mercer was still having difficulty following the advice of Praetorius, for H. S. Gehmann in reviewing his Ethiopic text of Ecclesiastes notes that as long as Mercer is merely reproducing the text all goes well, "but in his further discussion of the Ethiopian version he is not so fortunate . . . and makes statements which upon analysis are seen to be contradictory or at least not clear."[31]

In 1929 Mercer published an ambitious book on Egyptian religion that was reviewed by Hermann Kees, a leader in that field: "It is superficially written and in many passages one comes upon familiar ideas of Maspero [to whom the book was dedicated]. But because Maspero never lost contact with the real world of Egypt one is all the more disturbed by the lack of any smell of Egyptian earth."[32] "To uphold his theories . . . Mercer must schematize mercilessly *[grausam schematisieren]*; his reconstruction of the beginnings is "a peculiarly artificial picture," and to explain the distribution of the cults of Egypt "Mercer must invent the most remarkable migrations."[32] Kees notes that "the unnatural way in which things are constructed" is "typical of this whole school of inventing religious history." Kees refers to his own classic work, *Totenglaube der Aegypter,* as "a book with which Mercer is of course *[freilich]* not acquainted." He takes note of "Mercer's peculiar way of putting questions and his naive and off-hand conclusions."

Our own impression after working for some years among Dr. Mercer's books and notes is obligingly put into words by an Egyptologist whom few may challenge: "The book is pleasant *[nett]* to read . . . but it brings no advance," for, "granted that Mercer has taken the trouble to read and cite all sorts of things, the whole thing is done in a disturbingly superficial way *[bedenklich oberflächlich]*."[33] What Mercer's work does give us of value, Kees decides, is "unfortunately" a demonstration "of how urgent is the necessity for anyone who wishes to undertake the study of Egyptian religion and especially of its beginnings, first of all to handle at firsthand the raw materials presented by the local cults of the land and by its topography . . . and such a study would do greater honor to the memory of Maspero than Mercer has with his International Society of Gods."[34] There is a sting in that!

Almost twenty years later Mercer returned to the lists with another and a bigger book still on Egyptian religion, and again it fell to the lot of Hermann Kees to review it. He begins by taking Mercer to task for ignoring much recent archaeological work while making archaeology his defense.[35] Especially Dr. Kees "must express profound concern *[grundsätzliches Bedenken]*" with Mercer's failure to explain the *why* in all his glib syncretism. Kees is franker than ever: "Mercer should have omitted things which he did not understand, including annoyingly frequent references to 'confusion' in Egyptian thinking."[36] This has become an important factor in the study of Egyptian religion today: more and more the scholars are recognizing that the strangeness and obscurity in the Egyptian texts is probably less due to their ignorance and inability to think clearly than to our own. Kees notes that Mercer displays his usual diligence in the business of collecting and cataloging material, but he never digests it, his work being marked by "triviality and irrelevance that predominate over a real grasp of material." He comments on Mercer's weakness for making sweeping and pontifical statements "which constantly run the risk of being easily refuted."[36] In concluding his study with a long list of some of Mercer's many mistakes, Kees says he is trying to avoid giving to "the well-intentioned reader a heightened dread of the labyrinth of Egyptian Religion and its incomprehensibility."[37]

But Hermann Kees was not the only one. Writing in another journal, H. Bonnet, the author of the invaluable *Reallexikon der Aegyptischen Religion,* reviewed the same work by Mercer, noting first of all that the author "misses the basic significance *[grundlegende Bedeudtung]* of Egyptian Religion," because he "collects a lot of unconnected data which are never brought into proper relationship," even while he continues to cling to his favorite but long outdated theories of Egyptian prehistory, "his entire study being controlled by a theory which is not only non-essential to the History of Egyptian Religion" but applies to a field "in which we can never count on achieving clarity."[38] In short, Dr. Mercer misses the point of everything. The assertion that we can *never achieve certainty* in some matters of Egyptian religion is an important one, and was stated even more emphatically in a long review of Mercer's *History of Egyptian Religion* by the eminent Eberhard Otto. This work, Otto writes, as "the fruit of a long and industrious scholarly career . . . shows us that a presentation of Egyptian religion which avoids a subjective attitude, but whose foundation lies outside

Sonnet for Peace

By Mildred N. Hoyer

Even as I pray this prayer for peace,
Within me other unknown wars are raging.
They do not stop because I bid them cease,
Yet I dare ask miraculous assuaging
Of universal conflict by divine
Decree, as if this peace could come before
A vanquishing of forces, deep within
The heart, that breed and scatter seeds of war.
What kind of madness is it, then, that sends
Me to my knees to offer up a plea
For something you have placed within my hands?
O, give me grace and wisdom now to see
My need to rise, to use your power for good
Within — without — for peace, for brotherhood.

the sphere of science is an impossibility . . . and it shows us the reason why it is now and perhaps always will be impossible to write a *history* of Egyptian religion."[40]

Instead of coming to grips with the problems he has raised, Mercer, according to Otto, leaves all the necessary explaining "to casual scattered remarks." The avoidance of a real method of coping with immensely hard problems "gives his description a rather disjointed and uncoordinated nature."[40] Since he can't escape facing certain problems of origins, Mercer, according to Otto, simply gets rid of them by thrusting them back into a dim prehistory where he posits a series of invasions or migrations, following Sethe's lead.[41] Instead of going to the basic sources, Otto observes, Mercer relies on "secondary sources," and even then fails to treat his sources critically. "He is often unclear, sometimes in matters of fundamental importance." "Many of his apodektic [*sic*] statements should not go unchallenged . . . many of his interpretations of names cry for refutation by the philologist,[41] his genealogies "contain many errors or theories no longer recognized today," and his work "belongs to an age of research whose scholarly goals are not in every point the same as those of the present generation of scholars."[42]

In his seventies Mercer, undaunted and undeterred, undertook a work that would intimidate the greatest Egyptologist—a translation and critical commentary on one of the oldest, largest, and most difficult books in the world—the Egyptian *Pyramid Texts*. Rudolph Anthes begins his review of this ambitious work by pointing out the dangers and hardships that attend any attempt at "translating a paragraph of these texts, in which each word is weighty, is a venture."[43] Mercer is again charged with underestimating the intelligence of the Egyptians when he sees, for example, in the mysterious Enneads only a demonstration of their muddled thinking, and affects

"The Egyptians didn't know Egyptian," charges our old critic.

to detect in *Pyramid Texts* "a lack of common sense on the part of the Egyptians of the Third Millenium."[44] Instead of accusing the Egyptians of ignorance, Anthes advises, "we should rather acknowledge the fact that *we* are not yet equal to the *Pyramid Texts*, although they represent excellent manuscripts."[45] (Italics ours.)

Mercer often attributes his own failure to come through to "corruptions in the text, mistakes in writing, errors in grammar and syntax, contradictions and confusions, expressions which seem ridiculous, and illogical expressions."[46] This is our old friend the Reverend Mercer, taking the Egyptians to task, as he once did the Mormons, for being inexcusably ignorant of Egyptian. But Professor Anthes will not go for this; it is not the Egyptians but ourselves who are ignorant, and Mercer's introductory statement that "we have not yet a definitive text" of the *Pyramid Texts* "is plainly misleading and I feel compelled," writes Professor Anthes, "to refute it."[46] There are imperfections enough in the translation—"imperfections of this kind, I am sorry to say, do occur in the translation"—but they are not due to any Egyptian incompetence. "Perhaps Professor Mercer was right in undertaking this task, for which—if I may say so frankly—hardly anyone is fully prepared," but instead of chiding the Egyptians, "the problematical situation of our understanding should have been indicated more often than it has been."[46]

Professor Anthes is one of a growing number of Egyptologists who now suggest in all seriousness approaching Egyptian religious writings with the idea that after all they might make sense, since the Egyptians were not complete fools: "There exists some incongruity," he notes, "between the sober effectiveness of the Egyptians in the Old Kingdom, which is apparent mainly in politics, architecture, and art, and what seems to be their inability for clear thinking in religious matters. This incompatibility is striking, the more so since government and religion did represent a unity which we may call governmental theology."[47] Professor Anthes objects to the illogic of saying (a) that everything the Egyptians did was part of their religion; (b) that their achievements were prodigious; (c) that their religion was ridiculous. That simply won't go down with Anthes and others, though the old school of Egyptologists still clings to it. Even Gardiner, a brilliant representative of that school, showed some signs of weakening toward the end of his wonderful career, when he was willing to concede that Egyptian religion was "as alluring as a will-o'-the-wisp by reason of its mystery and even in spite of its absurdity";[48] and he suggested that while it was most dangerous to take seriously such "unmitigated rubbish" as some of the Egyptian hymns, it was still also dangerous (though, of course, less dangerous) to take an "unsympathetic and even patronizing attitude towards the myths and religious practices of Pharaonic times."[49]

In reviewing Mercer's *Pyramid Texts*, T. G. Allen, the foremost student of Egyptian funerary literature, did not mince words: "Would that the contents of these handsome volumes were fully in keeping with their appearance!"[50] The defects of those contents "spring from two main sources: faulty translation of German and violation of Egyptian grammatical principles." What a blow! It is bad enough for an Egyptologist to be criticized for ignorance of Egyptian in making translations from Egyptian, but when the reviewer recognizes his dependence on other sources and notes that it is in German that he is at fault, one wonders how this could have been

"Egyptology is in an atmosphere of somewhat dazed and bemused speculation."

received by the scholar who often lectured others on their ignorance of language. "Mistranslations of German are various," says Allen. "Egyptian grammar is often mistreated." Again Mercer is charged with superficiality: "Mercer himself states, that analysis of the utterances [in the *Pyramid Texts]* has not 'been too meticulous in unessential matters'; the truth is that his definition of 'unessential matters' has been far too liberal."[50]

In his pointed remarks about German, Professor Allen was no doubt hinting at what the great French Egyptologist Dom E. Drioton said more openly in reviewing an earlier book of Mercer's on the Pyramid Texts, that Mercer's work on the *Pyramid Texts* simply follows Sethe, the great master in that field, who had already translated them into German. Because of this lack of originality, Drioton concludes, "This investigation can bring no new light." Moreover, Drioton observes that the method followed by Mercer cannot possibly lead to the conclusions he has adopted.[51] Mercer has prefixed to his *History of Egyptian Religion* the remarkable statement that Sethe had placed at the introduction of his own history of the same subject: *Wer es nicht glauben will, mag es nicht glauben*: "Who doesn't want to believe it does not have to." This had not been an attempt on Sethe's part to disarm criticism, however, for he stated his position with a characteristic frankness that Mercer does not follow, when he said in a preceding sentence: "This is how for thirty years the Egyptian religion has appeared to my eyes, or, if you will, to my imagination *[phantasie];* the whole thing is completely hypothetical."[52] This would place Sethe today in the camp of Karl Popper, but one would hardly expect such an admission from the confident Mercer—and one does not get it.

In the same year that his vast work on the *Pyramid Texts* appeared, this remarkable man published *Earliest Intellectual Man's Idea of the Cosmos,* in which he brought his Babylonian philological studies into conjunction with his Egyptian to compare the earliest religious concepts of both lands. Of this work the Sumerologist Salonen wrote that to Mercer, "Sumerian conditions may well be quite hazy. Specifically as regards Sumer . . . the book contains annoyingly many mistakes, incongruities and blunders. . . . Sumerian and Babylonian names often appear in wrong forms."[53] Salonen then gives some examples of what he calls Mercer's "other outrageous mistakes!" He finds "the book is confusedly written and is full of tautology . . . the part relating to Sumer could safely have been omitted."[54] In particular, "chronology does not seem to be one of Mercer's strong points, hence information which has been doomed several decades ago."[55] This recalls Mercer's own onslaught on a massively documented work on ancient chronology some years before: ". . . of course no self-respecting chronologist will for a moment agree. . . . one feels that with all that has been said, we shall still feel safer under the guidance, in Egyptian matters, of Meyer and Breasted."[56] Here again, instead of giving the reasons, Mercer had simply appealed with his lofty "of course" to authority, though the chronologies of Meyer and Breasted were even then being seriously questioned.

Our purpose in this long digression about Dr. Mercer has not been primarily to discredit the authority of one whose authority has for years been used as a club to beat the Book of Abraham withal, but rather to provide us laymen with an instructive introduction to the limitations and pitfalls of Egyptology in general. What we have just beheld is the spectacle of some of the world's foremost Egyptologists laying down the law to one of their colleagues who in turn was never backward in laying down the law to them. From this it should begin to appear that we are not here moving in a world of cold, indisputable scientific facts at all, but rather in an atmosphere of somewhat dazed and bemused speculation. And the puzzlement and bewilderment are if anything greater among the specialists today than they were in 1912. ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[27]"The Gorringe Collection of Egyptian Antiques," in *Receuil de Travaux,* Vol. 36 (1914), pp. 176-78, with photograph.
[28]*Utah Survey,* Vol. 1, p. 11.
[29]*Ibid.,* p. 13.
[30]F. Praetorius, in *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenlend. Gesellschaft,* Vol. 70 (1916), p. 263, viewing Mercer's *Ethiopian Liturgy, Its Sources, Development and Present Form* (Milwaukee, London, 1915): *"Vollig unzureichend sind aber zur Zeit noch des Verfassers Kenntnisse der athiopischen Sprache. Die von ihm verueoten zahlreichen Uebersetzungsfehler wirken zuweilen wie erheiternde Scherze."* It would be hard to put it stronger than that.
[31]H. S. Gehmann, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* Vol. 52 (1932), p. 260, reviewing Mercer's *The Ethiopian Text of the Book of Ecclesiastes* (London: Luzac, 1931).
[32]H. Kees,in *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft,* Vol. 84 (1930), p. 191, reviewing Mercer's *Etudes sur les Origines de la Religion de l'Egypte* (London: Luzac, 1929).
[33]*Ibid.,* p. 192.
[34]*Ibid.,* p. 193.
[35]H. Kees, in *Orientalia,* Vol. 20 (1951), p. 98, reviewing Mercer's *The Religion of Ancient Egypt* (London: Luzac, 1949).
[36]*Ibid.,* p. 99.
[37]*Ibid.,* pp. 99-100: *". . . ein neues Grauen vor der Wirrnis aegyptischen Glaubens und seiner Unverstaendlichkeit. . . ."*
[38]H. Bonnet, in *Orientalische Literaturzeitung,* 1953, No. 8, pp. 355f.
[39]*Ibid.,* p. 355: "The content and scope *[Anspruch]* of syncretism are a sealed book to Mercer, and so he attains no insight whatever into the inner life of Egyptian religion and the forces and goals that move it. In spite of the abundance of material supplied therefore, his presentation offers the reader little of value."
[40]E. Otto, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies,* Vol. 12 (1953), p. 215.
[41]*Ibid.,* p. 216.
[42]*Ibid.,* p. 217.
[43]Rudolph Anthes, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* Vol. 74 (1954), p. 35, reviewing Mercer's *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1952, 4 vols).
[44]*Ibid.,* pp. 36-37.
[45]*Ibid.,* pp. 35f.
[46]*Ibid.,* p. 35.
[47]*Ibid.,* p. 36.
[48]A. H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford Paperbacks, 1961), p. 427.
[49]A. H. Gardiner, in *Revue Egyptologique,* Vol. 11 (1957), p. 55.
[50]T. G. Allen, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies,* Vol. 13 (1954), p. 119.
[51]E. Drioton, in *Revue Egyptologique,* Vol. 13 (1961), pp. 148-49.
[52]K. Sethe, *Urgeschichte und aelteste Religion der Aegypter* (Leipzig, 1930), pp. 2-3. Bonnet, *op. cit.,* p. 355, comments on Mercer's use of the phrase.
[53]A. Salonen, in *Orientalische Literatur zeitung,* Vol. 54 (1959), p. 570.
[54]*Ibid.,* p. 572.
[55]*Ibid.,* p. 571.
[56]In *Egyptian Religion,* Vol. 1, pp. 37-38.



A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

Part 3. *Empaneling the Panel*

Illustrated by Dave Burton

• *Qualified for What?*—"But surely," we hear again and again, "such great scholars should be able to decide on this particular case without any trouble." Should they? Being a great scholar, while it gives people the impression that one is an authority on many things, is possible only because one is an authority on few things. It is precisely the great authority, C. S. Lewis reminds us, that we should mistrust: "It sounds a strange charge to bring against men who have been steeped in those books all their lives," he writes of the leading New Testament scholars, "but that might be just the trouble. A man who has spent his youth and manhood in the minute study of New Testament texts and of other people's studies of them . . . is, I should think, very likely to miss the obvious things about them."[1] Lewis then proceeds to cite examples in the field of biblical scholarship, but the best examples of all must surely be furnished by the Egyptologists.

Every Egyptologist is by necessity a specialist, if only because Egyptian is written in three totally different scripts, and as the outpouring of specialized studies has steadily increased in volume, especially since World War II, the specialists have become ever more specialized. Jean Leclant noted in 1966 that the last of the real "all-round" Egyptologists are fast dying off.[2] Shortly before his death, Sir Alan Gardiner, who was certainly one of those great ones, complained that it was "impossible for any student to keep abreast of all that is written save at the cost of abandoning all hope of personal contributions."[3] And those contributions become ever more personal, according to Jean Capart, things having reached the point where "the authors sometimes confine themselves to reading nothing but their own works while systematically turning their backs on those of their colleagues."[4] Many years ago Capart cited Heinrich Schaeffer's complaint that the study of Egyptian religion had made little or no progress through the years because the experts, like the blind wise men examining the elephant, were each content to study and report on one limited department only; all their lives, Capart notes, Maspero and Wiedemann had protested against that sort of thing—but in vain.[5]

In 1947 an attempt to organize an international society of Egyptologists (a thing that any sensible person would think to be totally inevitable in such an ancient and peculiar

By stating with great emphasis and clarity his views on religion in general and Joseph Smith in particular, he disqualifies himself for the jury.

brotherhood) fell through completely—for specialists are a jealous lot. Adrian de Buck even charged Egyptologists with discouraging others from studying Egyptian[6]; and G. Roeder reports that his translations of religious texts had to buck "the current of opinion and the sovran *[sic]* personalities in the field," who opposed his ideas "with much head-shaking and rude condemnation" before they finally began to give way.[7] The very nature of Egyptian studies, in which the unknown so completely overshadows the known, has always encouraged specialization, for as Chabas noted a hundred years ago, it is possible for each student "to find in Egypt whatever sustains his particular views."[8]

Today even the specialist, according to Siegfried Morenz, "is in constant danger of losing his grasp even of a special area, such as Egyptian religion."[9] How specialized Egyptian studies have always been may be inferred from the report of G. Goyon in 1963, that the problems of the Great Pyramid, which have had enormous popular appeal for more than a century, remain unsolved, because "the scholars who have really studied it on the scene can be counted on the fingers of one hand."[10]

Tucked away in a highly specialized corner of this highly specialized field are three highly specialized papyri supplying with their highly specialized commentary illustrations to a highly specialized account of Abraham in Egypt. The peculiarities of the Facsimiles and the explanations that go with them cry for careful specialized investigation. So the question we have to ask here of every member of the Spalding jury is not whether he knows a lot, but whether he is equipped to deal *with this particular problem.* The problem is complicated by emotional religious elements that make it necessary in screening the jury to ask two main questions of each: (1) whether he is equipped by training to give a thorough and definitive interpretation of the plates and texts in the Pearl of Great Price, and (2) whether he is temperamentally qualified to do so.

Five of the scholars consulted by Bishop Spalding were among the most learned men who ever lived. Each of them was a giant endowed far beyond the normal run of men with independence of mind, imagination, curiosity, insight, energy, and integrity. Yet as we look them over it appears that each is uniquely *un*qualified to pass judgment on Joseph Smith as a translator, at least on the basis of the information supplied by Spalding. Let us take them in order of their seniority, labeling them with the titles Dr. Spalding gives them.

1. "Dr. A. H. Sayce, Oxford, England," or, more fully, the Rev. Archibald Henry Sayce, D. Litt., LL.D., D.D. (1845-1931). Sayce was born with a phenomenal I.Q. and plenty of money, and "his attitude to life was that of a fastidious ascetic," according to his fellow Welshman and fellow genius F. L. Griffith.[11] Free to do pretty much as he chose, he was constantly traveling about; he "knew about every great personality in Europe in the past two generations"[12]; and "in the course of his long life he seems to have seen everything and everybody that was interesting."[13]

At the age of 18, according to Stephen H. Langdon, "he proved that he knew Hebrew, Egyptian, Persian and Sanscrit," and that "he had a firm grasp of the state of cuneiform studies." In time he "had a good knowledge of every Semitic and Indo-european language, and could write good prose in at least 20 languages." And yet this paragon "never became a great specialist in any subject"; he was too volatile, "always moving from place to place. . . . Any subject lost its attraction for him as soon as the period of decipherment passed."[14] He left no lasting monument," writes Griffith; ". . . one cannot but feel that his marvelous gifts were out of proportion to his accomplishments."[15] Or, as Langdon puts it, "his greatness was never revealed in his work." But how is one to measure gifts save by accomplishments or greatness apart from works?

In his younger years Sayce attacked the evolutionists hammer and tong, maintaining that "the whole application of a supposed law of evolution to the religious and secular history of the ancient Orient is founded on what we now know to have been a huge mistake. . . ."[16] But later in life he became even more vigorous in assailing fundamentalism: "When I was a boy," he recalled shortly before his death, ". . . there were some old fashioned people who still believed that . . . some of them [the books of the Old Testament] were written by Moses himself . . . and we of the younger generation, trained in the critical methods of Germany, were unable to accept the dogma; it rested only on unproved assertions." Of course there is no excuse for that sort of thing any more. "A new era has dawned upon us, the scientific method . . . has furnished us with facts instead of theories."[17] And so he ticks off the well-worn and now discredited clichés of scientism with evangelistic fervor: "An inductive science deals with objective facts and not with tastes and predilections. . . . like the geologist, the archaeologist has had to leave catastrophic theorizing to the literary amateur"[18]; we must forget the idea that "similarities in technique [e.g. of pottery] indicate relationship"—for diffusion is a myth.[19]

He has no patience with historians who want to measure civilization by the thousands of years, for he has proven that "civilization cannot be measured . . . by millennia . . . civilized man in the fullest sense of the word is immeasurably old. . . . archaeology is repeating the lesson of geology and physical science."[20] This is the sort of thing Griffith refers to when he writes, "His vivid imagination and insight frame pictures of events and of interpretation in which he too often mistook the sharp lines of the picture for fact,"[21] and of these "facts" he would brook no criticism, for "he was impatient of the claims, the pride, and the reticence of exact scholarship."[21]

Sayce's Egyptological researches are typical of his methods. For a number of years his own Nile boat, the *Ishtar,* might be seen searching out unfrequented spots along the banks of the great river, where he would discover new ruins and inscriptions, only to leave them behind for others to study.[22] It is significant that of the many inscriptions he discovered and copied down, he is always careful to translate

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the Greek and Latin ones in full (though most of his readers could read Greek and Latin well enough for themselves), while he never attempts to translate any of the Egyptian inscriptions.[23] Why not? "His metier was that of a decipherer of anything new," wrote Langdon, explaining that he lost interest as soon as the code was cracked.[24] But surely the deciphering of Egyptian was far newer and more challenging in the 1890's than the reading of Greek and Latin. In the same way Sayce, though criticizing Joseph Smith more severely than any other member of the big five, is the only one of them to preserve complete silence regarding the Facsimiles. Sayce's speciality was Assyriology, not Egyptology, and while in the former field, according to H. R. Hall, "the Professor must be judged by his peers," his speculations in Egyptology "do not carry much conviction."[25]

There is another side to this remarkable man that we must not overlook, for though Dr. Sayce was greatly annoyed by people who took the Bible literally, he remained always a churchman and fiercely loyal to his church. "Attached by generations of his heritage to the ancient traditions of the Church of England," to follow Langdon, Sayce "regarding all learning which did not apply to the culture of his people and his Church as useless."[26] His native language was Welsh.

Now just how well does this man qualify to pass impartial judgment on Joseph Smith as a translator? By temperament he is the fastidious aristocrat moving in exalted circles, disdaining the vulgar; above all he is the austere, uncompromising churchman—how would he judge the efforts of an uneducated rustic from the American frontier? By training he is the spoiled dilettante to whom everything came easy, impatient of criticism, opinionated, and dogmatic in his own views. It is a toss-up which A. H. Sayce would be more intellectually hostile to Smith: the early clerical Sayce who "regarded as useless" all learning that did not support his church, or the scientific Sayce, invincibly opposed to supernaturalism. The two meet and mingle in the Sayce of 1912, who dismisses the Book of Abraham with eleven contemptuous lines: For all his great learning, I don't think Dr. Sayce rates a place on this particular jury.

2. "Dr. W. M. Flinders Petrie, London University" (1853-1942). If it is possible to imagine a man more independent in his ways and self-contained in his thinking than A. H. Sayce, that man must be Dr. Petrie. We can illustrate this by a story told by Professor Georgerog Steindorff to a small group that met to celebrate Steindorff's eightieth birthday in 1942. Petrie came down to meet the Nile boat one hot evening in 1894 as the young Steindorff disembarked at the scene of Petrie's operations in upper Egypt. The great man conducted his guests to his tent for dinner, which was to consist of an enormous, heaping bowl of rice, completely covered with a mantle of blue-bottle flies. Professor Petrie in his hearty manner invited the party to fall to, but when some of them hesitated he reached for a box of Keating's Insect Powder and showered its contents liberally over both flies and rice, saying as he did so, "I've found that it kills them—but it doesn't kill me!" Such a man was not to be deterred from his course by the opinions of others. Petrie's strength was his weakness—his complete independence of mind made it possible for him to make real discoveries where timid souls would never have ventured, but at the same time it blinded him to the valid objections that others might have to his theories and interpretations.

An only child, Petrie never went to school—he was from the first self-educated and self-directed; "he was incapable of teamwork," writes his biographer Guy Brunton—"Petrie seems to have felt no need of companionship; nor was he very sympathetic to the ideas of others."[27] With a "somewhat limited outlook on life in general," he boasted that he had never been to a theater.[27] Though he was the greatest practitioner of scientific archaeology in modern times, "even when visited by those having great experience in archaeology he preferred to talk rather than listen"[28]; and though archaeology was his life, "he never visited the excavations of others."[29] With his own work "there must be no interference or deviation," and "having once arrived at a conclusion he was extremely averse to modifying it in any way."[30] So as time went on, "Petrie's views on all manner of subjects . . . crystallized into stated facts" from which he was not to be moved.[31]

This intransigence was abetted, if not actually caused, by the nature of

Petrie's education, which in turn was determined by his complete inability to learn languages. At a tender age he had a tutor to teach him "French, Latin, and Greek grammar, for which he had," according to Brunton, "no aptitude whatever. A breakdown resulted, and for two years he was left to his own devices." Then they tried again—"fresh attempts were made with the grammars, but it was found to be hopeless. . . ."[32] So he became his own teacher and did the things he was really good at: "Essentially a practical field worker of great ability, he made contributions of the highest value, but had no flair for research in epigraphy. He was prone to base his theories on inadequate premises. . . ."[33] He expressed his settled opinions on religion shortly before Spalding apealed to him, in a book in which he declares that any feeling of a need for repentance is the index of a "morbid mind,"[34] and that "the last branch of unbalanced religious experience is that of Hallucinations," which "enter so much into the scope of mental disease that it is useless to begin upon the detail of so far-spreading a subject."[35]

So here we have another spoiled only child, a law unto himself (no need for *him* to repent!) reaping the rich rewards of independent thinking (and how we could use a little of that type of thinking in our own society!), but paying a high price for the luxury of always having his own way. Not a linguist by any means, he is hardly the man to call in for a study of all but illegible documents; and, utterly averse to any hint of the supernatural in religion, he is even less likely than Sayce to give Joseph Smith a fair hearing; then too, quite aside from his one-sided training and religious prejudice, would the man who had not the patience or courtesy to listen to the opinions of his most eminent colleagues or to visit their excavations take time off to give careful attention to the 80-year-old writings of a young farmer from New York? Indeed, while Petrie confirms statements of the Book of Abraham in a surprising number of instances, he would be the last man on earth to recognize the fact, and all Spalding got from him on the subject was a terse offhand opinion. What else could he expect? I think we should excuse Dr. Petrie from serving on this particular jury.

3. "Dr. Edward Meyer, University of Berlin." Eduard (Spalding misspelled the name) Meyer (1855-1930) knew more about the whole field of ancient history than any other man who ever lived. He was the greatest scholar since Scaliger, and it would be hard to think of some way in which his learning might have been more extensive than it was, or more productive—though he himself declared at the end of his life that his generation of scholarship had erred sorely in trying to be so everlastingly "scientific" about everything instead of trusting more to their intuition and instincts. Because of his wholehearted and single-minded dedication to the documents of the past which from childhood he was determined to search thoroughly and systematically, Meyer's judgments often seemed to smack of almost prophetic insight.[36] His mistakes, wrote Walter Otto, were often more valuable than other men's facts[37]; he laid the firm foundations of Egyptian chronology, vindicated the historicity of the Old Testament against Wellhausen and his school, was rivaled only by Breasted in his contributions to Egyptian history, exploded the evolutionary theory of economic development, first showed the importance of Iran in Jewish and Christian tradition, anticipated the Dead Sea Scrolls in discerning the important role played by the desert sectaries in early Christian and Jewish history, opened up the world of the Hittites, gave the world the first real picture of ancient Greece, and was the last human being to find himself in a position of being able to write a general history of antiquity from the sources of his own learning. Like the other members of the panel, he was largely self-taught and always went his own way, a pioneer wherever he went; but unlike the others, he had a healthy sense of his own limitations and freely admitted his mistakes and changed his views when the evidence required it.[38]

Also, he had his blind spots. He could not understand art, according to his biographer; he lacked any aesthetic sense; he was impatient and usually in a hurry, so that he often brushed aside or overlooked real problems, e.g. his history of the U.S. "is hasty, biased, superficial and inaccurate. . . ."[39] When the U.S. declared war on Germany in 1917, Meyer, it is said, ran down Unter den Linden with hair flying, declaiming wildly, and tearing his honorary Harvard diploma to shreds.

"...the only time Meyer was able to fill his lecture halls was when he spoke on the Mormons."

Still, if any scholar was competent to pass judgment on Joseph Smith, it should have been Meyer. An indication of his peculiar independence and deep insight is seen in the fact that he always regarded Mormonism as a phenomenon of enormous importance in the history of religions. Professor Werner Jaeger recalled that the only time Meyer was able to fill his lecture hall in Berlin was when he talked on the Mormons—then the place was packed, because then Meyer became alive as never before. Meyer, according to Walter Otto, "was the first secular historian ever to tackle the problem of the origin of Christianity—the central-problem of World History," and in Mormonism he saw the best guide.[40] He was convinced that "Mormonism . . . is not just another of countless sects, but a new revealed religion. What in the study of other revealed religions can only be surmised after painful research is here directly accessible in reliable witnesses. Hence the origin and history of Mormonism possesses great and unusual value for the student of religious history."[41]

He had visited Utah in 1904, and a year before Spalding's book appeared, he had published his *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen*. In that book Meyer had made it perfectly clear just what he thought about Joseph Smith, whom he regarded as a prophet in exactly the same sense in which Isaiah, Jeremiah, and (to a lesser degree) Mohammed were prophets. He was free to run the risk of paying such high tribute to the Mormon prophet because everyone knew that he did not for a moment believe that there ever was such a thing as a *true* prophet; in keeping with the lofty scholarship of his day, Meyer disdained to grant the smallest

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measure of probability to any proposition tainted with the supernatural. That, as Otto points out, is what spoiled what should have been his greatest work, that on the *Origins of Christianity,* in which "everything in the person of Christ must be explained on rationalistic grounds. He never allowed for the irrational element in the human character."[42] So it is no compliment to Joseph Smith for Meyer to place him among the real prophets, for Meyer begins from the premise that all prophets are self-deluded. Granted that premise, there is only one position, of course, that one can possibly take regarding Joseph Smith's claims to divine revelation, and only one view that anyone can possibly take of his teachings in the Book of Abraham.

So Bishop Spalding was appealing to a judge who had already declared against any form of supernaturalism. Eduard Meyer, great man that he was, was also a judge on whom Spalding could count with absolute trust to give only one answer to his question about the Book of Abraham. By stating with great emphasis and clarity his views on religion in general and Joseph Smith in particular, he ineffectively disqualifies himself for the jury.

4. "James H. Breasted, PhD., Haskell Oriental Museum, University of Chicago." Professor Breasted (1865-1935) had his full share of those qualities which we have found to be most conspicuous in the three giants noticed so far: independence of action and judgment, boundless self-confidence, and equally boundless energy and exuberance. We have already seen how Professor Mercer chides his master for getting carried away too much. Breasted's training and temperament go together. He was trained in a school that knew all the answers—the Prussian school of the 1890's, which bolstered the individual's sublime confidence in himself as one who shared the corporate omniscience of the establishment. He was, a German reports, "most intimately tied to the German school of Egyptology from his first scientific beginnings,"[43] as "the dear, hearty comrade of the German Egyptologists." His friend Eduard Meyer inspired him to take wide views, which in turn inclined him to make wide and sweeping pronouncements that disturbed some of his colleagues,[44] some of whom point out that he was much too prone to generalize and "often interpreted evidence wrongly to suit his purposes."[45]

The French Egyptologists sometimes felt that Breasted underestimated their work and so criticized him quite freely, accusing him of being pro-German to the point of slighting and even insulting French Egyptology, while putting forth his own theories as settled facts and completely ignoring any theories and even evidence that did not appeal to him.[46] George Foucart comes right out and accuses Breasted of being opinionated and unfair, noting that "in treating the contradictions of his predecessors without charity [indulgence] Breasted makes himself vulnerable to the same treatment in the future."[47] In this Foucart was a true prophet, for time has not been too kind to Professor Breasted's favorite theories. As Professors Jequier and Foucart see it, Dr. Breasted with sublime self-confidence goes his way "bestowing his criticism or approval freely on all sides," presenting his own opinions as historical facts and his private reconstructions as original texts,[48] and while his colleagues may find his affirmations "most unconvincing, the general public is supposed to accept them as official."[48]

We have ventured to quote such unpleasantries because we have here exactly the high and authoritarian attitude taken by Breasted in dealing with the Book of Abraham. There is no doubt that he could have translated most of the hieroglyphs if he had given himself the trouble, but, though he professed himself most interested in the problem, he never did. Why should he? He knew the answers already. Like every other American professor in 1912, he belonged to that school which firmly believed that evolution held all the answers, as Jean Garnot observes, basing their boldest speculations on implicit faith in the validity of analogies with biological evolution, sublimely confident that the evolutionary rule of thumb could give them perfect insight into the mind of the "primitive."[49] Thus he can assure us that "Set was doubtless some natural phenomenon . . . and it is most probable that he was the darkness," though no Egyptologist would write that way today.[50] And he can tell us with convincing insight how copper was discovered when Primitive Man one morning noticed little beads of the pure metal that had oozed from the rocks that banked his campfire somewhere in the Sinai Peninsula; it

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"It is possible to find in Egypt whatever sustains one's particular views."

was not until 1945 that the Egyptologist Alfred Lucas called attention to the experiments of H. H. Coughlan, showing that it is quite impossible to smelt copper in any open fire.[51]

Breasted's main argument against the Book of Abraham is that the Hebrews were monotheists and the Egyptians polytheists: both points have always been disputed among Egyptologists, some of the greatest being ardent defenders of a standard Egyptian monotheism, yet for Breasted the question is settled once he has spoken. When the Mormons pointed out that Breasted had identified as the lady Isis in Facsimile 1 a figure that other Egyptologists had called Horus, Anubis, or a priest, Dr. Breasted impatiently remarked to Mercer: "One man says fifty cents, another man says half a dollar!" But it isn't the same at all; Isis and Horus are as different quantities as half a dollar and half a pound.

In our fatal year of 1912 Breasted completely misinterpreted many passages in the Egyptian wisdom literature, discovering among other things in them "a complaisant optimism" in a text that, Frankfort insists years later, "indicates no such thing, but represents on the contrary, the deep religious conviction which inspired the 'teachings.' "[52] Errors due to the imperfect state of the evidence at one time are, of course, excusable—but they are nonetheless errors. Thus, of the great *Ancient Records* series Alexander Scharff wrote in 1935, "Today we read many passages differently and more correctly."[53] "Unhappily," wrote Sir Alan Gardiner in 1961, "in Breasted's day our knowledge of Late-Egyptian syntax was not sufficiently advanced to enable him to translate the damaged introduction of the Turin papyrus correctly."[54] So as knowledge increases, the verdict of yesterday must be reversed today, and in the long run the most positive authority is the least to be trusted. Few have been more positive than Breasted, and in nothing was he more positive than in his attitude toward Joseph Smith's pronouncements.

5. "Dr. Friedrich Freiherr von Bissing, Professor of Egyptology in the University of Munich." Incredible as it may seem, there was one man in the world who actually surpassed Sayce, Petrie, Meyer, and Breasted in complete independence of thought and action, and that was the Freiherr von Bissing (1873-1956). Not yet 40 years old in 1912, he was richer than all the rest of them put together; already hailed as "the generous Maecenas of Egyptology," von Bissing was rich enough not only to visit important excavations in Egypt when he chose, but also to finance them from his own pocket.[55] Even more than the others, he traveled and dug and collected everywhere,[56] "an archaeologist in the broadest sense of the word," recognized as "the last scholar who could see the Mediterranean as a unit, familiar with everything down to the most insignificant potsherd."[57] "For us today," wrote Heinrich Brunner, "it is simply inconceivable how one individual man could speak with equal authority on the etymology of the word 'Pavian,' the painting of el-Amarna, the fundamentals of Byzantine art, the structure of the personal pronouns in early Egyptian, or the exodus from Cnidus."[58]

Von Bissing "was proud of being a dilettante,"[59] and his numerous writings on all subjects almost all take the form of short notes of a few sentences.[60] Most of them have to do with artistic history and criticism, which was his specialty, and allowed him to range as widely and speculate as freely as he chose.[61] Both rich and noble, "he was an original, stamped from a unique mold, willing to face all consequences without regard to praise or disapproving head-shakes. . . . he went the way of his own convictions."[62]

Here, then, we have an incorruptible judge—but was he an unbiased one? Hardly. Whatever his scientific convictions or scholarly integrity, he was a member of the nobility: throne and church always had first and unquestioned claim on his loyalty, and nothing could budge him from his commitment to them.[63] In this he was much like the aristocratic Sayce, his scientific scepticism matched only by his uncompromising loyalty to a feudal society and a feudal religion—hardly the man to look with a kindly eye on the supernaturalism and humble simplicity of a Joseph Smith.[64]

As to von Bissing's technical knowledge, his specialty was ancient art, especially Egyptian art, but even in that, G. Foucart maintains, "his conclusions go too far,"[65] and in his archaeological one-sidedness he often shows poor judgment.[66] Not surprisingly he too often equated the old-fashioned or established view with the sound and safe one, insisting, for example, as late as the 1930's that there were no ties whatever between ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia,[67] and continuing to doubt the existence of the Hittites, whom he always puts in quotation marks.[68] Even his approach to art was an old-fashioned, positivistic one, and he opened his *Systematic Handbook of Egyptian Art* with words that today seem hopelessly narrow: "A History of Art must not be a history of culture."[69] For him, in fact, even the glories of Egyptian art were but a preparation for Greek art.[69] Hidebound and opinionated to the point of rudeness,[70] artistocratic and aloof, fiercely loyal to the views and interests of one church, impatient of any disagreement or contradiction—is this the man to give a cool and patient hearing to Joseph Smith? He never offers to tell us what the Facsimiles are, but is completely satisfied that "every one figure is an absurdity," and that whatever the inscriptions say (though he does not read them), "they cannot say what Smith thought." His verdict is not surprising, but neither is it very convincing. ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[1]C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1967), pp. 154f.
[2]Jean Leclant, in *Archiv fuer Orientforschung*, Vol. 21 (1966), p. 272.
[3]Sir A. H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford, 1961), p. 16.
[4]Jean Capart, in *Melanges Maspero*, Vol. 1, p. 227.
[5]J. Capart, *Religions d'Egypte* (1905), pp. 6-7.
[6]Adrian de Buck, in *Chroniques d'Egypte*, Vol. 23 (1947), p. 23.
[7]Günther Roeder, *Volksglaube in Pharaonenreich* (Stuttgart, 1952), p. 7.
[8]Francois-Joseph Chabas, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. II (1865), p. 47.
[9]Siegfried Morenz, *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, Vol. 48 (1953), p. 341.
[10]Georges Goyon, in *Revue Archaeologique*, 1963, No. 2, p. 1.
[11]F. L. Griffith, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 19 (1934), p. 66.
[12]Thus S. Langdon, in *Archiv fuer Orientforschung*,

Vol. 8 (1932), p. 341.
[13]Griffith, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[14]Langdon, *loc. cit.*
[15]Griffith, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.
[16]A. H. Sayce, *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*, (New York, 1904), p. 118.
[17]Sayce, in *Smithsonian Report*, 1931, pp. 518-19.
[18]*Ibid.*, p. 529.
[19]*Ibid.*, p. 528.
[20]*Ibid.*, p. 520.
[21]Griffith, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[22]Editorial note in *Chronique d'Egypte*, Vol. 9 (1933), p. 283.
[23]The one exception is an inscription from Aswan of only six characters, of which Sayce writes, "The inscription on the left reads, I think, 'Beloved of Khnum the Great, the Lord of the country of Ranefer.' In the inscription on the right the island of Senem appears to be mentioned." The inscription on the right was much the longer one, yet no attempt is made to translate it. *Receuil de Travaux*, Vol. 15 (1893), p. 147. On p. 148 is a Greek inscription: "This I venture to translate. . . ." Cf. *Receuil de Travaux*, Vol. 16 (1894), pp. 167-76; Vol. 17 (1895), pp. 160-64; Vol. 20 (1898), pp. 169-76; Vol. 13 (1895), pp. 62-67, 187-91.
[24]Langdon, *op. cit.*, p. 342.
[25]H. R. Hall, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 1 (1915), p. 72.
[26]Langdon, *op. cit.*, p. 341.
[27]Guy Brunton, in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 43 (1943), p. 5.
[28]*Ibid.*, p. 4.
[29]*Ibid.*, p. 13.
[30]*Ibid.*, p. 5.
[31]*Ibid.*, p. 13.
[32]*Ibid.*, p. 4.
[33]*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1966 ed., s.v. Petrie.
[34]W.M.F. Petrie, *Personal Religion in Egypt before Christianity* (New York: Harpers, 1909), p. 22.
[35]*Ibid.*, p. 37.
[36]His education is described by W. Otto, in *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. 85 (1931), p. 6; his unique aptitude and personality, *ibid.*, pp. 1-3.
[37]*Ibid.*, p. 8.
[38]Some of Meyer's accomplishments are listed, *ibid.*, pp. 11-22.
[39]*Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
[40]*Ibid.*, p. 20.
[41]Eduard Meyer, *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen* (Halle, 1912), p. 1.
[42]Walther Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
[43]Editorial in *Zeitschr. fuer aegyptische Sprache*, Vol. 72 (1936), flyleaf.
[44]*Loc. cit.*, and Gustav Jequier, in *Sphinx*, Vol. 17 (1913), pp. 148-49.
[45]Hans Bonnet, in *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. 81 (1927), pp. 179, 183, and Jequier, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-50.
[46]Jequier, *loc. cit.*, and G. Foucart, in *Sphinx*, Vol. 11 (1908), pp. 40-42, who is particularly outspoken.
[47]Foucart, *op. cit.*, pp. 42, 40ff.
[48]Jequier, pp. 148f; Foucart, p. 42.
[49]Jean Garnot, *La Vie Religieuse dans l'ancienne Egypte* (Paris: Presses Universitaires), pp. 107-9.
[50]James Breasted, *Religion and Thought*, (London, 1912), p. 40.
[51]Alfred Lucas, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 31 (1945), pp. 96-97.
[52]Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (New York: Columbia University, 1948), pp. 64, 66, 71.
[53]Alexander Scharff, in *Jahrbuch der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaft*, 1935/6, pp. 1-2.
[54]Alan H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 291.
[55]T. Smolenski, in *Bulletin de l'Academis de Science de Cracow*, 1906, p. 77.
[56]Helmuth Brunner, in *Archiv fuer Orientforschung*, Vol. 17 (1955), p. 484.
[57]*Ibid.*, p. 485.
[58]*Ibid.*, p. 484.
[59]H. Brunner, in *Archiv fuer Orientforschung*, Vol. 21 (1966), p. 269.
[60]For a complete bibliography of his writings, *Zeitschrift fuer aegyptische Sprache*, Vol. 85 (1959), pp. 1-16 (complete for 1895-1955); Vol. 89 (1964), pp. 3-4.
[61]The vast range of his studies on art is discussed in *Zeitschrift fuer aegyptische Sprache*, Vol. 79 (1954), p. 54.
[62]H. Brunner, in *Archiv fuer Orientforschung*, Vol. 17, p. 485.
[63]*Loc. cit.* In 1922 he became a voluntary exile for political reasons, *ibid.*, p. 484.
[64]On his skepticism, Brunner, *Archiv fuer Orientforschung*, Vol. 21, p. 270.
[65]G. Foucart, in *Sphinx*, Vol. 11 (1908), p. 89.
[66]*Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.
[67]von Bissing, in *Archiv fuer Orientforschung*, Vol. 7 (1931/2), pp. 24-30.
[68]*Ibid.*, pp. 159-201.
[69]Herbert Senk, in *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, Vol. 58 (1963), pp. 6-7.
[70]J. Capart, in *Egyptian Religion*, Vol. 3 (1934), p. 228.


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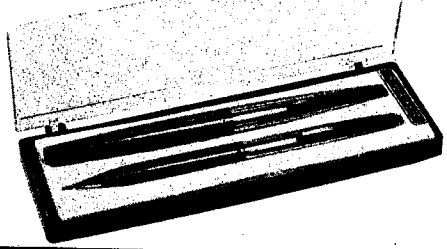

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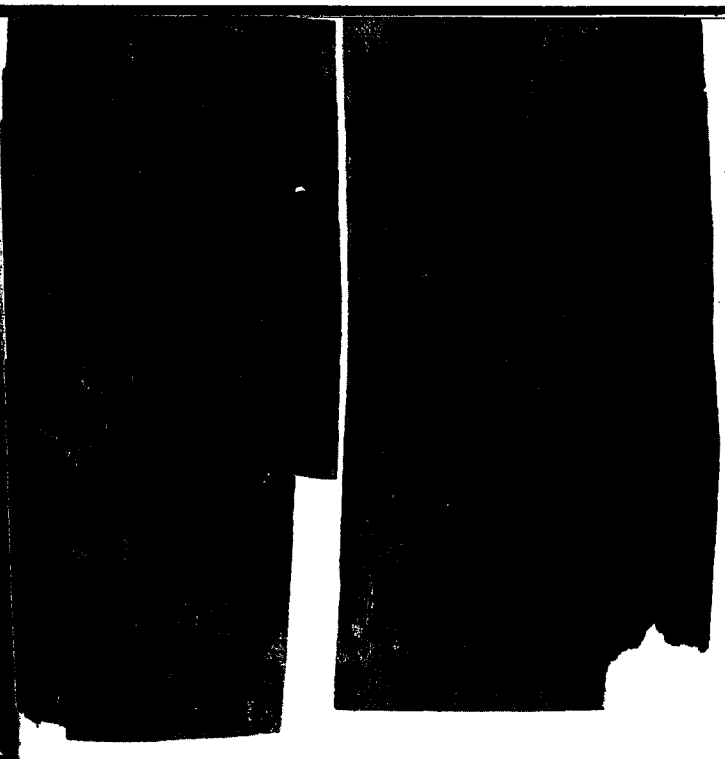
Right Reverend Franklin S. Spalding, who half a century ago sought the opinions of Egyptologists concerning the Book of Abraham.



Both the vignette and the rubric announce that this section of the Book of the Dead contains a "Speech for Taking the form of a Swallow," yet the chapter itself (No. 86) seems to say nothing whatever on the subject. This is part of the papyri, rediscovered by Dr. Aziz Atiya, that the Prophet Joseph Smith once owned.

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

Second String

●With the five giants accounted for, the other members of the team should not detain us long. But first, Theodule Deveria (1831-1871) deserves a word of notice because he wrote the first, the longest, and the most carefully considered report on the Facsimiles that has appeared to date.[1] Bishop Spalding gives short shrift to Deveria because, as he explains, "unquestionably, this matter is far too important to depend on the opinion of a youthful amateur. Such an important matter deserves the thoughtful consideration of mature scholars—of the world's ablest Orientalists."[2]

Youthful? When Deveria wrote his study of the Facsimiles he was 34—ten years older than Mercer was when he wrote the same—fully matured and at the height of his powers.

Amateur? At 17, urged by the Egyptologist Charles Feuquieres, Deveria had plunged into Egyptology while Charles Lenormand gave him Coptic lessons and August Harle, the best Hebraist of his time, pushed him in Hebrew. At 19 he retranslated an important manuscript formerly rendered by Champollion; at 23 he was publishing in Egyptology and in the following year became attached to the Department of Antiquities of the Louvre, where he produced the first complete catalogue ever made of a major Egyptian collection. Still in his twenties, he succeeded the great Mariette as conservator of the Egyptian museum in the Louvre and, according to de Rouge, produced a work on the Turin Papyrus that "placed Deveria among the masters." It was only the jealousy of his superior at the museum, A. Mariette, that obscured his great contributions to Egyptology.[3]

Thoughtful consideration? Whereas Deveria wrote a long study, two of Spalding's experts dashed off notes of a hundred words only, and five of them wrote less than a page.

World's ablest Orientalists? Spalding deems superior to Deveria four men besides Mercer, whose combined output in Egyptology could not begin to approach that of the "youthful amateur." We have already considered Dr. Mercer; how about the others?

"Dr. John Peters, University of Pennsylvania. In charge of expedition to Babylonia, 1888-1895." In 1912 Dr. Peters (1852-1921) was pastor of a church in New York, and had not been at the University of Pennsylvania for 20 years. When Spalding's good friend, Professor Pack, discovered this, he was quite upset and wrote: "For an instant I was paralysed. . . . Could it be possible that Dr. Peters is not connected with the University of Pennsylvania, but is a rector in one of New York's fashionable churches? No. I could not believe it. . . . you had led the public to believe that Dr. Peters is at the University of Pennsylvania."[4] So while he was back East Dr. Pack

made a number of visits and inquiries, and summed up the results thus: "Now, Dr. Spalding, this looks like plain deceit. Am I mistaken? Why did you lead the public to believe that Dr. Peters is now at the University of Pennsylvania when you knew that he left there twenty years ago? Why did you hide from the public the fact that Dr. Peters is a rector in your own church and has been for years?"[4]

To be sure, being the rector of anything need not prevent one from being also an Egyptologist, but Peters was never that. He had taught Hebrew at Pennsylvania for eight years, and he wrote popular books on the Bible and modern politics, but his name appears nowhere in connection with Egyptian studies. A career churchman, he had in 1912 just finished serving six years as canon-residentiary of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.[5] He is another of those devoted churchmen who, like Sayce and Mercer, combine with the dignity of the cloth an intellectual contempt for the supernatural and an ill-concealed impatience with those who would interpret the Bible too literally. Dr. Peters, in fact, wrote a book showing that the ancient patriarchs were nothing but myths, legendary figures "generously clothed with personal traits by successive generations of narrators" by whom "striking episodes have been introduced into the stories and even romances which have no inherent connection with the original legends."[6] Along with "racial and legendary" elements, the history of Abraham combines "features of a purely romantic character, in which we are to see no other meaning than the fancy of the story-teller. . . ."[7] In all the story of the man Abraham, he claimed, there is not a word of real history.

With such a view of Bible history, is Dr. Peters the man to give serious attention to the Book of Abraham as history? Peters' ideas reflect the consensus of scholarly opinion in his day, and that of the Spalding jury in particular. At that time the establishment was solidly against the whole concept of the Book of Abraham.

"He combines with the dignity of the cloth an intellectual contempt for the supernatural. . . ."

"Dr. Arthur C. Mace, Assistant Curator, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Department of Egyptian Art." Though he is not mentioned in any of the usual biographical sources nor in W. R. Dawson's *Who Was Who in Egyptology, 1910-1914*, Dr. Mace (1874-1928) had been a student of Petrie and had worked with the Hearst collection in Berkeley before going to the Metropolitan.[8] His chance for immortality came when Howard Carter, overwhelmed with work and expense on the tomb of Tutankhamen, asked for the assistance of a Metropolitan Museum crew who were working close by; Mace at the time was taking Dr. Lythgoe's place in charge of the work, and on instructions from the latter he joined the Carter enterprise and thus had a part in the most sensational archaeological discovery of the century.[9] Dr. Mace was an archaeologist and not a philologist. He assisted in the publication of discoveries by and for the museum, but when he came to inscriptions, even short and easy ones, he turned the work over to others.[10] His one serious attempt to deal with documentary sources, a study called "The Influence of Egyptian on Hebrew Literature," (1922), is described by Raymond Weill as nothing but an inferior rehash of Herrman Gunkel's work of 1909 on the same subject.[11]

"Dr. Albert M. Lythgoe, Head of the Department of Egyptian Art of the Metropolitan Museum," should be added to the list, since Bishop Spalding intended to consult him instead of Arthur C. Mace, who was his understudy while he was abroad. Like Mace, Dr. Lythgoe (1868-1933) was a museum man and a collector who had been a pupil of Wiedemann at Bonn and assisted Reisner in the field. "His finest achievement," according to his obituary, ". . . was the arrangement of the Egyptian Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of New York."[12] Arranging collections is not the same thing as interpreting abstruse texts, and the long interview with Lythgoe in the *New York Times* reads almost like a burlesque of pompous scholarship: "To make very clear just how great a hoax the Mormon prophet perpetrated upon his people," Lythgoe explains to the reporters with magisterial ease exactly how Egyptian symbolism originated and just what Egyptian religion is all about, as he readily identifies solar hymns in the Facsimiles, and twice refers to Facsimile I as depicting the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. The whole baffling complex presented "no puzzle to Dr. Lythgoe," though his strange theories of Egyptian religion and his guesses about the Facsimiles found no echo even among the other members of the Spalding panel.[13]

"Dr. George A. Barton." When he was challenged by the Mormons, Bishop Spalding sought further support from the learned and got it from Professor Barton (1859-1942), acknowledged minister of the Society of Friends (orthodox) 1879-1922, deacon 1918, priest 1919, D.D. 1924. In 1912 Dr. Barton's book, *The Heart of the Christian Message*, had just gone into its second printing. "Permit me first to say," Professor Barton began his contribution to the Spalding cause, "that, while I have a smattering of Egyptology, I am not an Egyp-

tologist"[15]—and indeed we have already seen what Dr. Mercer thought of Barton as an authority on Egypt.[16] But he *was* a minister, thus bringing to five the number of *non*-Egyptologist ministers sitting in judgment *as* Egyptologists on Joseph Smith.

Barton believed that the "faker" Joseph Smith merely attempted to "imitate Egyptian characters," the result being "untranslatable . . . as they stand they do not faithfully represent any known writing."[17] As to the Facsimiles, the experts disagree about them, Mr. Barton explained, because "these pictures were differently interpreted at times by the Egyptians themselves," and some of the jury "have given the original interpretation of the symbolism, and some the later Egyptian interpretation."[17] Odd, that that explanation should never have occurred to any of the experts themselves, who might have been very embarrassed had the Mormons chosen to exploit Professor Barton's foolish remarks.

P.S.: In 1915 the University of Utah brought in Edgar J. Banks, "one of America's most distinguished archaeologists," to put the final seal of authority on the Spalding enterprise.[18] Banks (1866-1941) had already sounded off on the subject in the *Christian Herald* in 1913, and duly reported through the pages of the prestigious *Literary Digest* that Dr. Spalding's zeal had forever discredited Mormonism in the eyes of the world and the more intelligent Mormons.[19] Mr. Banks pictured himself in *Who's Who* decidedly in the romantic tradition of Richard Haliburton. He had been U.S. consul in Baghdad in his youth, organized an expedition to excavate Ur, which, however, never got into the field, and claimed to have discovered in 1903 "a white statue of king David, a pre-Babylonian king of 4500 B.C. (oldest statue in the world)." While Spalding was working on his grand design in 1912, the dashing Banks, as he tells us, was climbing Ararat (17,210 feet high—he puts that in *Who's Who* too), and crossing the Arabian Desert on a camel (from where to where he does not say).[20]

It is amazing, unless one knows this type of glamor-mongering archaeologist, that Mr. Banks, after months in Salt Lake City as an expert on the subject, could come out with such howlers as that "Smith seems to have obtained the documents from a sea captain,"[21] that it was the Mormon officials themselves who "turned the manuscripts over to Spalding" with the request that he investigate their authenticity,[21] that hypocephali such as Facsimile 2 (of which less than 50 were known at the time) existed by the millions: "It has been estimated that something like 20,000,000 of Egyptian mummies have been discovered. . . . Beneath each mummy's head, [lay] a cushion. . . . The disks, found in great numbers, are nearly alike, varying only slightly with the period from which they come."[22] Banks also announced that Joseph Smith had never possessed any papyri at all but only such little plaster disks.[23] Apparently nothing Mr. Banks could say was too absurd to be swallowed by the open-mouthed scholars on the Bench as long as the magic words "science" and "progress" were evoked with ritual regularity.[24]

We should not leave our experts without a word about Sir E. A. W. Budge (1857-1934), who in 1903 had agreed with his colleague Woodward at the British Museum "in declaring the Prophet's interpretation bosh, rubbish. . . ."[25] This was a demonstration of Budge's "ferocious bark, which could turn to biting if need be."[26] Others could bark back, however, and when Budge gave the Englishman Thomas Young priority over Champollion in the translation of Egyptian, an eminent French Egyptologist quoted Peter Renouf: "No person who knows anything of Egyptian philplogy can countenance so gross an error."[27] Jean Capart noted that the highest praise of Budge must also be his severest criticism—the phenomenal productivity for which he paid too high a price.[28] Animated by the laudable objective of providing as many texts as possible for students and as many translations as possible for the public, Budge dashed off the longest list of publications in the entire scope of *Who's Who*.[28] To do this he followed no plan, paid no attention to the work of others, never indicated his sources; "his interpretation of figures is extremely defective," wrote Capart, "and his translations are full of completely erroneous ideas."[29] "I can categorically declare," wrote the same critic, of Budge's *Gods of the Egyptians*, "that it is bad; the work lacks the necessary preparation."[30] As R. Campbell Thompson observed, Professor Budge was always "in too great a hurry to finish."[31] Will anyone maintain that he was not in a hurry, his old impulsive blustering self, when he offhandedly condemned the interpretations of the Facsimiles?

It is still going on: If nothing else, our long involvement with the affair of 1912 has taught us something about the limitations of scholarship. We should know by now the meaning of the maxim, "there are no fields—there are only problems," with its corollaries that familiarity with a field does not mean mastery of all related problems, since no major problem is to be solved within the walls of any one department. Since closed systems are a fiction, the conclusions of science must remain tentative forever: ". . . the method of critical discussion does not establish anything [writes Popper]. Its verdict is always and invariably 'not proven.' "[32]

Consider for a moment the scope and complexity of the materials with which the student *must* cope if he would undertake a serious study of the Book of Abraham's authenticity. At the very least he must be thoroughly familiar with (1) the texts of the "Joseph Smith Papyri" identified as belonging to the Book of the Dead, (2) the content and nature of the

mysterious "Sen-sen" fragment, (3) the so-called "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar" attributed to Joseph Smith, (4) statements by and about Joseph Smith concerning the nature of the Book of Abraham and its origin, (5) the original document of Facsimile 1 with its accompanying hieroglyphic inscriptions, (6) the text of the Book of Abraham itself in its various editions, (7) the three Facsimiles as reproduced in various editions of the Pearl of Great Price, (8) Joseph Smith's explanation of the Facsimiles, (9) the large and growing literature of ancient traditions and legends about Abraham in Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Greek, Slavonic, etc., (10) the studies and opinions of modern scholars on all aspects of the Book of Abraham.

It will not do to consider just one or two of these areas before passing judgment on the Book of Abraham; yet so far nobody has done more than that. Who *can* hope to cover all that ground? Only a lot of diligent students with plenty of time and big libraries at their disposal. That is why we cannot accept as final the brief and scattered departmental studies of the Book of Abraham. It is not because we do not respect the knowledge and ability of the experts or because we feel in any way superior to them (the world will not see another Eduard Meyer until the millennium), but because the nature of the problem calls for infinitely more care and study than has been put into it.

There are two propositions regarding the Book of Abraham that none can deny. The one is that Joseph Smith could not possibly have known Egyptian as it is understood today. The other is that the Prophet has put down some remarkable things in the pages of the Book of Abraham. Why should we waste time on Proposition Number 1? What can we say about a method of translation that completely escapes us? This writer is anything but an Egyptologist, yet he has stood on the sidelines long enough to know that there is no case to be made out against the Book of Abraham on linguistic grounds for the simple reason that Joseph Smith did not commit himself beyond the interpretation of the Facsimiles.[33] We cannot pretend to understand *how* the Book of Abraham was translated, but that should not seriously disturb us, since nobody understands the method by which some of the greatest scholars were able to translate texts that no one else could read—one thinks of George Smith, Edward Hincks, and the late Francis Llewellyn Griffith. In their case, it was the result that justified the intuition, and not the other way around. So let it be with Joseph Smith: we must still take his word for it that he was actually translating, but the result of his efforts is a different matter —could such a monument be the result of trickery and deceit? It is Proposition 2 that provides us at last with firm ground to stand on—and none of the critics have ever given it a moment's thought!

What Joseph Smith tells us about Abraham in the book attributed to him can now be checked against a large corpus of ancient writings, unavailable to Joseph Smith, to which we shall often refer in the pages that follow. He has also given us, independent of any translated text, his interpretations of the three Facsimiles, and it is to these that we now address ourselves. It was in his explanation of the Facsimiles, it will be recalled, that our experts of 1912 were convinced that they had caught the Prophet out of bounds. But they were wrong: none of them knew nearly enough about the Facsimiles to pass judgment as they did. That *we* do not know the answers is beside the point, which is that present-day scholarship would reverse the fundamental principle on which the authorities of more than half a century ago rested their conclusions, namely, the conviction that Egyptian writing is a good deal harder to interpret than Egyptian pictures. Actually, Mercer got it backwards when he said that

"The largest part of the
consists of fra

"while the translation of ignorantly copied hieroglyphs is a precarious proceeding, the interpretation of Egyptian figures is a comparatively simple matter."[34] For the beginner, to be sure, this is true; but as the student gets more and more of the grammar and vocabulary, the writing naturally becomes increasingly easier to read; but the pictures that once looked so simple and obvious become, alas, ever more puzzling, until we finally get to the top of the ladder where the full-fledged Egyptologists frankly tell us that the reading of a text is far easier than the correct understanding of symbolic pictures.

A hundred years ago Maspero and Naville agreed that "a philologically easily understood sentence, the words and grammar of which give us not the slightest difficulty," often conveys ideas that completely escape all the experts, these being also the ideas behind the pictures.[35] And today Professors Wilson and Anthes would concur in the same view. The latter calls attention to our "helplessness in the face of these mythological records," both "texts and pictures,"[36] while Dr. John A. Wilson suggests the amusing analogy of an Eskimo who had never heard of the Bible trying to make sense of the old hymn "Jerusalem the Golden"; he "might grasp the individual meanings of all the words . . . but he would still be puzzled by the allusions. . . . We have similar troubles in trying to apply our understanding to the religion of the ancient Egyptians, which dropped out of human ken for more than 1500 years."[37] The ancient pictures have a face value that is clear enough to us and to the Eskimo, but what they said

...papyri in the possession of the Church of fragments from the Egyptian Book of the Dead...."

to an Egyptian is another matter.

The Mormons were not slow in calling attention to this fatal limitation to the understanding of the Facsimiles: "I repeat," wrote Dr. John A. Widtsoe, "that something more must be done than to label a few of the figures Osiris, Isis or Anubis before Joseph Smith can be placed in 'the same class of fakers as Dr. Cook.'"[38] The mere names tell us nothing unless we can also tell "who and what were Isis and Horus and all the other gods of Egypt? Not by name and relationship, but as expressing the Egyptian's vision of . . . the past, the present and the hereafter?"[39] Sjodahl and Webb asked similar questions, but the Mormons were ignored because they were not Egyptologists. Yet, shortly before, Georg Steindorff had written: "We know relatively little about Egyptian religion in spite of the abundance of pictures and religious texts of ancient Egypt which have come down to us. We know, it is true, the names and the appearances of a large number of divinities, we know in which sanctuaries they were honored, but until now we have but few notions about their nature, and the significance which the people and the priests gave to them and the legends attached to their persons."[40] And today Jaroslav Cerny can still write: "For the Old and Middle Kingdom there are hardly more than proper names to give us a glimpse into the beliefs of the common people and their relationships to the gods,"[41] while Jequier points out that the "shocking contradictions" in the interpretation of religious imagery "show us that we have not yet found the truth."[42] There is nothing for it, says Jequier, but for each scholar to continue on his way, "each interpreting in his own manner and according to his means . . . and so gradually penetrate the mystery of the Egyptian religions."[42] These were the very points that the Mormons were trying to make and that the opposition, determined at any price to give the impression of great and definitive knowledge, quietly ignored.

The Book of the Dead: The largest part of the Joseph Smith papyri in the possession of the Church consists of fragments from the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the fragments having been recently translated and discussed by no less a scholar than Professor John A. Wilson of the Oriental Institute.[43] "Scholars had barely begun the study of the Book of the Dead," Edouard Naville recalled, "when they saw that the text swarms with difficulties . . . the prevailing mysticism, the abundance of images, the oddity of the pictures, the impossibility of knowing how the Egyptians expressed even the simplest abstract ideas—all offer formidable obstacles with which the translator is continually colliding."[44]

These points can be illustrated by the most easily recognized section of the Joseph Smith papyri, namely, the fragment with the picture of a swallow, Chapter 86 of the Book of the Dead. It is, according to the rubric (the title in red ink), "A Spell for Becoming a Swallow." But what do we find? To this day Egyptologists cannot agree on just what is meant by "spell"—is it a recitation? an ordinance? an act of meditation? an incantation? merely a chapter? Neither does anyone know for sure in what sense the "transformation" is to be understood—whether it is a change of form, a transmigration, imitation, moment of transition, passage from one world to another, mystic identification, ritual dramatization, or what not. And what about this business of becoming a swallow? In the same breath the speaker announces that he is a scorpion, and after the title there is nothing in the text that even remotely suggests anything having to do with a swallow—literal, typological, allegorical, or mystical. Certainly what the subject does is most unswallow-like and unscorpion-like as he advances on his two legs and stretches forth his two arms in the accepted human fashion.[45] Strangely, the titles are often easier to understand than the sections that go with them, as if, Thomas George Allen points out, the two were of different origin and history.[46]

Such confusion may in part be explained by the alarming fact that the ancient scribes who produced these documents were often unable to read what they were writing. By the twenty-first dynasty, Naville noted, the ignorance of the scribes reached the point (toward which it had long been steadily tending) of complete miscomprehension of their own texts, betrayed by the common habit of copying entire sections backwards![47] "Even in their original state," however, Professor Allen assures us, "the sanctity of the spells proper was furthered by intentional obscurities,"[48] so that no matter how far back we go we will always be in trouble.

At all times, W. Czermak observes, "the concrete wording of the Book of the Dead is illogical and fantastic," but its religious sense, he insists, is not; if we confine our researches, therefore, to the examination of the text, as almost all students do, we are bound to get nowhere.[49] This is not a paradox: the divine words don't need to make sense in order to be taken seriously. For some years this

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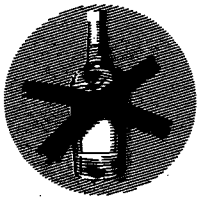

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writer taught classes of Moslem students who gloried in the thrilling sound of the Koran while resenting, some of them fiercely, any suggestion that a mortal listening to those words might possibly understand their meaning—their incomprehensibility was a stamp of divinity.

The Book of the Dead is a huge Chinese puzzle. In the first place, no two copies are just alike and most of them differ widely, so widely, in fact, that if we were to gather together all the materials in all the various copies and reconstruct from them a single standard text, "the whole would make an ensemble that would be hard to reproduce and even harder to use."[50] The pictures often have nothing to do with the texts they accompany, and sometimes illustrate things not found in the book at all.[51] Texts and pictures (they are usually called vignettes) were usually done by different persons, and "generally speaking, the beauty of the vignettes runs counter to the goodness of the text."[52] By the same token some of the most beautifully written texts are among the worst in grammar and spelling, for everything seems to go by mere appearances, so that the relation between the effectiveness of a certain spell and the actual contents of the spell is "often incomprehensible."[53] Texts were valued long after their real meaning was lost from sight because "the magical use of these old religious texts is based on their external aspects; it is magic, not religion that loves learned obscurity, actually ,,taking pleasure in what is incomprehensible because of its mysterious allure."[54] This means that the documents defy classification, each being "an agglomeration of texts related in content but coming from different epochs and backgrounds."[55]

Anything Goes! Since the Egyptians were, as is well known, the most conservative of people, and since funerary rites, as is equally well known, belong to the most tradition-bound and

"...each individual was free to impose his private taste and his personal history into the record whenever he saw fit."

conservative department of human activity, it is quite baffling to find just in this particular branch of this particular culture what seems to be a total lack of official or social control. Everything is up to individual choice: some vignettes drawn to order for a particular buyer might in the end be bought by somebody else ordering completely different texts to go with them;[56] sometimes a text chosen by one person would catch the fancy of others who would order the same for themselves;[57] individuals would for their private funeral texts "borrow, apparently without a qualm, many of the Pyramid Texts, including their implications of royalty," while at the same time blithely composing new chapters on the spot to suit their fancy.[58] If a person did not understand an old text, that made little difference—he would simply latch on to something in the manuscript that caught his fancy, even if it was only a single word or symbol, and put it down for its magical use.[59] "Sometimes a space was kept blank for a vignette which was to record some special feature of the deceased."[60] As to the order in which the texts occurred, there was no fixed order, and different general arrangements were popular at different periods.[61]

It will be useful to keep all this in mind as we consider the Facsimiles, which have been brushed aside as "typical" Egyptian funerary documents, though uniqueness is a conspicuous characteristic of such documents, and the Facsimiles are among the strangest. Completely counter to what one would expect in the ancient and venerable tradition of ritual documentation, each individual was free to impose his private taste and his personal history into the record whenever he saw fit: ". . . each copy," according to T. G. Allen, "comprised a collection of spells both selected and arranged on a more or less individualistic basis."[62] And this goes for the oldest funerary monuments as well as the latest crude papyri: "Not one of the mortuary Temples hitherto excavated has proved to be an exact replica of any other known example."[63] Typical is the representation of the rite of the opening of the mouth, depicted in some 80 tombs over a period of more than 1500 years: all but seven of the tombs offer only "an extremely curtailed representation," no single tomb shows the entire rite, and what one tomb shows another does not; also, during the long centuries of transmission "no systematic variation" appears.[64]

It was at first assumed that the Book of the Dead was a ritual text, and Champollion gave it the name of the Egyptian Funeral Ritual; but that interpretation was given up when it was recognized that no ritual is described: There is not a single mention in the Book of the Dead of anything that the dead person or any priest or any member of the family is required to do.[65] Taken as a whole or a part, "one gathers the impression that the compilers of the Book of the Dead included any religious material suitable for recitation as a spell regardless of its contents."[66]

As an illustration of this puzzling unconventionality, we may take the best-known picture from the Book of the Dead, the well-known judgment scene or "Psychostasy," a fine example of which is found among the Joseph Smith papyri. This judgment of the dead is the sort of thing that any amateur expert could explain at first glance, but those with experience tell us that "we do not even know what significance it may have had for the dead."[67] Though the scene occurs in many copies of the Book of the Dead, it is by no means found in all of them, and it would seem that "not all the dead are required to stand judgment."[67] What is more, there is no indication anywhere that standing trial successfully will lead to any kind of blessedness, nor any certainty whatever about what is supposed to happen to the wicked in the hereafter; and except for its occasional representation in the Book of the Dead, the idea of judgment is nowhere so much as hinted at in all of the Egyptian documents.[68] The dead person is tried for 42 sins: "How strange!" cries Naville, "the 42 sins are not the same in all the texts."[69]

We often read of transformations, the capacity of the dead to assume whatever form he will, "but not all the dead take advantage of this privilege and nothing obliges them to do so."[69a] Transmigration may be indicated, "but there is no doctrine of compulsory transmigration."[70] In fact, in all this vast literature of the beyond, "there is neither a system nor any definite ideas about the fate of the dead beyond the grave. . . . In the Book of the Dead the goal is as uncertain as is the way to get there. . . . there is no compulsion and no necessity."[71] Down through the centuries of tradition there is not the slightest indication "of any authoritative transmission of theological interpretations."[72] And yet, in spite of this lack of controls, we cannot learn from these sources what the Egyptians really thought of death, for all thoughts on the subject such as occur in their secular writings have been rigidly excluded.[73] The one safe, or at least what Gardiner calls the "most valuable," guideline to the understanding of Egyptian texts, that is, "the logic of the situation," is denied

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1 cup water



Sort and wash fully ripe peaches, remove pits and skins, and crush fruit. Measure peaches into a large mixing bowl. Add sugar. Mix well, and let stand for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Dissolve pectin in water; bring to a boil, and boil for 1 minute. Add pectin solution to the fruit and sugar mixture. Stir for 2 minutes. Ladle the jam into jelly glasses or freezer containers, leaving ½-inch space at the top. Cover the containers and let stand for 24 to 48 hours. Makes about 9 six-ounce glasses. Store uncooked jam in a refrigerator or freezer. It can be held for a few months in a refrigerator or up to a year in a freezer. If kept at room temperature, it will mold or ferment in a short time. Once a container is opened, the jam should be used within a few days.

NOTE: If jam is too firm for serving when opened, it can be softened by stirring. If it tends to separate, stirring will blend it again.

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The Book of the Dead stands in line of descent of a very ancient corpus of writings beginning with the Pyramid Texts. The so-called Coffin Texts, standing midway between the Pyramid Texts and the Book of the Dead, "contain in about equal number" chapters found on the one hand in the Pyramid Texts and on the other in the Book of the Dead, while there are many passages in the Coffin Texts that are found in neither of the other two,[75] some of these being nonetheless just as old as the Pyramid Texts themselves.[76] "The Coffin Texts," says Lacau, "overwhelm us with unanswered questions,"[77] mostly the same questions that confront us in the Book of the Dead.[78] It seemed to Breasted that "the priests to whom we owe the Coffin Text compilations allow their fancy to roam at will," so that "it is difficult to gain any coherent conception of the hereafter which the men of this age hoped to attain."[79]

Thus, we see that the problems of the Book of the Dead are not merely the result of decadent and sloppy thinking; in fact, the same problems meet us in the very beginning, where the priests of Heliopolis in compiling the Pyramid Texts selected those "sayings" which they considered most desirable for particular individual kings.[80] The Pyramid Texts were used in ritual, but already "the Coffin texts have deserted the firm ground of ritual," presenting a "kaleidoscope of ideas that do not reflect the cult [illegible] are very free."[81] Though the C[illegible] Texts differ widely from coffin to [illegible] fin and follow no plan of organization, they do all have certain ideas in common, according to Louis Speleers, namely, (1) the idea of a physical resurrection and a spiritual existence in eternity, and (2) the reception of the dead by Osiris.[82] The doctrine of Osiris lies at the heart of the business, yet in all of Egyptian literature "no

The view that "the Book of the Dead is nothing but...fantastic ideas" is the easy way of "escaping a humiliating confession of ignorance...."

systematic exposition of this myth is known,"[83] and we would know nothing whatever about it were it not for the remarks of some poorly informed Greeks.[84] As in the Book of the Dead, the coffin text owner is always going somewhere, "but where he is going on his long road is not to be clearly discerned from the spells."[85]

"*Yet there is method in 't*": The scholars who condemned the Facsimiles in 1912 by labeling them scenes from the Book of the Dead never bothered to answer the urgent question of J. M. Sjodahl, "What *is* then the Book of the Dead?"[86] The question is still in order. Since the beginning, "the idea has prevailed that the Book of the Dead is nothing but a conglomeration of fantastic ideas," but that, as leading Egyptologists are pointing out today, was just the easy way of escaping a humiliating confession of ignorance and a crushing commitment to years of hard work.[87] As a result, "the 'illogic' of the Egyptians has almost become an article of faith in our science—much to its loss."[88] We have been told *ad nauseam* that things that supposedly intelligent Egyptians took seriously were "unmitigated rubbish,"[89] that Egyptian religion is "inarticulate, [and] incoherent from the logical point of view,"[90] that "the mentality of the East" will forever escape us [Western]ers,[91] that the Egyptians, like all primitives emerging from the night of prehistoric times [are] yet to discover and explore [the] real world,"[92] that "ancient Egyptian religion was a motley mixture of childishly crude fetishism and deep philosophic thought,"[93] ". . . a hotchpotch of warring ideas, without real unity of any kind."[94]

Perhaps the most enlightening discourse on this theme is that of Professor Louis Speleers, who in his work on the Coffin Texts takes the Egyptians to task with great feeling for holding religious beliefs that clash at every point with the teaching of Roman Catholic scholastic philosophy. He is shocked to find among the Egyptians "the total absence of the idea of an Absolute Being," but in its place the concept of a God who is "but man on a higher scale."[95] Their unpardonable sin is to prefer concrete to abstract terms: they "ignore the Absolute Good" to describe eternal bliss "in terms of earthly objectives."[96] In their thinking, "everything is as material and concrete as the Christian metaphysic is abstract and spiritual."[97] Even worse, if possible, they fail to place rigorous logic before all other considerations: "These ancients always proceed by simple affirmation and negation. . . . They don't think, they only 'feel' . . . no critical sense, no method."[98] Thus, they "expect to live forever with their neighbors and the delights of material things while at the same time sharing the life of gods and spirits."[99] "It is as if the principle of contradiction . . . did not exist for them."[100] Disgustingly egocentric, too, with the individual clinging to his personal identity throughout the eternities;[101] which is highly unscientific to the bargain, what with the "transposition of earthly things to a divine existence and of a dead person to another world . . . ," and otherwise "accepting the most improbable miracles, denying the laws of nature as we understand them."[102] It all bespeaks "a disorder of the brain . . . which provokes in us a horror of everything that offends our more or less innate sense of logic."[103] "As to their cosmology . . . there is nothing in common between certain of their cerebral conceptions and our own intellectual operations"; where Christian thinking "applies the most rigorous logic," the Egyptian "accepts the most shocking contradictions," of the most "rudimentary and childish thinking."[104]

Significantly enough, Dr. Speleers admits that the early Christians were guilty of the Egyptian type of thinking, regarding heaven and hell, for example, as definite places, "and it was only in the course of the Middle Ages [that is, thanks to the efforts of Scholastic philosophy] that they were recognized as a 'psychic state' of human existence."[105] And even as the Egyptians could not think of existence without some physical base, "one must recognize that the Christians themselves could not free themselves from this idea until a certain period of time had passed, and even then only to a certain degree."[106] To bring out their glaring contrast, Professor Speleers places certain of his own beliefs side by side with their Egyptian opposites; and given the choice between the two, there can be little question but that the Latter-day Saint would choose the Egyptian version every time. Indeed, at the present time, Catholics are becoming rather cool to the appeal of Scholastic philosophy, and many Egyptologists are beginning to ask whether the Egyptians were such fools after all. As examples of some of his own impeccable logic, Speleers tells us how "God through the mediation of his creatures becomes aware of that which He is not,"[107] and how the human soul "requires to be resurrected in a body, but . . . purged of all necessity of organs."[108] And he calls the Egyptians confused!

From the very first there were eminent Egyptologists who suspected that people as clever as the Egyptians could not possibly have been as anti-logical

as they seem to be from their writings. What we have in the texts, they argued, must represent the breakdown of a religion which in the beginning was entirely logical.[109] The most widely accepted explanation for all the confusion was the well-known determination of the Egyptians to throw nothing away: ideas, images, and stories originating in remote times and places were all welcomed by the Egyptian community and retained side by side, with ingenious efforts to explain their clashing coexistence and, when these failed, a good-natured and permanent hospitality, that "liberal" or "additive" attitude that allowed room for everybody in the temple.[110]

Along with this, we have today an increasing tendency to seek the explanation of many paradoxes not in Egyptian intransigence but in our own ignorance of what was really going on. "We cannot subscribe," wrote Henri Frankfort, "to the prevalent view that . . . the Egyptians held a number of incompatible ideas in hazy or muddleheaded confusion," this false idea being "founded on a discrepancy between our own outlook and the views and intentions of the ancients."[111] Alan Shorter seconds this: "We are apt to stigmatize as 'contradictory' the apparently confused ideas which run through . . . many Egyptian texts, when perhaps it is ourselves who are interpreting them too literally."[112] F. Daumas lays down some rules to be observed in the reading of Egyptian religious texts: (1) Assume a minimum of errors in a text, always giving the Egyptians instead of ourselves the benefit of the doubt. (2) "Believe that if we do not understand it is because we are badly informed, rather than imputing a shortage of intelligence to the Egyptians. . . . Let us not be hasty to condemn what on first sight looks chaotic and confused."[113] It was for failing to observe these principles, it will be recalled, that Professor Mercer was taken severely to task by his reviewers.[114] "Our attitude to the Egyptians," wrote Daumas, "has been that of children who find their parents to be outmoded and old-fashioned and conclude from that that they must be absolute nincompoops"; to fall back on Egyptian unreason to explain what we cannot understand is not a sound practice: "it is a vessel that leaks on all sides, and it leads quickly . . . to the conviction that the Egyptians were utterly stupid."[115] In the same vein the eminent Egyptologist Adrian de Buck chided those who find fault with the Egyptian language as primitive and defective: the real fault with the language of the Egyptians, de Buck points out, is, after all, simply that it is not *our* language.[116]

"I have never met a specialist," wrote Professor Anthes, "who did not have the highest respect for the Egyptian craftsman. . . ."

"I have never met a specialist," writes Professor Anthes, "who did not have the highest respect for the Egyptian craftsmanship, and all agree in classifying the best Egyptian work as perfect in form and timeless in appeal." Moreover, Anthes continues, we judge Egyptian military and political history by the same measures we use for modern history, never claiming Egyptian leaders to be naive or primitive in their thinking. In everything militarily they come up to the highest standards and often surpass the best the later world can produce. Yet we give these same people no credit for brains whatever when it comes to the subject that interested them most, religion![117] A century ago E. Revillout called attention to this strange bias.[118] What is behind it? Anthes and Frankfort suggest not a different level of intelligence but a different method of solving problems.

We get neat final solutions to our problems by isolating them in artificially closed systems. Thus we find a tidy correlation between the consumption of cholesterol and heart disease and immediately announce that all cholesterol is deadly. We get quick answers by drastic oversimplification. The Egyptian, on the other hand, "did justice to the complexity of the problem by allowing a variety of partial solutions."[119] After a statement in a funerary text, for example, it is common to find the phrase, "Some say this means so-and-so . . .," followed by another, "Others say it means so-and-so . . .," and so on, the reader being given his choice among a number of "official" explanations.[120] What we have here is "liberality in dogmatics rather than inability to think clearly."[121] Why settle for a final answer before we know all the facts? If two pieces of the jig-saw puzzle did not fit together, the Egyptians did not, as we so often do, pronounce one of them to be a fraud and throw it away, but they allowed for the possibility that there might be missing pieces that in the end would link up the two apparent contradictions.

This attitude some have called the "multiplicity of approaches": "Ancient thought . . . admitted side by side certain limited insights which were held to be simultaneously valid."[122] Hence, "quasi-conflicting images should not be dismissed in the usual derogatory manner,"[123] since they are expressions of "the habit of using several avenues of approach to subjects of a problematical nature." The modern single-line approach is neater and easier to understand, but the history of Christian dogma has

shown only too clearly how brittle and bigoted its solutions are. ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[1]Theodule Deveria, "Fragments de Mss. Funeraires Egyptiens consideres par les Mormons comme les memoires autographes d'Abraham," in *Memoires et Fragments* (Paris: Leroux, 1896), published in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 4 (1896), pp. 195-202; see also "Specimen de l'Interpretation des Ecritures de l'ancien Egypte," *ibid*, pp. 165ff.

[2]Franklin S. Spalding, *Joseph Smith as Translator*, p. 19.

[3]All this from the biography by his brother, Gabriel Everia, "Notice Biographique de Theodule Deveria (1831-1871)," in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 4 (1896), pp. i-xlviii.

[4]*The Improvement Era*, Vol. 16 (1913), pp. 703-4.

[5]*Who's Who in America*, 1912, p. 1648.

[6]J. P. Peters, *Early Hebrew Story* (New York: Putnam's, 1904), p. 129.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. 143.

[8]His work on mummy bandages while with the Hearst Egyptological expedition of the University of California is noted by G. E. Smith, in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 7 (1906), p. 157.

[9]Howard Carter and Arthur C. Mace, *The Tomb of Tutankhamen* (New York: Cooper Square, 1963), Vol. 1, pp. 107-9.

[10]Arthur C. Mace, *The Tomb of Senebtisi* (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1916), p. 35, note 1: "The greater part of these translations is due to the kindness of Dr. Alan H. Gardiner." Since the only inscriptions in the tomb were very short and easy ones, one wonders why Dr. Gardiner was needed to translate "the greater part" of them, and how much would be left to the genius of Dr. Mace. So also Carter and Mace, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, 109: ". . . Dr. Alan Gardiner kindly undertook to deal with any inscriptional material that might be found."

[11]Raymond Weill, in *Revue Egyptologique*, Supplement 1950, p. 48.

[12]Obituary in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 20 (1934), p. 107.

[13]*New York Times*, Dec. 29, 1912, magazine section.

[14]*Who's Who in America*, 1924-25, p. 331.

[15]*Era*, Vol. 16 (1913), p. 613.

[16]*Era*, Vol. 71 (May 1968), p. 57.

[17]George A. Barton, quoted in *Era*, Vol. 16 (1913), p. 774.

[18]Quote is from a *Christian Herald* article given at length in *Literary Digest*, July 10, 1915, p. 67, where also Banks is quoted: "Lately I have been delivering a series of lectures under the auspices of one of the departments of the University of Utah.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 66: "The knowledge of such facts is working like a leaven. . . . The Board of Regents of the University of Utah, avers Professor Banks, is 'predominantly Mormon' and 'making desperate efforts to check the growth of progress,' etc.

[20]*Who's Who in America*, 1924-5, pp. 303-4.

[21]Banks, *op. cit.*

[22]Quoted in *Era*, Vol. 16 (1913), p. 774.

[23]". . . the inscriptions are not upon papyrus, but upon small clay objects. . . ." Banks, *loc. cit.*

[24]See his sanguine remarks quoted in *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 774 75. "At the close of one of the lectures a bright young Mormon student accompanied me to the club where I was stopping. He asked about Joseph Smith's translation of the Egyptian inscriptions, for he remembered the discussion of two years ago. He is now a Mormon only in name. A Mormon gentleman . . . showed me about the Temple grounds. He was ashamed of his religion . . ., and he represents the younger generation of Mormons," Banks, *op. cit.*

[25]Reported in *Era*, Vol. 16, pp. 341ff, and *Deseret News*, Dec. 19, 1912, p. 4.

[26]R. Campbell Thompson, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 21 (1935), p. 69.

[27]E. Andersson, in *Sphinx*, Vol. 12 (1909), p. 237(d.).

[28]Thompson, *loc. cit.*; J. Capart, in *Bulletin critique des Religions de l'Egypte* (Brussels, 1905-1913), p. 25.

[29]Capart, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-28.

[30]*Ibid.*, p. 25.

[31]*Ibid.*, pp. 68f, noting that Budge "early relinquished" the writing of articles and turned out instead about 120 Oriental books. His work "undeniably does show this haste."

[32]Karl W. Popper, *Federation Reports of the*



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American Society for Experimental Biology, Vol. 22 (1963), p. 970.

[33]In translating the Book of Abraham Joseph Smith apparently made no use of any of the fragments of the Book of the Dead now in possession of the Church; the so-called *Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar* has never enjoyed any official status; the connection between the Book of Abraham and the "Sen-sen" papyrus remains a mystery: see our preliminary remarks in *BYU Studies*, Vol. 8 (Spring 1968), pp. 245-54, and *Dialogue*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Summer 1968), pp. 99-105.

[34]S. A. B. Mercer, in *Utah Survey*, Vol. I, p. 25, and *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 612. *Cf.* Mercer in Spalding, *Joseph Smith as Translator*, p. 29.

[35]Edouard Naville, *Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII. bis XX Dynastie. Einleitung* (Berlin, 1886), p. 2; Gaston Maspero, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 1 (1893), p. 22.

[36]Rudolph Anthes, in *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 20 (1957), p. 92.

[37]John A. Wilson, in *Dialogue*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Summer 1968), p. 71.

[38]Widtsoe, *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 618.

[39]*Ibid.*, p. 457.

[40]Georg Steindorff, *Baedeker's Guide to Egypt and the Sudan* (Leipzig, 1908), pp. cxii-cxxvi.

[41]Jaroslav Cerny, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1952), p. 54.

[42]Gustave Jequier, *Considerations sur les Religions Egyptiennes* (Neuchatel: 1946), pp. 7-8.

[43]Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-85.

[44]Naville, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[45]Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.

[46]Thomas George Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 3.

[47]Naville, *op. cit.*, p. 41; *cf.* E. A. W. Budge, *Egyptian Religion*, p. 45.

[48]Allen, *loc. cit.*

[49]W. Czermak, in *Ztschr. f. Aeg. Sprache*, Vol. 76 (1940), p. 10.

[50]Naville, *op. cit.*, p. 11. The various texts and interpretations were introduced with no idea of trying to "add to a composite design," R. Anthes, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

[51]Naville, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

[52]Theodore M. Davis, *The Funeral Papyrus of Iouiya* (London: Constable, 1908), p. 1.

[53]Hans Schack-Schackenburg, *Das Buch von den Zwei Wegen des seligen Toten* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903), p. 9. Thus the magnificent Turin Papyrus "swarms with every kind of mistake," Naville, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[54]Schack-Schackenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[55]Etienne Drioton, in *Archiv fuer Orientforschung*, 12 (1959), p. 261. ". . . an arrangement of the manuscripts in classes and lines of descent is not possible, so that we must fall back on an eclectic method," Hermann Grapow, *Das 17. Kapitel des aegyptischen Totenbuches* (Inaugural-Dissertation, Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universitaet, Berlin, 1912), p. 51.

[56]Naville, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

[57]*Ibid.*, p. 40.

[58]Thomas George Allen, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. II (1965), p. 177.

[59]Hermann Kees, *Der Goetterglaube im alten Aegypten* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1941), p. 254.

[60]Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[61]Naville, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 1 (1893), p. 25.

[62]Allen, *loc. cit.*

[63]I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt* (Penguin Books, 1952), p. 114.

[64]S. Bjerke, in *Numen*, Vol. 12 (1965), pp. 202-3.

[65]Richard Lepsius, *Aelteste Texte des Totenbuches* (Berlin, 1867), p. 6; Edouard Naville, *Das Aegptische Todtenbuch*, p. 19.

[66]Alan Shorter, *The Egyptian Gods* (London: K. Paul, 1937), pp. 64-65.

[67]Naville, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[68]*Loc. cit.*, and Alfred Wiedemann, *The Ancient Egyptian Doctrine of Immortality of the Soul* (New York: Putnam's, 1895), pp. 55-57; Naville, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[69]*Ibid.*, p. 26.

[69a]*Ibid.*, p. 22.

[70]Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

[71]Naville, *op. cit.*, p. 21; *cf.* Wiedemann, pp. 49f: "The Egyptians never attained to any clear idea of the Osirian underworld; the same confusion and obscurity reigned over it as over the whole conception of the unseen world and of deity. . . . each was at liberty to form for himself a more or less modified conception of the characters of the underworld."

[72]Rudolph Anthes, in *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 20, p. 95.

[73]E. Suys, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 1 (1932), p. 65, noting that the average Egyptian seems to have been rather skeptical about the whole business.

[74]Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 24.

[75]Pierre Lacau, in *Receuil des Travaux*, Vol. 26 (1904), p. 59.

[76]H. Kees, *Aegyptischen Totenglaube*, p. 255, noting that the content of the Coffin Texts in general suggests "freely selected pieces from a corpus of Pyramid Texts."

[77]Lacau, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[78]Capart, *Bulletin Critique des Religions de l'Egypt* (1904) p. 31, quoting Lacau.

[79]James Breasted, *Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), p. 278.

[80]Kees, *op. cit.*, p. 15. According to Kees, not only the Book of the Dead but the Coffin Texts and Pyramid Texts as well are all "entirely disorganized collections of unrelated sayings," p. 14:

[81]R. Anthes, in *Ztschr. fuer Aegyptische Sprache*, Vol. 82 (1958), pp. 7-8.

[82]Louis Speleers, *Textes des Cercueils* (Brussels, 1946), xxxii.

[83]J. Cerny, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 35.

[84]For a recent estimate of the limitations of Greek knowledge on the subject, see Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, pp. 1-10.

[85]Hans Schack-Schackenburg, *Zweiwegebuch*, p. 15, noting also (p. 11) that the real meaning of the "Two Ways" was entirely lost by the Middle Kingdom.

[86]T. M. Sjodahl, in *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 331.

[87]W. Czermak, in *Ztschr. f. Aeg. Sprache*, Vol. 76 (1940), p. 9.

[88]Czermak, in *Archiv fuer Aegyptische Archaeologie*, Vol. 1 (1938), p. 205.

[89]Gardiner, speaking of certain hymns, in *Revue Egyptologique*, Vol. 11 (1957), p. 55.

[90]Weill, in *Egyptian Religion*, Vol. 3 (1935), p. 121.

[91]Wilhelm Kaiser, in *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, Vol. 58 (1963), p. 341, citing Hermann Junker.

[92]Weill, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

[93]Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

[94]H. R. Hall, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 1 (1914), p. 77.

[95]Louis Speleers, *Textes des Cercueils*, pp. lxii, lxx.

[96]*Ibid.*, pp. lxx, xxxi, xix, xviii.

[97]*Ibid.*, p. xxxii.

[98]*Ibid.*, p. lxviii; also, "no concern for ontology or causality," p. lxix.

[99]*Ibid.*, p. xviii.

[100]*Ibid.*, p. lviii.

[101]*Ibid.*, p. lxx.

[102]*Ibid.*, pp. lxii-lxiii, lxix.

[103]*Ibid.*, p. lxxiii.

[104]*Ibid.*, pp. lxiv, xxxi: In short, "their cosmology is simplistic; they do not state clearly what they mean by life and nature," but simply accept such things as given quantities.

[105]*Ibid.*, p. xvii.

[106]*Loc. cit.* They accept "the most improbable miracles" (p. lxix), and "persistently confound the body and soul" (p. lxx). These are stock charges of the ancient pagan philsophers against the early Christians.

[107]*Ibid.*, p. xxx.

[108]*Ibid.*, p. ix.

[109]S. G. Maspero, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 1 (1893), p. 124.

[110]W. Kaiser, in *Oriental. Literaturzeitung*, Vol. 58 (1963), p. 342, discussing the theories of Herman Junker, *Die Geisteshaltung der Aegypter in der Frühzeit* (Vienna: Boehlau, 1961).

[111]H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 91, 125.

[112]A. Shorter, *The Egyptian Gods*, p. 86.

[113]F. Daumas, in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, Vol. 160 (1961), pp. 147-48.

[114]*Era*, Vol. 71 (June 1968), pp. 20-21.

[115]Danmas, *op. cit.*, pp.) 139-40.

[116]Adrian de Buck, in *Chroniques d'Egypte*, Vol. 23 (1947), pp. 26, 28, 34.

[117]Rudolf Anthes, in *Mitteilungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, No. 96 (Sept. 1965), pp. 5-6; *cf. Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 74 (1954), p. 36.

[118]E. Revillout, in *Ancient Egypt*, Vol. 1, p. 103, noting also *ibid.*, pp. 31-65, that Egyptian piety in no way differs from orthodox Christian piety in nature.

[119]Frankfort, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[120]According to Anthes, in *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 20, p. 95, this formula is "no allusion to any authoritative transmission of theological interpretation," but rather acknowledges the validity of individual judgment.

[121]Anthes, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 74, p. 39. ". . . it was dogma, and not the transmission of earlier myths. . . ."

[122]Frankfort, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[123]*Ibid.*, p. 19.

[124]*Ibid.*, pp. 91f. The idea is discussed by R. Anthes, in *Zt. f. Aeg. Sprache*, Vol. 80 (1955), p. 85; and Vol. 78 (1954), p. 53; H. Kees, in *Totenglauben . . . der alten Aegypter*, reviewed by H. Wall-Gordon, in *Revue Egyptologique*, Vol. 13 (1961), p. 145.

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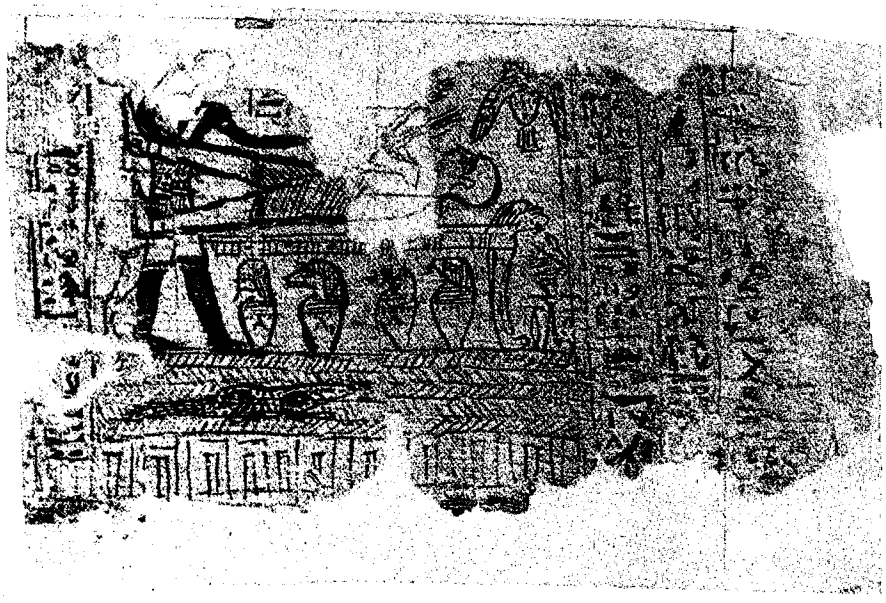
PART 5

● *A Doubtful Coup-de-grace*: It was the finding of the original papyrus from which Facsimile 1 in the Book of Abraham was taken that reopened the case of Joseph Smith versus the Scholars by making it possible to give definite answers to questions of fundamental importance that have heretofore been viewed by the Mormons as remaining in the twilight zone of speculation and by the non-Mormons as absolutely settled and sealed for all time.

What was felt to be by far the strongest argument against the authenticity of Joseph Smith's interpretations was the claim that the three facsimiles were not unique documents at all, but thoroughly conventional representations of well-known Egyptian scenes, identical copies of which could be produced in unlimited quantities: Joseph Smith had mistaken ordinary glass buttons for the crown jewels. This was the point that the experts labored with might and main; it would be hard to state it more bluntly and emphatically than Breasted did again and again: "Joseph Smith was attributing to Abraham not three unique documents of which no other copies exist, but was attributing to Abraham a series of documents which were common property of a whole nation of people who employed them in every human burial, which they prepared."[1] As to the first facsimile, "If desired, publications of facsimiles of this resurrection scene . . . could be furnished in indefinite numbers."[2] And again, the three facsimiles in question represent equipment which will be and has been found in unnumbered thousands in Egyptian graves. In accepting them, then, as parts of the 'Book of Abraham,' let it be understood that they were in universal use among the pagan Egyptians."[3] Dr. Breasted cannot insist too strongly on this: the scene in Facsimile 3 "again is depicted innumerable times,"[4] and "to sum up, these three facsimiles . . . depict the most common objects in the mortuary religion of Egypt. . . . Not to repeat it too often the point which I wish to make is that Joseph Smith represents as portions of a unique revelation through Abraham, things which were commonplaces and to be found in many thousands in the everyday life of the Egyptians."[5] Is that clear enough?

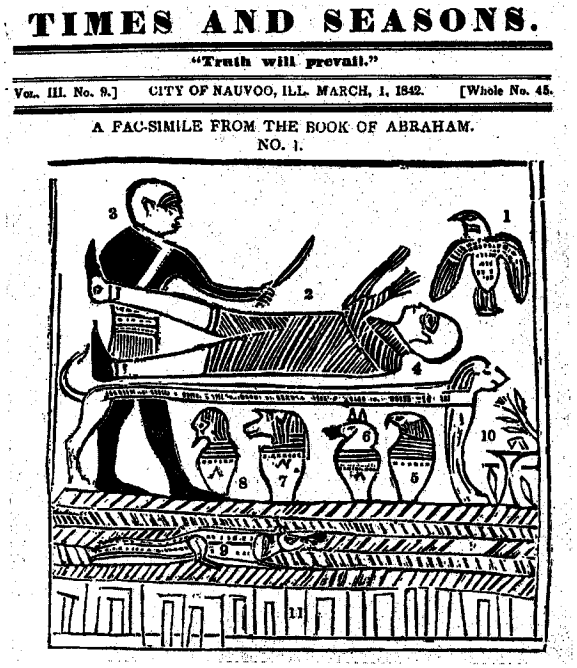


Eduard Meyer had already made the same point in his book on the Mormons, observing that the plates in the Book of Abraham were nothing but "the usual representations from the Book of the Dead. . . . The most amusing thing about it is the explanations of the pictures. There is the usual scene of the dead person being conducted into the presence of Osiris by the Goddess of Truth."[6] It is all so perfectly ordinary and familiar—that is what makes Joseph Smith's version so amusing. Petrie joins the chorus: the facsimiles "are copies (very badly done) of well-known Egyptian subjects of which I have dozens of examples."[7] For Dr. Lythgoe, Facsimile 1 was "merely the usual scene of the mummy upon its bier. The idolatrous priest . . . was merely the familiar figure of the god Anubis. . . ." The facsimiles "were thus stock scenes, and in no way individual to any particular mummy . . . stock and stereotyped scenes. . . . there is nothing so certain as that the Mormon prophet got hold of pictures showing the common mortuary ritual of the Egyptians, and that these pictures recur again and again throughout the whole period of Egyptian burials."[8] Even the hypocephalus (Facsimile 2) was for

Sayce just "an ordinary hypocephalus" (as if any hypocephalus was ordinary!) found "under the head of the ordinary mummy."[9] For Mercer these were all "the most commonplace Egyptian figures,"[10] and for the confident Banks, "The original of Smith's crude drawing is a common stock picture from the tombs; its meaning is thoroughly understood."[11]

Finally, Dr. Lythgoe's present-day successor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art repeats the refrain: "The three scenes belong to three common classes of inscription of which many hundreds of examples exist today. . . . Any textbook on Egyptian religion or funerary customs . . . would give you information on these objects."[12]

Here the experts have their surest argument, and they are determined at any price to deny any slightest glimmering of originality or uniqueness to the three facsimiles, the concession of which would be bound to raise all sorts of difficult questions. In view of this challenge, the Mormon position was forthright and ingenuous: they simply asked for a demonstration of the proposition that the critics were loudly declaring to be supremely demonstrable: ". . . a sample 'facsimile' or two from the doctor's 'scores' would be exceedingly enlightening. It would cost him little time and trouble to give us a few titles and page references. . . ."[13] After all, it was hardly asking too much of the men who insisted they knew of the very parallel documents that would settle the case once for all to produce a few of those all-important items for the benefit of the ignorant. But they never did. Why not? Some of the experts hedged a bit: ". . . you will find *practically* the duplicate of this drawing over and over again,"[14] and you can also find *"almost* exactly a duplicate of the disk (Facsimile 2)."[15] But a duplicate is not an approximation; it is not practically or almost like something else, and today it is being pointed out with increasing frequency that apparently minor differences in otherwise identical Egyptian documents can be extremely significant.[16] Thus, to say with Dr. Eric Young that the facsimiles "belong to three common *classes* of inscription" is almost the equivalent of saying that the three are not unique because they all contain recognizably Egyptian material.[17] In their zeal to damn the Mormon documents as utterly commonplace, the doctors soon found themselves in a rather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awkward, not to say ridiculous position.

Plus c'est la meme chose, plus ca change! No sooner have the authorities announced with all the majesty at their command that all three facsimiles are the most ordinary stereotyped documents imaginable, than they start protesting that everything about the pictures is wrong, irregular, and out of order—"incorrect," as Dr. Sayce puts it. And they are right: anyone who follows the advice of our experts and duly spends some time looking through "any textbook on Egyptian religion or funerary customs"[17] will recognize the facsimiles at first glance as old friends, for they do look reassuringly familiar. But whoever risks the indiscretion of a second glance is suddenly not so sure—there is something strange going on here! At this point the conscientious student should do what nobody seems yet to have done and what the Mormons begged the experts to do, namely, to go back and check all available parallel documents.[18] This is what we now have to do. The admitted haste and brevity of all reports made to date on the facsimiles by professional Egyptologists, and their invincible reluctance to engage in any discussion of the problems that their own pronouncements have raised, have limited their contribution to statements of first impressions; but in their petulent complaints of annoying irregularities in the pictures, we have an indication that they could not avoid some rather disturbing moments of doubt. There is something comical in proclaiming in a single breath that a disgustingly ordinary document is full of peculiarities that just should not be there, and what Robert C. Webb wrote in 1914 still applies; that every one of the interpretations of Facsimile 1 "involves . . . some change more or less radical. . . ." ". . . it is perfectly evident that several of these Egyptologists, if not all of them, are not telling the public just what this plate is, as it stands, but rather what, as they state, it should be, provided sundry changes were made to render it 'correct.'"[19] They would make it ordinary, and then denounce it for being such. The need for having the plates conform to the assigned categories explains the coolness of Spalding and his jury toward Deveria,[20] whose important study was largely devoted to showing that the Mormon papyri were *not* the usual thing at all—which is exactly what the experts of 1912 and today are particularly eager to have everybody not notice.

Theodule Deveria was convinced that the papyri had been substantially altered by somebody. Of Facsimile 1 he wrote (the italics are ours): "The soul of Osiris . . . *should* have a human head," while "Anubis *should* have the head of a jackal." In Facsimile 2, Figure 1 is elsewhere "*always* represented with four ram's heads, and the picture here *has certainly been altered.*" Figure 7 in the same facsimile "*has certainly been altered* on the hypocephalus of the Mormons." Of Facsimile 2 in general, Deveria concludes, "It is plain to me that *several* of the figures which are found on various fragments of other Egyptian manuscripts have been *intentionally altered.*" Speaking of "Shulem" (Fig. 5 in Fac. 3), he writes: "An unknown divinity, probably Anubis, *but they have changed the head*, which *should* be that of a jackal."[21] Speaking of this last scene, the great Gaston Maspero wrote: "M. Deveria notes, with regard to this papyrus, that he has never seen the resurrection of Anubis represented in funerary manuscripts. He believes that if it exists it is extremely rare, and that if this is not a modern imitation of the great bas-reliefs in

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With the finding of the papyrus of Facsimile 1, the picture changes, there is no sign of tampering anywhere.

which this mythological scene is represented, it has in any case been altered; since Anubis should have a jackal's head."[22] That is, this unique picture of the Mormons would be even more unique if they had not altered it. No wonder the authorities soft-pedal the work of Deveria!

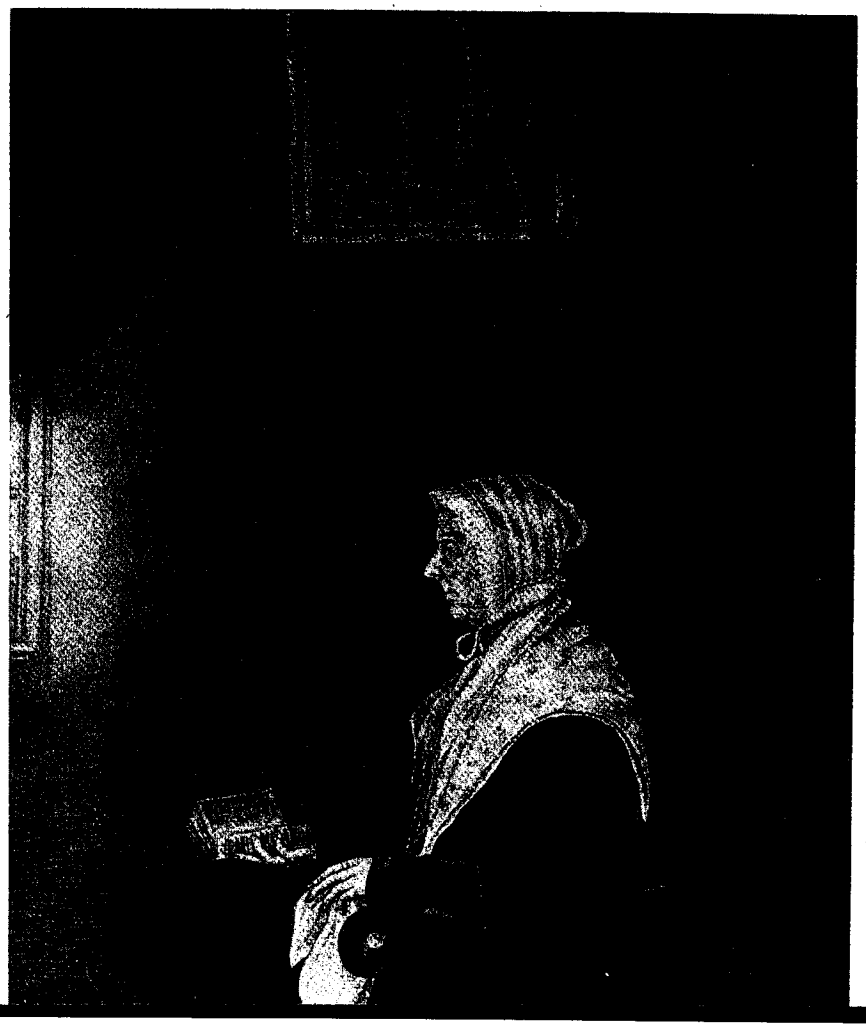
To bring things up to date, Professor Richard Parker now sees in the damaged papyrus (cf. Fac. 1) "a well-known scene from the Osiris Mysteries," his interpretation requiring that the missing parts be replaced by a jackal's head or mask and a second bird.[23] Though Professor Parker is not concerned with Facsimile 1 and does not mention it, his conclusion of necessity requires that Facsimile 1 as it stands is *not* a faithful copy of the original. If it were, then the original would certainly have been a unique document; but even if his reconstruction were correct, the document, as we shall see, would be no less unique.

Looking for a Way Out: The presence of unique and embarrassing elements in documents that are supposed to have nothing unique about them has been readily explained away on three hypotheses: (1) either the Mormons deliberately altered the *original* documents, (2) or else they made deliberate changes in the *copies* they prepared for the press, (3) or else their copying was so bad that the irregularities were produced *unintentionally*.

The first of these theories, that the original documents in possession of Joseph Smith were themselves faked, was maintained by Professor George Barton when he insisted that "Joseph Smith was trying to imitate" Egyptian characters, and that the resulting characters "do not faithfully represent any known writing."[24] Dr. Peters was even bolder: "The plates contained in the 'Pearl of Great Price' are . . . a very poor imitation of Egyptian originals, apparently not of any one original, but of Egyptian originals in general."[25] This made the facsimiles anything but the unimaginative stereotypes that the other experts were looking for and at—it saw in them an unorthodox and unique jumble of authentic Egyptian motifs. With characteristic finality, Professor Budge dismissed both the explanations and the facsimiles themselves as "idiotic," i.e., anything but authentic.[26] Though Deveria was convinced that important changes had been made, he did not specify whether the Mormons operated on the original documents or made their changes in the process of copying.



By the hasty sketch of Facsimile 1, which forms the background to Lucy Smith's portrait, the artist makes it clear that the document was intact at the time this copy was made.



The second theory is that in copying the Egyptian things Joseph Smith "has altered the drawings to suit his purpose."[27] All of Facsimile 3, for example, is a "falsified copy,"[28] and in Figure 2 of Facsimile 1 "a knife has been drawn into the god's hand," while the god himself has "a strangely un-Egyptian head instead of a jackal's head."[29] Though Professor Parker does not comment on the facsimiles, his interpretation of No. 1, as we have just noted, implies that significant changes were made in the copies published by the Mormons.

Interestingly enough, it was the third of the three explanations, i.e., that clumsy copying alone was responsible for irregularities in the facsimiles, that was favored by the jury of 1912. Dr. Mercer was quite emphatic on this: The culprit, he writes, was "the bad copying (though not 'purposely altering' as Mr. Roberts would try to make his readers believe the scholars to have said—but the scholars were careful not to use such a phrase since they hold the bad copying to be due to ignorance). . . ."[30] Why were Mercer and his colleagues so anxious to disclaim a charge that B. H. Roberts seems equally anxious to publicize, preferring an accusation that was by far the least convincing of the three assumptions on the face of it, and by far the least damaging to the Mormons on ethical grounds? It was because the arguments against deliberate faking are direct and convincing, whereas the charge of bad copying, no matter how fantastically bad the copying would have to be, could not be discredited in the absence of the original documents.

With the finding of the papyrus of Facsimile 1, however, the picture changes. Though theory No. 2, the altering of the copy, suffers a severe setback, Numbers 1 and 3 collapse completely. No scholar has been denied access to the original,



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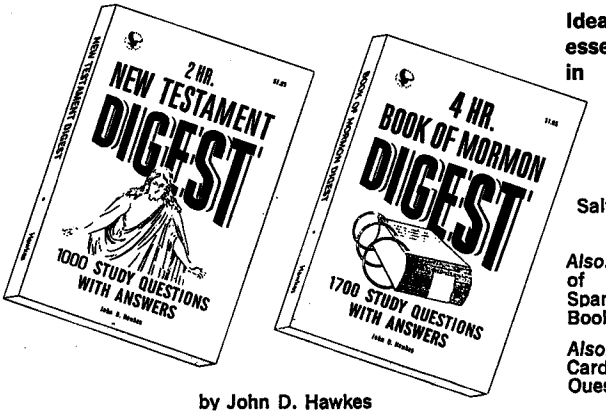

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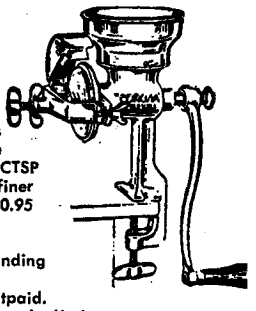

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all of whose peculiarities, no matter how disturbing, must now be attributed to an Egyptian hand. Though some of the other fragments are glued together in wild disarray, there is no sign of tampering anywhere with any of the writing or drawing on any of the "Joseph Smith Papyri." If any alterations were made, it was not on the original documents. The clumsy "pencilled restoration" that Professor Parker rightly condemns as "incorrect"[31] is, of course, not a forgery, since no attempt is made to conceal its true nature. Also, it can hardly have been the work of a Mormon hand, since it differs completely from the official copy of the papyrus that was circulated in many thousands of copies both during and after the lifetime of Joseph Smith, and was well-known to every responsible Latter-day Saint. While what they considered a sacred document was still in the hands of the Prophet, or at least of the Mormons, no one could have taken such outrageous liberties with it. It is a perfectly legitimate and universal practice to restore missing parts of ancient texts and pictures, always, of course, giving clear indication of the nature and extent of the restoration. The fact that this attempt to indicate the missing parts of Facsimile 1 is exceedingly crude and half-hearted, done without the slightest attempt to be accurate or convincing (there is no redrawing, no erasing, no elaboration or detail, no correcting) shows that this is no Mormon attempt to doctor the manuscript. And since this is the *only* attempt to indicate the missing parts, it would seem clear that the parts were not missing when the Mormons still had the thing in their possession. This is borne out by the clear traces left behind in the dried glue by those parts of the papyrus that crumbled away after it was mounted; they show that at the time of the mounting there was room on the papyrus for the complete head and hand of the priest.[32]

The third charge, that of unconscious disfigurement through ignorant copying, also breaks down if one only compares the original Facsimile 1 with Reuben Hedlock's engraving of 1842, which should convince anyone that the wood-carver did a very creditable job. Also, if one takes the trouble to compare Facsimile 2, the "hypocephalus," with reproductions of other hypocephali in prestigious nineteenth century journals, one will discover that Hedlock's en-





These two hypocephali should be compared with Facsimile 2 in the Book of Abraham to show that Reuben Hedlock's engraving is a fairly reliable reproduction and that imperfections of the work are to be imputed to the Egyptian rather than the American copyist.

graving is not only quite as good as the others, but that the sloppiness of his hieroglyphics is the very kind of sloppiness we find on other hypocephali, where it is sometimes quite as bad or even worse.[33]

There is, however, one significant discrepancy in the copying of Facsimile 1. In the 1842 engraving a figure is lying on a couch and a priest is standing on the opposite side of the couch *and* its occupant, which is the natural and normal way of seeing things—either the priest is on this side of his victim or on the other side. But in the original papyrus he is on neither! He stands in an astonishingly awkward position between the couch and the legs of the man on the couch. By correcting this "blunder" and saving himself a lot of trouble, Mr. Hedlock neatly reversed the charge that it was the Mormons who introduced absurdities into perfectly conventional Egyptian drawings. It is not the engraver but the Egyptian artist who is having trouble here, and he seems quite aware of being challenged to depict something out of the ordinary, departing from the familiar canons of his art to carry out special instructions. Plainly puzzled as to how to go about it, he makes no effort to complete either the side of the couch that normally *should* be there or the priest's apron that somebody wants to put in its place. In his perplexity the artist simply leaves the space empty and thus proclaims, by avoiding, his predicament.[34] Brother Hedlock's attempt to help out the artist and save himself the same embarrassment is the only deliberate alteration in copying of the papyrus; it can easily be explained on the most obvious common sense grounds, and is anything but an attempt to distort the original to make it fit Joseph Smith's interpretations. On the contrary, the Mormon engraver was covering up a peculiarity in the original that actually supported Joseph Smith's ideas. Other examples can be found in which Egyptian artists draw people in awkward and unusual positions, but in these cases it is also apparent that the artist is consciously *trying* to show something unusual, and we may safely assume that the oddities in the lion-couch papyrus are neither accidental nor meaningless.[35]

The experts who attributed to bad copying their inability to make anything of the hieroglyphics on

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Richard L. Evans

The Spoken Word

One man, one mind, one life to live . . .

This question from the Psalms always suggests some earnest searching: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"[1] It is obvious that the mind and spirit and intelligence of man are infinite, as we see what he can conceive: art, music, literature, science; the doing and making of too much to mention. It is obvious that man is the most marvelous mechanism on the earth, with body, mind, spirit—the chemistry and composition, and all the physical and mental functions: the power to grow, to think, to feel. "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?"[2] the Lord asked of Job. ". . . who hath given understanding to the heart?"[2] Who has given the body wisdom to heal itself? When we think of the power to reason, to learn, to judge, to decide, to remember the past, to project the future, we are awed by man, but more by his Maker, and by all that God has given. And we are sobered by this fact: This body, this mind, is the only one we shall have here. It has to last a lifetime. One cannot imagine a rational man deliberately abusing a precious machine. Yet how much more irrational it would be to abuse the body, to partake of anything that would impair its functioning, anything that is detrimental to it. What utter irreverent waste it would be to deface the body, or to mar or cloud the mind, or diminish co-ordination or consciousness, or make us less aware of actions that would injure us or others. Each person is all he has—one man, one mind, one life to live. Mortality goes so swiftly, and eternity is so everlastingly long, and when one has been given life and mind and memory, talent, purpose, limitless possibilities, and all this wondrous physical functioning, why should anyone be so short-sighted, so utterly, ungratefully self-destructive as ever to do anything which would lead to less than clean, clear thinking, clear conscience, wholesomeness, with peace and productive purpose—within the laws of nature, of God—the laws of health and happiness—the laws of the land? Without law there could be no life.

[1]Psalm 8:4.
[2]Job 38:36.

* "The Spoken Word" from Temple Square, presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System June 30, 1968. Copyright 1968.

the plates cannot get off so easily, for they were supposed to be thoroughly at home with the worst Egyptian penmanship and by their own assertion had access to unlimited numbers of identical documents, by which the texts in the facsimiles could have been easily reconstructed and checked. Then too, we must recognize that there really are sections of hieroglyphic text in Facsimile 2 that present-day Egyptologists read without too much trouble: since these legible portions are found to be correct and conventional Egyptian, it is perfectly plain that nobody has falsified or jumbled them, as was charged. That is to say, whenever the text *can* be checked, everything is found to be in order.

What makes the constant protestations of bad copying appear as an obvious attempt to minimize the uniqueness of the documents is the strange silence of all the authorities on the really glaring irregularities in the plates. If the gentlemen want something to make fun of, why don't they—ever—call attention to the hilarious incongruity of having the figure on the couch fully clothed? In all the other lion-couch scenes (see below, note 54) the person on the bed is either a properly encased mummy or completely nude, and never does the man on the couch wave both arms. Why the total silence on what should have been Joseph Smith's A-Number-1 howlers? Such things cry for an explanation and are always good for a laugh, but our experts will not even mention them. For here they cannot escape with the charge of "bad copying"—bad copying never went that far, and we now have the original to show who invented the clothing and the upraised hands, and it was not the Mormons.

Was Facsimile 1 Altered in the Copying? If the presence on the scene of the original subject of Facsimile 1 deals fatal blows to theories 1 and 3, it is hardly less damaging to Number 2, the sole survivor, which assumes that somebody has deliberately changed certain features in the process of copying the papyri. We have observed that the scholars of 1912 fought shy of this argument, and the reasons for that are not far to seek; consider some of the holes in the sieve:

1. It is significant that the charge of false copying today centers on those parts of the document which happen to be *missing*, and thus offends the first principle of textual criticism, which is, always to give a document the benefit of the doubt. If the copyist is perfectly reliable in the four-fifths of the sketch that have survived, why should he go berserk in the particular fifth that is missing? Could that fifth have been deliberately removed to cover up the fraud? Hardly: (a) the breaking off of the fragile papyrus takes place in every

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Richard L. Evans

The Spoken Word

. . . breaking the law "just a little . . ."

A thoughtful listener has sent these words from an inscription in a school auditorium: "Obedience to law, respect for others, mastery of self, joy in service—these constitute life."[1] These are words to remember. The question of law and freedom and self-control has become of such concern as to be a constantly compelling subject. "Many today seem to be demanding for themselves the unlimited right to disobey the law,"[2] observed an eminent jurist. The shades and degrees of disobedience are of great concern, but the attitude of encouraging or condoning disrespect for law is of greater concern—for the breaking of law "just a little" is something one can't turn on and off at will. It is such that once the line is crossed, there may not be any determinable stopping point in sight. Like a forest fire, it is hard to burn just to a pre-determined point. When you think you have it under control, it flashes over the breaks and the barriers. It is the character, the basic concept that is of more concern than merely the method. What is not lawful leads to breakdown, beyond what was perhaps intended, and in effect there may be no such thing as isolation or limitation in breaking law. We reaffirm this fundamental of faith: "We believe in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law."[3] To repeat the opening inscription: "Obedience to law, respect for others, mastery of self, joy in service—these constitute life."[1] "Oh, thus be it ever when free men shall stand."[4]

[1]Motto in the Los Angeles High School auditorium.
[2]Earl Morris, president of the American Bar Association. cited in *Time*, April 26, 1968.
[3]Article of Faith 12.
[4]Francis Scott Key, "Star-Spangled Banner."

* "The Spoken Word" from Temple Square, presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System July 7, 1968. Copyright 1968.

case only along lines of folding and around the edges, where ancient documents always suffer; (b) the most important parts were broken off, as the marks in the glue show, after the papyrus was mounted and, as we have noted above, in all likelihood after it had fallen into non-Mormon hands. To the charge that the Mormons may have destroyed evidence, one can only ask, What evidence? Consider our next point.

2. If a crime was committed, we must look for a motive. If Joseph Smith "altered the drawings to suit his purposes,"[36] why don't they suit his purposes? As Mercer points out, no one would dream that the figures as they stand represent what Joseph Smith says they do—indeed, the experts agree that his explanations are quite hilarious.[37] And why bother to make any changes at all? In a world in which nobody knew anything about Egyptian, Joseph Smith was free to give any interpretations he pleased, and they would appear no more absurd than the ones he did give. What possible point or advantage, then, could there be to distorting, elaborating, or recomposing perfectly meaningless symbols or falsifying genuine texts by rearranging them in different but equally meaningless combinations? Take the two-headed man in Facsimile 2 (Fig. 1), for example, who, we are told, *should* be a four-headed ram.[38] A four-headed ram, however, is ridiculous—whoever saw a four-headed ram? So Joseph shrewdly redraws the figure to make something more plausible, an ordinary two-headed man? Or take the hawk-headed hawk that the experts insisted should be a human-headed hawk: which would be the more appropriate to represent an angel in the thinking of Joseph Smith's time? The well-established conventions of Christian art had long accustomed the pious to

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represent angels by a symbolic combination of human faces and feathers—but a one-hundred-percent bird would have been out of the question. If the crime of forgery has been committed here, it is by one who went to great trouble and risk to alter documents that had far better been left unaltered as far as Joseph Smith's interests were concerned.

3. Then there is the matter of style. If we attribute the irregularities in the figures to deliberate transformation, we must still admit that the alterations are by no means such as a modern artist would make. Thus, when our impostor drew a hawk's head instead of a human one, he managed to draw a good Egyptian hawk's head and not an American type. And when he puts human heads in the place of rams' heads, how does it happen that he draws the kind of double human heads that only Egyptians draw? (See illustration.) And after copying the other figures as well as he did, couldn't the rascal who substituted a human head for a jackal's head on "Shulem" (Fig. 5 of Fac. 3) have drawn a better head than that? If all the faces in Facsimile 3 are rather grotesque, it is still an Egyptian type of grotesqueness. If "Pharaoh" and "the Prince of Pharaoh" in Facsimile 3 were being drawn to order, why on earth were they not drawn as princes or at least as men instead of being so very obviously women—is this cunning alteration to suit Joseph Smith's interpretation? And while the artist is at it, why not make an "altar" that looks like an altar? (Fac. 1, Fig. 4). Though we are told that much has been changed in the drawings, plainly nothing has been Americanized in the process, and nothing has been redrawn to fit with a particular interpretation. The criminal has failed to leave any traces of his personality and style.

4. Besides a motive, we are told, the perpetrator of a crime needs an opportunity, that is, a chance to escape detection. It would be easy enough to falsify copies of the facsimiles in the upper room of the Mansion House some dark night, but what happens when one puts the results on display the next day side by side with the unchanged originals? Any altering of the figures or texts, as B. H. Roberts pointed out, "is out of the question, since . . . the mummies . . . and the papyri, were on exhibit in the home of the Prophet's parents in Nauvoo, subject to the inspection of all who might choose to examine them."[39] Joseph Smith had printed copies of the facsimile circulated in large numbers in and around Nauvoo, while at the same time the originals

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Richard L. Evans

The Spoken Word

The best books . . .

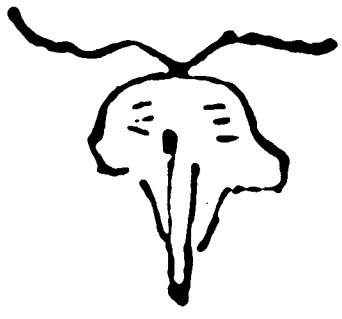
It was Carlyle who said that "books are like men's souls."[1] This could mean that the kind of man an author is suggests the kind of book he will write. And perhaps also that the kind of people we are suggests the kind of books we will choose to read. This brings to mind a most memorable statement by Sir Walter Scott: "I have been perhaps the most voluminous author of my day," he said, "and it is a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principles, and that I have written nothing which on my death-bed I should wish blotted out."[2] What a marvelous statement to be able to make—and what contrast to much that is currently offered, when so much that is cheap is put into print, with every inducement to the unclean, the immoral, the indecent, the salacious and shoddy, put out for unconscionable profit and fashioned to undermine morals and young minds. More than a thousand books, we are told, are added to the Library of Congress each day—added to the millions that are already there—from the profound to the trivial, from the uplifting to the debasing, from the reliable to the misleading, from the enduring true to the manifestly false. And since we can't read everything—since there is so much of it—and since life is so short—we ought to select the best of all that is offered, whether for entertainment or information. ". . . seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom,"[3] significantly has been said. We should be discriminating in our reading, in our looking, in our listening, remembering that what is stored in memory is part of a man. Blessed be the memory of him who can say: "I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principles, and . . . have written nothing which on my death-bed I should wish blotted out."[1]

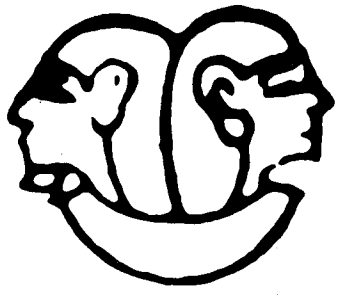
[1]Carlyle, Inaugural Address, Edinburgh, 1866.
[2]Sir Walter Scott, cited by Samuel Smiles in *Character*, Chapter 6.
[3]Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.

*"The Spoken Word" from Temple Square, presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System July 14, 1968.Copyright 1968.

were on exhibition. "They were seen by all the Church that saw proper to visit the house of the Prophet Joseph," Orson Pratt recalled, "and also by hundreds of strangers. . . ."[40] Most of the strangers were critical and suspicious, and some of them, like Josiah Quincy, Henry Caswall, and the reporter from the *Warsaw Signal*, were keenly on the lookout for any sign of trickery.[41]

We must bear in mind that the alterations that Professor Parker's interpretation requires—the jackal's mask of the priest, the hovering bird, and the reproductive activities indicated—not only occupy the most conspicuous position, front and center, on the Number 1 papyrus, but by their unusual, not to say shocking nature (and many visitors to Nauvoo were looking for something shocking), would be most certain to command the attention of any observer. How does it happen that during all the years when the papyri were being shown by old Sister Lucy Mack Smith for a small admission fee to any interested parties, nobody ever noticed that they differed drastically from the well-known printed copies that the visitor was invited to take away with him? Could Joseph Smith and the Mormons have overlooked anything so glaring (none of *them* ever mentions it) or invited hostile outsiders to discover it for themselves? It does not help things to assume that the vital parts of the papyrus were already missing when the thing was put on display or even before it came into Joseph Smith's possession, for the total absence of the key features of the sacrificial scene could hardly have gone unnoticed by all the Mormons and Gentiles alike: that would have been as glaring and as disturbing as any discrepancies between the original and the printed copy. But nobody ever noticed it, as many gladly would have, had it been there to notice. Thus, in a letter written on February 5, 1838, at Kirtland, in an all-out attempt to expose Joseph Smith as a fraud, Warren Parrish writes: "I have set by his side and penned down the translation of the Egyptian Hieroglyphicks as he claimed to receive it by direct inspiration from heaven."[42] Here was a man in a position to detect any manipulation or trickery in the composing of the Book of Abraham, and eager to expose such; yet he, like everybody else, seems completely unaware of the outrageous discrepancy between the original document and the printed copies of it that the





It has been claimed that Joseph Smith invented the double head on the left and substituted it for four rams' heads. Comparison with other double-headed Egyptian figures makes it clear that the Prophet was not indulging in fantasy or forgery.

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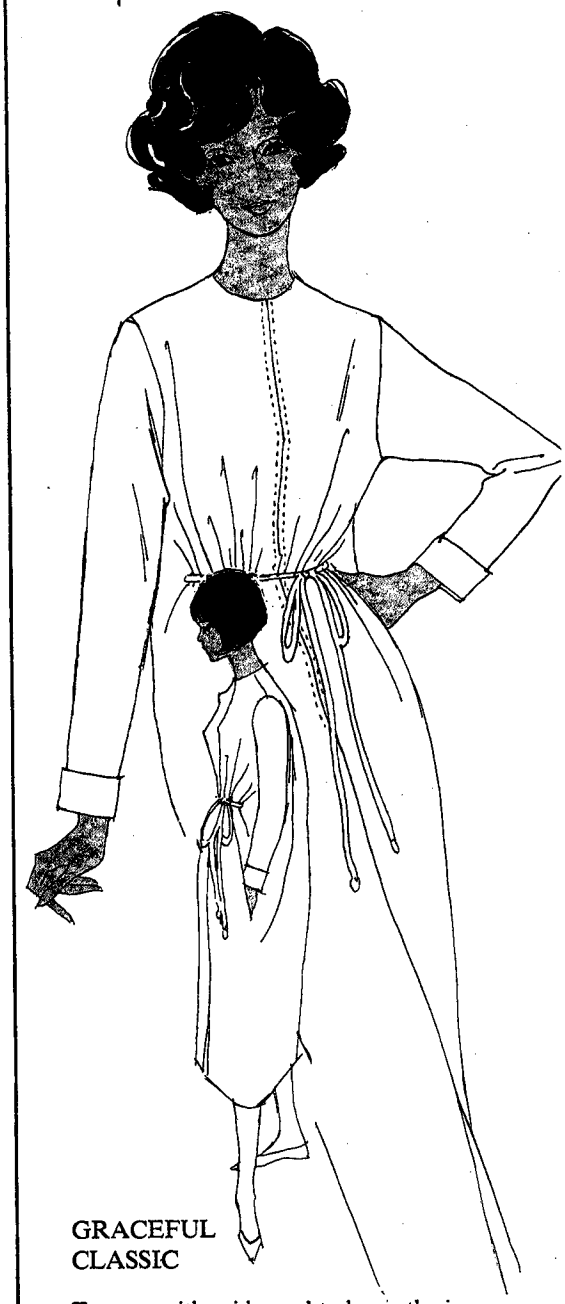

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present explanation of Facsimile 1 requires.

5. Those who maintain that important parts of the papyrus, now missing, have been changed to give it its present unique aspect are careful not to call attention, as we soon shall, to equally odd and unusual features in the *surviving* parts. What is the big crocodile doing there? and the "pillars of heaven"? and the strange inscriptions? Such elements do not occur in any of the supposedly identical parallels to Facsimile 1, yet there they are before us, and that not by any modern manipulation. Dr. Lythgoe makes the good point that the head of the priest and his knife look suspiciously un-Egyptian. They do, in the very poor reproduction that Dr. Spalding supplied him with, but in the better engraving of 1842 the knife is quite different, and the head of the priest is no more nor less "Egyptian" than that of the man on the altar who, we know now, is an authentic Egyptian type.

6. *An Impartial Witness*: Further evidence that Facsimile 1 has been honestly reproduced is found in an early independent copy of it by an artist (very probably non-Mormon) who was using it for purely decorative purposes and without the intention of proving anything. It is to be found in an old portrait of Lucy Mack Smith, the Prophet's mother, who was given custody of the Egyptian antiquities in Nauvoo and took possession of them at Joseph Smith's death.[13] The picture was located by President Joseph F. Smith and Preston Nibley in a farmhouse near Nauvoo.

In 1942 President George Albert Smith, accompanied by Elder Preston Nibley (who is the authority for this account), visited a relative, Salisbury Smith, a respected citizen and banker in Carthage, Illinois. Mr. Smith took the brethren to a farm near Carthage to see "Aunt Clara," the 83-year-old daughter of Lucy, the youngest daughter of Lucy Mack Smith. She showed them a picture of her grandmother, which she said she had inherited from her mother. She refused to part with the picture but allowed the brethren to have it photographed, and the photo now hangs on the walls of the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City.[14]

In the portrait the artist has decorated the wall space behind his subject with her most prized possession—the original of Facsimile 1. He has used his artist's license to enlarge the object both for decorative effect (the original is no larger than a postcard, being a square of only $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches on a side) and to preserve clarity of detail. But there can be no doubt that it is the original papyrus hanging on the wall, for the artist has taken pains to show the bent and wrinkled surface—a copy would be mounted smoothly and evenly. Moreover, the frame depicted is like the one that still encloses some of the other papyri now in possession of the Church. That is, the rather elegant frames were used for displaying original and valuable documents, and Mrs. Smith would certainly not have gone to the expense and trouble of framing, and then have proudly displayed, a printed copy of no value whatever (they existed by the thousands) while she still had the original in her possession. The artist, like Hedlock, has done the reasonable thing and not bothered to fight with the problem of the legs; what interested him was to get a good likeness of Mrs. Smith and her impressive document (the Egyptian things were always her special concern), and in so doing he has given us a rapid, fairly accurate, and unbiased sketch of what the papyrus looked like before it was damaged. It matches our printed reproductions, and not the proposed restoration. ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[1]Franklin S. Spalding, *Joseph Smith as Translator*, p. 25.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 26.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 25.
[4]*Ibid.*, p. 26.
[5]*Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
[6]Eduard Meyer, *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen* (Halle, 1912), pp. 64-65.
[7]Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[8]*New York Times*, Magazine Section, December 29, 1912.
[9]Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[10]*Ibid.*, p. 29.
[11]*Era*, Vol. 16 (1913), p. 775, speaking of Facsimile 3.
[12]Dr. Eric Young of the Metropolitan Museum in a letter to LaMar Petersen, dateline of 1959.
[13]Robert C. Webb, in *Deseret News*, July 5, 1913, Section 3, p. viii, col. 4, and *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 1079.
[14]Edgar J. Banks, in *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 775.
[15]Albert M. Lythgoe, in *New York Times*, *loc. cit.*

An Autumn Wind Whispered

By Dennis Drake

An autumn wind whispered
Through the tree in my backyard.
And the tree bowed its limbs comfortably.
I whispered in her ear the words
I knew she longed to hear:
She bowed her head.
I meant it then; I mean it now,
Though I know she understands it's changed.
You came into my life;
In generous friendliness
We accepted each other.
I loved her once—she knows it.
Nor do I love her any less;
I only love you more.

[16]See below, notes 56 to 61.
[17]Young, *loc. cit.*
[18]"The museums on both sides of the water . . . are filled with papyri . . . and might be examined to secure the counterparts of Joseph Smith's 'hieroglyphics.'" John A. Widtsoe, *Era*, Vol. 16, pp. 456-57. "Another worthwhile phase of the matter would perhaps be now to turn to hypocephali and collect and compare all of them." *Ibid.*, p. 1099.
[19]*Era*, Vol. 17 (1914), pp. 319f.
[20]Later Bishop Spalding joyfully welcomed Deveria as the eleventh member of his team, after Mercer declared "his opinion . . . to be in substantial agreement with that of the other experts," to wit, that "the translation was declared to be entirely incorrect." Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 19. Though Spalding has the effrontery to accuse the Mormons of neglecting Deveria's work (*loc. cit.*), that work is never quoted in the Spalding discussion except by the Mormons and Robert C. Webb.
[21]Theodule Deveria, *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 4 (1896), pp. 195-202.
[22]*Ibid.*, p. 196.
[23]Richard Parker, *Dialogue*, Vol. 3 (Summer 1968), p. 86.
[24]*Era*, Vol. 16, p. 612.

*

Richard L. Evans

The Spoken Word

Marriage is more than a wedding

One of my students wrote . . . me . . . announcing his engagement," said William Lyon Phelps. "'This is not going to be much of a wedding,' he said, 'but it is going to be a wonderful marriage.'"[1] This states a simple fact, sometimes overlooked—the fact that marriage is much more than a wedding—infinitely more. And among the foremost facts to be faced is that marriage is made up of the duties and routine and responsibilities of every day—day after day after day—and that marriage is a relationship of two imperfect people, a relationship that requires character, loyalty, common sense, common convictions, along with much giving up of self, and an unfaltering commitment to make it a success in the long and enduring sense. "The art of living together happily, is perhaps one of the greatest of all the arts,"[2] said Dr. Phelps. "Naturally, . . . all sorts of adjustments are called for."[1] "Quarrels and disputes are sure to come, [but] the great thing is not to let them *last*. . . ."[2] In marriage "two distinct personalities must work toward one end . . . ," said Temple Bailey. "It is not possible for a married couple to reach happiness with eyes fixed on different stars; . . . they must set up a single ideal and work toward [it]. . . . Cease cherishing impossible fancies of impossible futures. Take the best of [your] dreams and fit them to life as it comes every day."[3] "Divorce is failure."[2] "The best goal," said an eminent authority, "is the success of the marriage itself."[4] Put all things to that test, and remember that marriage is a relationship of two imperfect people—a relationship that requires character, loyalty, a sense of humor, common conviction, and common sense, along with much giving up of selfishness and self, and an unfaltering commitment to make it a success in the long and enduring sense. Marriage is much more than a wedding. "Marriage is a fine and sacred thing if you make it so. . . ."[1]

[1]Dr. William Lyon Phelps quoting an unknown writer.
[2]Dr. William Lyon Phelps, "Marriage Is What You Make It," *Delineator*, August 1932.
[3]Temple Bailey, "The Bride Who Makes Her Dreams Come True," *Ladies Home Journal*, June 1912.
[4]Dr. Paul Popenoe, "Make Your Marriage a Partnership," *Ladies Home Journal*, June 1942.

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PART 5

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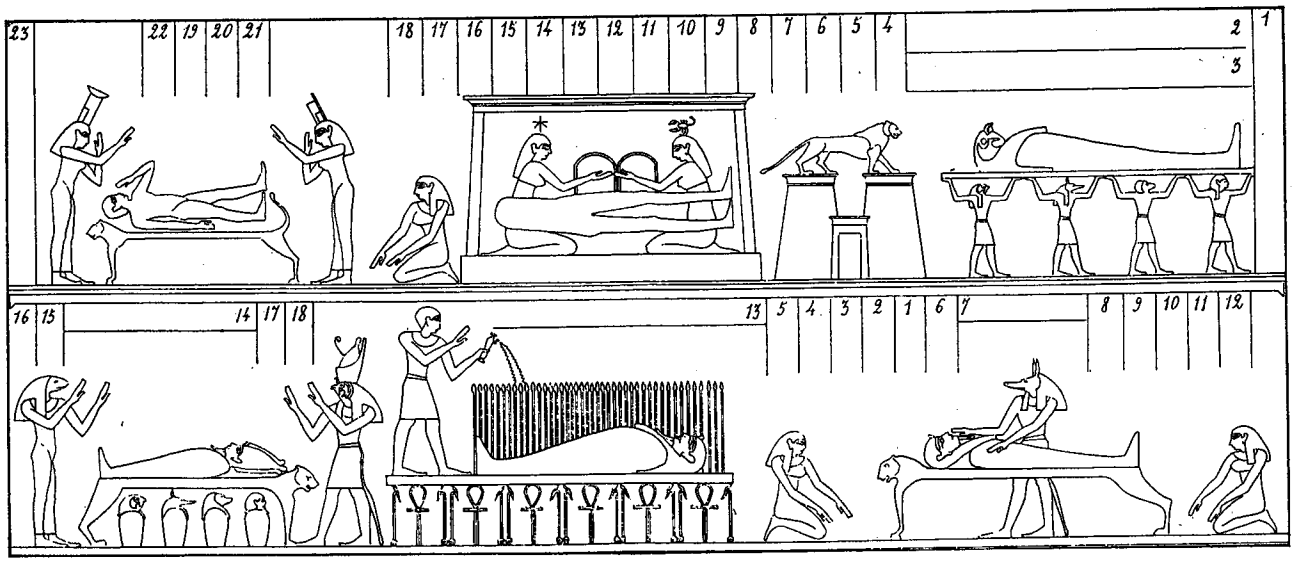

Scenes from the Grand Temple of Philae show various lion-couch drawings, informing us that not all such scenes depict embalmment. Critics have scoffed at Joseph Smith's declaration that Facsimile 1 is a sacrificial scene, not an embalming scene.

● *Hand or Wing?* The earliest and latest scholarly critics of the facsimiles have insisted that the bird in Facsimile 1 should have a human head.[45] Though the bird's head, being on the edge of the papyrus, was broken off even before it was mounted, enough of the neck fortunately remains to show that it never bore a human head. And so the original again comes to the rescue to refute the Approved School Solution.

Another near miss has preserved just enough of "Abraham's" hands to show us that they *were* hands—both of them. This is a critical point on which Professor Parker's interpretation must stand or fall. He tells us that "the apparent upper hand is part of the wing of a second bird. . . ." In favor of such an interpretation is only the fact that two birds are represented in approximately the positions indicated in a number of other drawings showing men on lion couches. Of course, if all lion-couch figures were accompanied by two birds, then we would be pretty well stuck with a second bird; but actually the two birds are the rare exception, one bird being the rule, though three are fairly common.[46] More to the point, in all documents obtainable in which birds appear regardless of their number, their wings are drawn according to the same artistic convention, exactly as the wings

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on our Facsimile 1 have been drawn, and no wings are to be found done in the manner of Professor Parker's hypothetical second bird.

But if we are not required by statistics to supply a second bird, the same statistics are even less in favor of a second hand, which if it really exists makes our picture quite unique. So the issue is still in the balance until we take a closer look —then the wing disappears.

1. First of all, the immediate proximity of a real bird to the imaginary one shows us clearly enough how this particular artist draws wings, and his method is in total agreement with all wing-drawing in those compositions which show hawks hovering over people's middles. Dr. Parker himself tells us that the two birds in this particular picture are sisters, and indeed, they usually figure as identical twins.[47] Why then should they be drawn, as nowhere else, according to different conventions and as different types? The accompanying illustrations will show how closely the two birds resemble each other when they appear together as a pair.



2. The position of the priest's arm and whatever he is holding interferes drastically with the act of procreation indicated by Professor Parker. There is nothing like the feet of the figure on the couch, scenes; when the central bird is present, the Anubis priest always stands well off to one side, beyond the feet of the figure on the couch, holding his hands upraised before his face, or bearing oil and bandages.

When the priest stands by the supine figure, as he does here, there is never a second bird present.[48] Indeed, one can hardly reconstruct the scene according to Professor Parker's directions without getting a startling, unique, and original result.

3. But if our two birds' wings do not match, the two hands most certainly do: (a) By an odd coincidence, they are exactly in the right position and at the right angle to represent a pair of hands. (b) As a magnified view of the hands will show, they are drawn exactly alike: the upper hand has strange twig-like fingers—six of them, not counting the thumb, and so also the lower hand, which no one will deny *is* a hand, has the same number of just such twig-like fingers. (c) Furthermore, examination of the original document makes it clear that the fuzzy or dotted sketching of part of the fingers of the upper hand is due entirely to the fraying of the papyrus fibers near the broken edge and is not an attempt to represent feathers. (d) The thumbs of both hands are strongly and unmistakably marked and drawn just alike, both being designated by short, heavy lines standing well apart from the fingers and properly curved as thumbs should be. The thumb of the upper hand is especially clearly and emphatically delineated. An eighteenth dynasty "canonical master drawing" in the British Museum shows us how thumbs should be drawn, Egyptian style, and leaves not the slightest doubt that the heavy line on the upper hand is a thumb and not a feather.[48a] Where in such scenes, or in Egyptian art in general, does one ever find the lowest

pinion of a hawk's wing so strangely designated? Eminent Egyptologists are used to studying original documents, and Dr. Parker was understandably reluctant to base interpretations on poor reproductions; properly photographed or magnified, the two hands stand out clearly for what they are.

4. But if only one hand is raised by the reclining figure, where is the other hand? Professor Parker knows where it should be: ". . . the left arm of Osiris is in reality lying at his side under him." In reality? In all the representations in which Osiris raises a hand, the other hand and arm are clearly shown beneath the body, the fingers reaching well down below the hip almost to the knee in an ample space provided for them between the body and the couch. And all that is precisely what we do *not* find in our papyrus –here, "in reality," there is no arm or hand under the body, and no room is provided for them, though more than enough of the papyrus is preserved to show where they should be.[49]

5. And then there is the matter of the knife. Since Professor Parker's attention was directed entirely to photographs of the papyrus, as was proper, and not to the facsimile, he makes no mention of the knife in the priest's hand. Of course, if his interpretation is correct, then there was no knife, and we must allow Dr. Lythgoe's claim that the Mormons have drawn it into the hand of the priest. But the other experts saw nothing wrong with the knife. Back in 1903 Budge's colleague at the British Museum, Henry Woodward, saw in Facsimile 1 "an embalmer, knife in hand, preparing to disembowel a dead body to embalm it!"[50] Von Bissing saw "the soul leaving the body the moment when the priest is opening the body with a knife for mummification."[51] And at the present time Professor George R.

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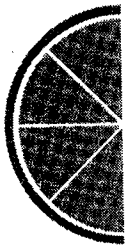
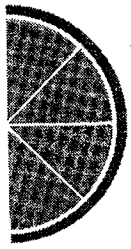


Honey-lemon prunes: Place 1 package (1 lb.) flavorful Del Monte Prunes in small saucepan with 4 lemon slices; add 2½ cups water. Cover. Simmer 20 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in ¼ cup honey. 5 servings.



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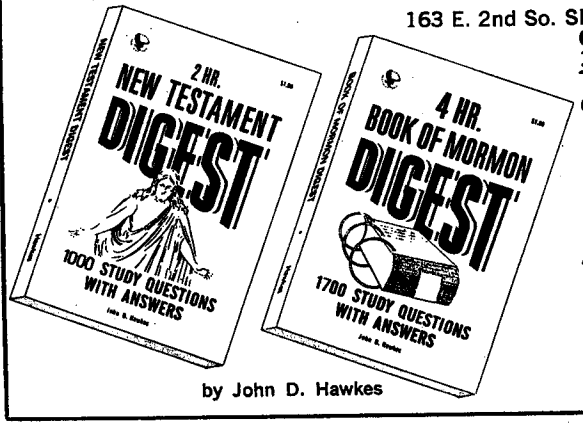
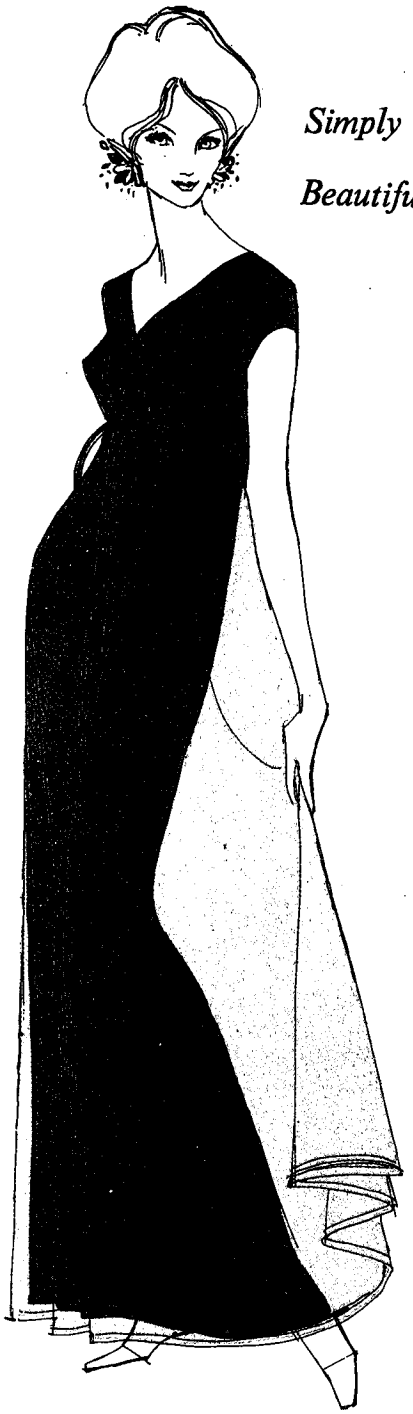


by John D. Hawkes



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Hughes of the Oriental Institute at Chicago obliges with an explanation: "The embalming of a deceased person, or rather the operation preparatory to mummification. (1) The deceased's soul or spirit . . . it is usually shown as a human-headed bird. . . . [Fac. 1, Fig. 3] is the embalmer-priest who is usually shown wearing a jackal-headed mask. . . . He has in his hand a knife ready to make an incision in the abdomen."[52]

Thus, the knife remains a respectable object and fits nicely into an embalming scene. What made Lythgoe suspicious was the peculiar form of the knife, and rightly so, since it was badly copied in the reproduction Spalding sent to him. In the 1842 engravings the thing has a different shape, like a thin crescent moon. Here we are speculating, to be sure, but not without some reason, for Herman Kees suggested that the knife used by the Egyptians for human sacrifice had to be shaped like a thin new moon,[53] and in one of the oldest Abraham legends we are told that the knife used by the patriarch to sacrifice Isaac "was a sharp knife, lusting after flesh, and crescent-shaped like the new-moon."[53] But more of this later.

Unique, Uniquer, Uniquest: At this point, we are not ready to discuss the significance of the oddities in the facsimiles of the Book of Abraham; our first concern is simply to show that such oddities do exist, and thereby refute the most serious charge against Joseph Smith, that of mistaking thoroughly typical and commonplace documents for something unusual. The facsimiles are in fact most unusual documents, all three of them. The only one over which we have any real control at present is Facsimile 1, and of this we have not been able to discover a single one of the supposedly "innumerable" and "identical" parallels. We are not referring to minute differences of detail, but to major and conspicuous discrepancies. We have dug up over a hundred lion-couch scenes, many of which may be considered significantly like our papyrus.[54] But how do they compare with it? That is the question.

In the past those who have really wanted to blast the Pearl of Great Price out of the water have printed reproductions of just any hypocephalus or lion-couch scene with the calm assurance that the mere sight of anything that looks like any of the facsimiles would be enough to spread consternation among the Saints and forever disqualify any and all statements of the Prophet. The idea that these various documents might be subjected to serious comparative study with a real interest in the myriad questions they raise was the farthest thing from the minds of those who published them.

Whenever like but not identical documents are placed side by side for study, two problems present themselves: (a) to explain the resemblances between them, and (b) to explain the differences. The favorite game of comparative scholarship since the mid-nineteenth century has been the hunt for resemblances while discounting differences, a practice cultivated to a fine art by the evolutionists and very well and clearly demonstrated by the critics of the Book of Abraham. These latter constantly pointed to the general resemblance of the facsimiles to other documents while stubbornly refusing to acknowledge any of the conspicuous points of difference, attributing everything simply to bad copying. But however "suspicious" and even "damning" the resemblances may appear, it is not enough to say, for example, that since ancient myth and ritual are full of remarkable parallels to the death and resurrection of Christ, the New Testament

must be rejected as history. To do that is to overlook both the great number of interesting hypotheses capable of explaining the supposedly devastating resemblances and the no less numerous questions raised by the swarming discrepancies and contrasts.

"Well-known" was a favorite expression of these critics, and we are still being told that Facsimile 1 is "a well-known scene from the Osiris mysteries" (Parker) and that it belongs to "a well-known class of documents" (Young), as if that explained everything. But we cannot drop the discussion there; just as Egyptologists had to learn by long experience that it was unwise to label everything found in a tomb as funerary in nature, so the student is admonished today not to leap to conclusions every time he sees a lion-couch. A useful study reminds us that the expression "he who is on his couch" can refer to anything from Osiris in the Underworld to a solid citizen taking 20 winks on a warm afternoon.[55] It is surprising how often an otherwise well-known scene is converted by a few minor alterations into something not at all well-known, as when by altering the names of participants "the Cairo papyrus has seriously distorted the meaning of the ritual," which is otherwise a well-known scene,[56] or when a well-known scene from the Book of the Dead loses its well-known meaning by another such change of names: "It would be easy to find numerous parallels to each of these figures," writes G. Nagel of the scene, "but that would not mean much,"[57] i.e., the numerous parallels no matter how well-known are not enough in themselves to identify every scene in which they occur. N. M. Davies reports on another document, "wholly conventional in its subjects," which isn't conventional at all because it "displays certain details and peculiarities of treatment that are, so far as my knowledge goes, unique."[58] The substitution of one divinity for another in a series of lion-couch scenes changes the normal resurrection motif, according to Derchain, to "an astral or calendrical myth" with special emphasis on the flooding of the Nile,[59] and by another such alteration the figure on the couch ceases to be Osiris and becomes a dead person "identified with a complex entity" who remains quite mysterious.[60]

Such alterations, which convert familiar scenes into unfamiliar ones, are by no means more radical than those that confront the stu-

*

Richard L. Evans

The Spoken Word

The "get-out-from-under" attitude

There is sometimes evident an attitude of wanting to get out from under, wanting not to be accountable to anyone. Young people, for example, sometimes choose to move away from home and family and friends. Work, education, opportunities in other areas are often good reasons. But to leave just to cut loose, just to go it alone, just to be free from being accountable to anyone may well not be wise. And before we feel we want to get away, to get out from under, we ought honestly to make sure we don't want it for the wrong reasons. No one is always safe. No one can know when he may become ill, or have an accident, or find himself in some serious situation. No one knows all the answers. No one can be sure he is self-sufficient. Besides, others have much invested in us. Others have taught us, trained us, nursed and nourished us, loved us, and given us part of their lives—parents, teachers, doctors, friends, family have done this and much more, and they have a right to an interest in us, and we have an obligation to recognize that right. There is also the fact that if we are alone and without the interest of others, we could become indifferent and deteriorate. Much of our performance is for others and not for us. We do our best when others expect it of us. If life were simply a matter of satisfying our selfish selves, there wouldn't be much progress or improvement. The faith and interest of others leads us to be better—and surely we wouldn't, for the wrong reasons, want to separate ourselves from stabilizing factors and influences, and place ourselves in a position that would make it easier to lower standards or lose the most precious things a person can possess: virtue, honesty, honor, respect, excellence of purpose and performance. Almost anything can happen to almost anyone, and the "cut loose," "get-out-from-under," "leave-me-alone" attitude, in this sense, isn't sensible or safe. To cite a significant sentence: "There is no such thing in human existence as being so high you're not responsible to anybody."[1]

[1]Lawrence A. Appley, *Managers in Action.*

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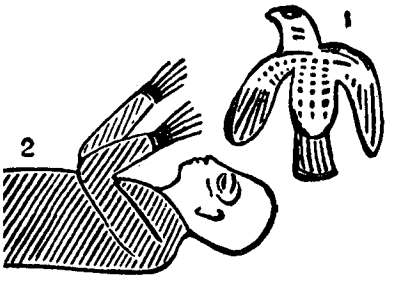
dent of Facsimile 1. How is this document to be classified? The student who looks over a hundred or so lion-couch scenes will readily recognize that they fall into a number of clear-cut categories, the principal ones being these:

1. First, there are a number of drawings, usually small ones, of a mummy reposing on a lion-couch all alone, unaccompanied by any other figure, peacefully awaiting the resurrection as it lies in state. It is simply the mummy on its bier.

2. There are quite a few embalming scenes, often plainly labeled as such, with Anubis approaching with bandages and/or ointment, or working with his hands on or over the mummy. This scene is not to be confused with No. 1,



A close examination of Fac. 1 shows the above as Abraham's hands, and not wings.

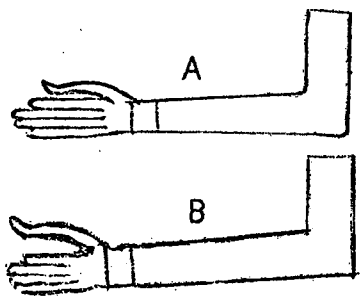
and is sometimes shown as a sequel to it.

3. Then there are many resurrection or resuscitation scenes, such as the famous "Awakening of Osiris" in the Temple of Apet at Luxor: "The Neter [god] is beginning to move himself, bending his right arm and raising his left foot."[61]

4. There are a number of procreation scenes in which the mummy is begetting his divine successor or reincarnation.

Now the question is, to which of these well-known scenes or classes does our Facsimile 1 belong? This is exactly what the experts have never been able to agree on. Some have designated it most emphatically as an embalming scene; others like Breasted saw in it a resurrec-

tion, and now Professor Parker tells us it is a mystic marriage. All the authorities have good reason for their opinions; the elements of all the episodes are undeniably present in our little sketch, or else experienced scholars would not have seen them there so clearly. But which is the predominant theme? The difficulty of answering that question is quite enough in itself to brand our document as unique. And now some European scholars are suggesting a new and neglected category for some of the lion-couch spectacles, namely, that they are really *sacrificial* scenes. This, of course, rings a tiny bell for Joseph Smith, and we shall have to look at these new studies quite closely. Until now none of the



Canonical drawings by 18th Dynasty Egyptian artist shows the way to draw thumbs.

critics of the Joseph Smith papyri has bothered to mention them.

To show how hard it is to pin down our facsimile, we invite the reader to compare it with the *closest* parallel in our collection. An Egyptologist may be able to explain the significance of an arm or a bird (though it is precisely in matters of significance that the experts have always disagreed most widely among themselves, and still do), but any intelligent child can usually spot an arm or a bird when he sees one in a picture, and it needs no trained specialist to recognize at least a dozen points of difference between our two sketches when they are placed side by side. Notice that in the non-Mormon papyrus (1) the bird is in a different position, there being no bird at the head of the mummy; (2) Anubis has both hands raised, not one hand lowered; (3) the figure on the couch has only one hand raised, while (4) the bird above him has a proper wing, not something that looks like a hand; (5) the man on the couch wears no clothes, (6) but does wear the *nm's* headdress and rests his head on a pillow; (7) his left arm and hand are plainly visible, held well apart from his body; (8) two ladies are in attendance; (9) a figure with a Horus mask is also assisting; (10) there are no Canopic jars under the couch, there is no crocodile, and no pylons, etc.; (11) stereotyped and familiar inscriptions accompany the drawing—the inscriptions on the Mormon papyrus are completely different; (12) Anubis is quite differently attired

*

Richard L. Evans

The Spoken Word

"...emphatic trifles"

The swift passing of a season is always sobering—for "time," said Benjamin Franklin "is the stuff life is made of."[1] And while we have a conviction that in the eternal sense time is limitless, what we can now foresee passes swiftly. And yet often we splinter it away with less thought, less purpose, less accomplishment than time is entitled to. "At times," said Emerson, "the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles."[2] It is true that other people splinter our lives into trifles if we let them, and often we ourselves do the same. Often we let our lives be cluttered with encumbrances—with bits and pieces and paraphernalia—with "emphatic trifles," as Emerson said. And while we don't want to be slaves to unreasoning routine, we ought to recognize the waste when time is not well used—for "time," said Diogenes, "is the most valuable thing that a man can spend." "Don't waste time," pleaded Arthur Brisbane. "Don't waste it in idleness; don't waste it in regretting the time already wasted; don't waste it in dissipation; don't waste it in resolutions a thousand times repeated, never to be carried out. Don't waste your time. Use all of it. Sleep, work, rest, think. Save part of the time of yesterday by saving part of the money earned yesterday. . . . The best of us have already wasted time enough. . . . Remember that however much time you have wasted already, you have time enough left [for some accomplishment and recovery] if you will use it . . . while life and time remain."[3] Passing and trivial things should not be allowed unduly to take us away from more productive pursuits, nor should we let others often distract us with trifles that take us away from our work. "At times the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles."[2]

[1]Benjamin Franklin, "The Way to Wealth."
[2]Emerson, *Self-Reliance.*
[3]Arthur Brisbane, as reprinted in *Sunshine Magazine.*

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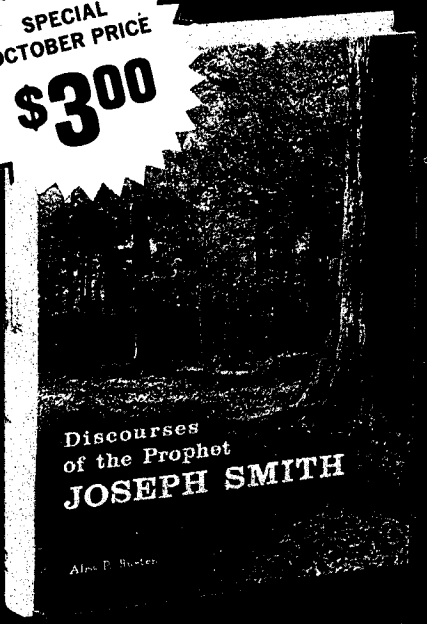

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in the two pictures. One could easily add to the list, but it might well be objected that this is only one document chosen for comparison, even if it is the nearest one in general appearance, and that among the numerous other lion-couch scenes are those in which each single element in the Joseph Smith papyrus could be matched. But this is not so; on many points our little sketch remains quite unique. Here are some of them:

1. Question: Of the hundred other figures on lion-couches, how many have both hands raised? Answer: None. Professor Parker is therefore statistically justified in being suspicious. So we pursue our statistics further:

2. How many of these figures have one hand upraised without having the other clearly visible, placed under the body in a space provided for it? Answer: None, though we know of one example in which the hand is shown beside the body, but very clearly shown, almost touching the knee.

3. How many other scenes show the figure on the couch clothed in the manner here shown? Answer: None. All are either nude or fully invested as mummies.

4. In how many is this figure wearing anklets or slippers? Answer: None.

5. In how many are the couch, the figure on the couch, and the priest out of line with each other in the strange manner of the Abraham papyrus? Answer: None; we have no replicas in which the artist has made any such blunder or anything comparable to it.

6. How many have crocodiles beneath the couch? Answer: None.

7. How many have hatched lines designated as "expanse, or firmament"? Answer: None of the others has such a design.

8. How many have the twelve gates or "pillars of heaven" or anything like them? Answer: None.

9. How many show the lotus and offering table, otherwise common in Egyptian religious and secular scenes? Answer: None.

10. How many show the resurrection, procreation, or embalming scene without the presence of the two ladies (Isis and Nephthys) and/or other dignitaries? Answer: None.

11. Granting Dr. Parker's reconstruction, when a bird is shown flying over the middle of the couch, how often is Anubis in the position shown? Answer: Never.

12. How often is any bird shown with wings drawn in the manner Professor Parker indicates? Answer: Never.

13. How many have inscriptions matching those in the Pearl of Great Price papyrus? Answer: None, though nearly all of them have stereotyped inscriptions designating the nature of the scene.

So our manuscript is different. But is it significantly different? In looking at it beside the others, we miss the august figures of the gods standing by and the solemn religious dignity they give to the other compositions as they kneel in mourning, stand guard, raise hands in praise, or make magical passes. At the same time we are impressed by the rather massive additions—the unfamiliar writing that frames the scene on either side, and the stage-like foundation of elements found in none of the other papyri. True, every individual sign and figure can be matched rather easily somewhere else, just as every word on this page can be found in almost any English book, but it is the combination of perfectly ordinary signs that makes extraordinary compositions, and we may well repeat the words of Professor Nagel: "It would be easy to find numerous parallels to each of these figures, but that would not mean much. . . ." For the combination here is different. We have just noted that for an Egyptian document to be considered unique, it does not have to be spectacularly different from all others: it can resemble scores of others in almost every particular and still have a message to convey that is quite distinct from theirs. Whether our facsimiles belong to this maverick type remains to be seen. But what we have seen is that one of them, at least, the one with which we are at present concerned, departs from the standard patterns in so many particulars as to render it worthy of closer attention than anyone has so far been willing to give it. ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[45]Deveria, *op. cit.*, p. 195, and Prof. G. E. Hughes, *op. cit. supra*, note 37.

[46]In the copies at our disposal (see note 54 below) are only *two* scenes with two birds in them, as against seven with three birds, 22 with one bird, and one with five birds.

[47]Parker, *loc. cit. supra*, note 23; Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), Vol. 2, pp. 254-58. "Isis and Nephythys were . . . associated inseparably with each other . . . and in all important matters . . . they acted together." *Ibid.*, p. 258.

[48]The reproduction here given, after Lanzone, *Dizionario*, Plate CCXC, is the nearest thing to the Mormon papyrus.

[48a]Reproduced in Erik Iversen, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 46 (1960) pp. 71-79, Pl. XVI.

[49]There is one representation, from Denderah, in which the lower hand is not beneath but laid alongside the body, but hand and arm are very clearly depicted, the fingers reaching well down almost to the knee, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 15 (1963), p. 17, Fig. 4.

[50]Cited in *Era*, Vol. 16, p. 342.

[51]In Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

[52]Hughes, in letter cited above, note 37.

[53]Hermann Kees, in *Zeitschrift fuer Aegyptische Sprache*, Vol. 78 (1942), pp. 47f.

[54]The best source of "lion-couch" scenes is F. A. F. Mariette, Denderah (Paris, 1875), Vol. 4, Plates 65ff, most of which is reproduced in R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia* (Turin, 1885), Plates 30, 63, 64, 261 (3 scenes), 262, 265, 268, 269, 270, 271 (2 scenes), 272 (2 scenes), 273, 274 (2 scenes), 276, 277 (2 scenes), 278, 279, 280, 281, 282 (2 scenes), 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291. Sixteen of these are reproduced in E. A. W. Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London: Methuen, 1904), Vol. 2, pp. 132-37, and there are others in his *Osiris* (New York: University Books, 1961), Vol. 2, pp. 22-57, including some not found in Lanzone, *i.e.*, on pp. 22, 23, 24, 30, 45, 48, 49, 51, 53. More in A. Moret, *Mysteres Egyptiens* (Paris, 1913), pp. 51, 53, 57 (2 scenes), 60, opp. 64. Other examples may be found in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 4 (1918), p. 143; Vol. 17 (1931), Plates 56, 57 (3 scenes); Vol. 24 (1938), p. 30, fig. 9: in *Chronique d'Egypte*, Vol. 19 (1943), pp. 195-97, figs. 27, 28, 29, 30 (2 scenes), and Vol. 34 (1959), p. 74, fig. 5; also in *Zeitschrift fuer Aegyptische Sprache*, Vol. 55 (1919), p. 51, and *Receuil de Travaux*, Vol. 21 (1899), p. 146, and Vol. 37 (1915), pp. 121, 125; *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 3 (1894), Plate XI; *Bulletin de l'Institute Francais d'Arch. Orientale*, Vol. 28 (1929), p. 47; *Egyptian Religion*, Vol. 3 (1935), p. 144; *Ancient Egypt*, Vol. 1 (1914), p. 21, fig. 17. Lion-couch scenes are most easily found in large editions of the Book of the Dead: R. Lepsius, *Das Todtenbuch der Aegypter* (Leipzig, 1842), Plates 8, 33, 74, 75; Edouard Naville, *Papyrus Funeraires de la XXe Dynastie* (Paris, 1912), Plate 1, and *Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch* (Berlin, 1886), Vol. 2, Plates 1, 3 (5 scenes), 5, 28 (3 scenes), 173, 174, 187, 207; T. G. Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (Chicago University, 1960), Plates 26, 48, 49, 60, 70, 94; E. A. W. Budge, *The Book of the Dead, Papyrus of Ani* (New York, London, 1913), Vol. 3, Plates 7, 17, 34. Unusual versions may be found in H. K. Beugsch, *Thesurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883-1891), Nos. 749, 750, 784, 789; also in *Life* magazine, June 7, 1968, two scenes: one is discussed in E. Otto, *Das Aegyptische Mundoeffnungsritual* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1960), p. 74, Abb. 12; and in Ad. Erman, *Religion der Aegypter* (1934), p. 293, fig. 121. There is a small lion-couch vignette in the "Joseph Smith Papyri" (photo in *Era*, Vol. 71 [February 1968], p. 40F). Other references will be given in subsequent articles. An actual lion-couch was found in the Tomb of Tutankhamon; its ritual significance is noted by A. Piankoff, *The Shrines of Tutankhamon* (Harper Torch Books, 1962), p. 36.

[55]V. S. Golenischchev, *Catalogue General des Antiquities Egyptiennes du Musee de Caire, Papyrus Hieratiques* (1927), p. 133. Here the hieroglyph for "couch" is the lion-couch. "It is difficult to say [writes Golenischchev] whether the designation of 'he who is on the couch' refers to the dead god Osiris. One could just as well think of the king (or, less probably, of some ordinary individual), who was thus placed while he slept under the protection of the gods." On the couch in the Underworld, E. Otto, *Mundoeffnungsritual*, Vol. 2, p. 33.

[56]A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, Vol. 1 (1935), p. 101.

[57]G. Nagel, in *Bulletin de l'Inst. Fr. d'Arch. Or.*, Vol. 29 (1929), pp. 30-31.

[58]N. M. Davies, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 32 (1946), p. 69, cf. Plate XIII.

[59]Ph. Derchain, *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 15 (1963), p. 13.

[60]J. Capart, in *Chronique d'Egypte*, Vol. 19 (1943), pp. 192, 194.

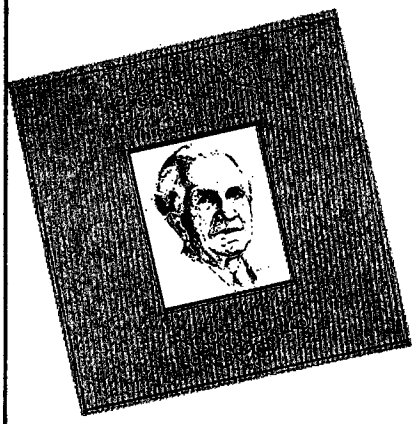
[61]A. Varille, in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 53 (1956), p. 110.

A Dream Grown Tall

By Florence Pedigo Jansson

An oak is but a dream grown tall,
An acorn's upward thrust,
A high resolve that shaped itself
To action born of trust.

An oak is sturdiness endowed
By roots of mighty length
That hold its aspirations high
And give it inner strength.



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A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

PART 6

FACSIMILE NO. 1
A Unique Document

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

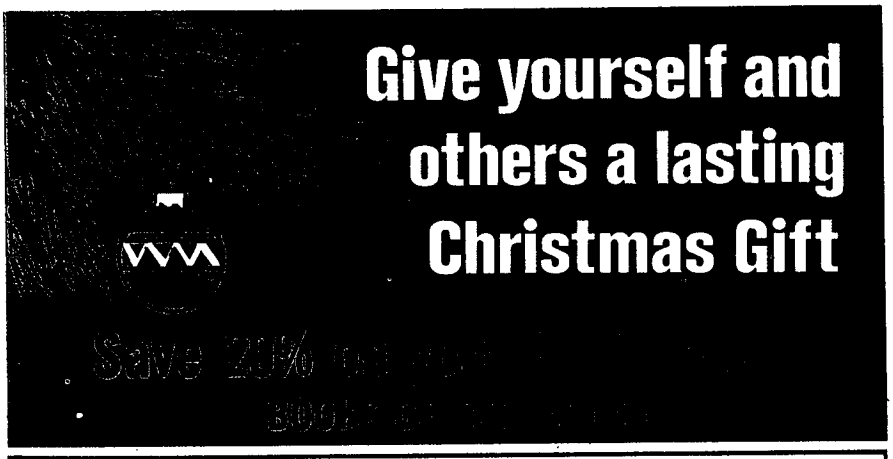
● *Stating the Question:* — The two-page spread in the December 29, 1912, issue of the *New York Times*, to which we have often referred in the course of these articles, finds an authentic echo in an article by Wallace Turner appearing in the same newspaper under the dateline of July 15, 1968. The crux of the article is Mr. Turner's statement concerning the newly acquired papyri: "There is no question that Smith worked from these papyri; the question is whether his writings based on them were actual translations or pure fabrications." But what Mr. Turner calls *the* question is itself meaningless until we know exactly what is meant by "worked from" and "based on," that is, until it can be shown whether the Book of Abraham really depends for its existence on these papyri, and if so, exactly how and to what extent Joseph Smith made use of them. The evidence in known documents is entirely inadequate to permit a definitive answer to these questions, all answers to date resting on the capacity of the critics as mind readers.

From the very beginning this writer has been rightly accused of an almost callous unconcern for the newly located papyri (all except the one matching Facsimile 1) as evidence for or against the authenticity of the Book of Abraham. Equal indifference to the so-called Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar springs neither from misgivings nor indolence, but from a principle which has been taught in the Church from the beginning and which cannot be too strictly enjoined on all students of the gospel, namely, that a Latter-day Saint is bound to accept as true scriptures *only* the standard works of the Church.[1] The wisdom of such a rule is readily apparent to anyone who considers what endless confusion would reign without it in a church in which all are encouraged to seek and receive personal revelation, and are also enjoined before receiving that revelation to indulge freely in vigorous speculation and exploration on their own: ". . . you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it is right. . . ." (D&C 9:8.)

One of the standard works *is the* Pearl of Great Price, in which the explanations of three Egyptian drawings are presented for our ac

ceptance as inspired scriptures. The drawings themselves are introduced as supplementary aids to the ancient reader, and were not necessarily inspired. We know that the Prophet was in possession of other Egyptian documents as well, but the fact remains that only the three facsimiles were published as ancient records directly relating to an inspired interpretation. Whatever use Joseph Smith may have made of the other manuscripts, whatever he may have thought or said or written about them, is *not* scripture and is not binding on anyone; nor can it be used as a test of his inspiration, not only because he was as free to speculate and suggest as anyone else, but also because all these other writings, ancient and modern, have been pointedly omitted from the body of books passing as scripture.

Accordingly, in the following articles we are going to discuss *only* the facsimiles and the interpretation thereof, passing by in silence those writings which do not belong to the Book of Abraham, even though that book may have been the end product of a process in which they had a part. Like the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham must be judged on its own merits, and not on the way men choose to recreate and interpret the baffling and fragmentary episodes of its creation. While we can only encourage those scholars competent to deal with the Egyptian texts to play to their hearts' content with those fragments which give them a specialist's advantage over the rest of us, we ourselves must resolutely resist the allurements of that succulent diet of red herring which has long been the staple of those who would discredit the claims of the Prophet. Unable to get at him directly, they find grounds for complaint in all sorts of interesting if irrelevant things.



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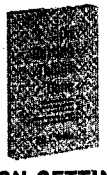

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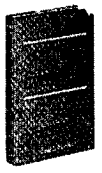

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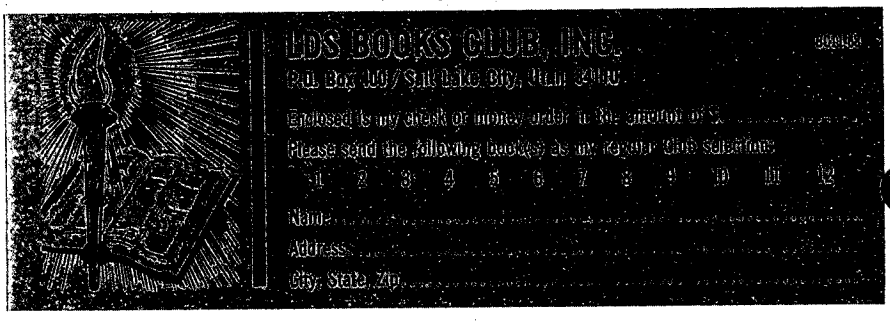

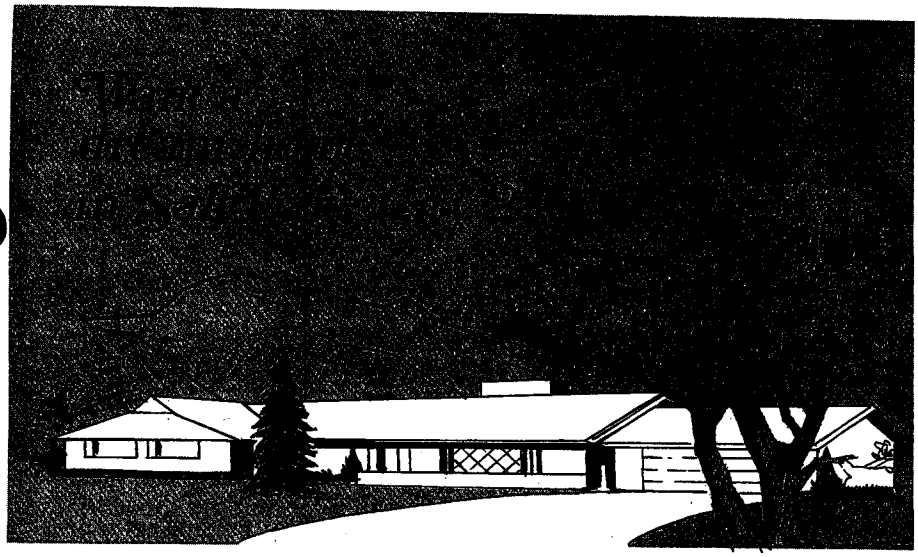

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Typical of this has been the reaction of some of our learned friends to the crushing discovery that among the papyri belonging to Joseph Smith was one document in Arabic. This was immediately pointed out to us as another proof of Smiths imbecility. True, he never included this Arabic writing among his Egyptian studies, never said it was Egyptian or offered to translate it, nor indeed have we any record of his ever mentioning it. Yet somehow the incongruity of an Arabic text among writings supposedly connected with Abraham is supposed to discredit Joseph Smith. In the same spirit snatches of the Book of the Dead, to say nothing of the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar, are now being treated exactly as if they were integral parts of the Mormon scriptures.

For those who wish to attack or defend the Pearl of Great Price, there is quite enough material contained in the facsimiles to keep things lively for sometime to come, without having to wrangle about hypothetical claims while the clear-cut claims of the facsimiles go unheeded. What are these clear-cut claims? One question embraces them all: *Were the originals of these three facsimiles ever used anciently to explain or illustrate historic events or teachings going back to Abraham?* If that can be answered in the affirmative the Book of Abraham is in the clear; if it can be answered in the negative—an emphatic negative—then it is discredited. Either solution depends upon an affirmative answer to an appalling preliminary question: Do you know *all there is to know* about these three documents? That admittedly is a poser, but none should know better than Egyptologists that where that challenge of omniscience cannot be met, almost anything can happen: He who knows not all things is

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ignorant of all things.

That Fearful Symmetry: The most obvious thing about the facsimiles is that they are pictures, but rather strange pictures. Not many people in frontier America had ever seen pictures like these at the time they turned up in Kirtland. Laymen like the writer still need expert instruction on how to view these quaint vignettes, and when Mr. Webb protested long ago that "the known habits of the ancient Egyptian artists have not been taken into consideration" by those who pronounced judgment, he was well within his rights. For it is only of recent years that the "grossly neglected" study of the canons of Egyptian composition has begun to receive the attention it deserves.[1] Early in the century Professor Budge could still claim in all seriousness that "it is possible that the Egyptians really believed in the existence of composite animals such as they depict in their funerary literature," the error of which proposition has been properly aired in our own day by Heinrich Schaefer.[2] It is not that simple.

As anyone can soon discover for himself, Egyptian hieroglyphic is not a naive picture-writing, but a special code governed by strict rules, without a knowledge of which it cannot be read. Not only must certain conventions, which some describe as rules of grammar, be observed in writing and reading it, but all the little pictures that convey the ideas and sounds must be executed according to strict canons of proportion that remained unchanged for thousands of years. From at least the 3rd Dynasty on, such strict controls "are canonical for the whole of Egyptian art . . . from the representation of human beings in relief and sculpture to the forms of pottery."[3] The general impression is that everything follows established rules "from age to age . . . without the slightest deviation."[4] Because of this system or convention the carvings and paintings on the walls of temples and tombs, no matter how vivid and how familiar they may seem to us, are, H. von Recklinghausen reminds us, "by no means self-explanatory. . . . one had to be taught their meaning in order to understand them, exactly as one must be taught the alphabet in order to read a written text."[5] This puts writing and drawing in the same class, and it has often been noted that it is impossible to draw a line between the Egyptian scribe and the graphic artist: ". . . was not drawing as much a part of the training of a scribe as writing itself?" asks D. Meeks. If Egyptian writing is a kind of graphic art, "Egyptian graphic art is also a kind of writing," says von Recklinghausen, so that "an Egyptian picture must accordingly be not viewed but read."[5]

Even Professor Sethe, who took it for granted that "pictographs are the prelude *[Vorstufe]* to writing throughout the entire world" (a proposition by no means confirmed by the evidence), assures us that though the Egyptians were the only people in the world who retained the primitive form of writing throughout, the oldest known Egyptian pictographs are already "firmly established conventional conceptual symbols," whose meaning is not to be divined by looking at them as pictures.[6] It is a contrived system from the beginning, so that "an Egyptian drawing . . . is not a picture in the present-day sense of the word." "Every figure," writes Siegfried Schott, "signifies more than its appearance would suggest, and can only be understood when its deeper meaning is recognized." Schott regards the ingenious method of conveying information by related techniques of writing and drawing in code as

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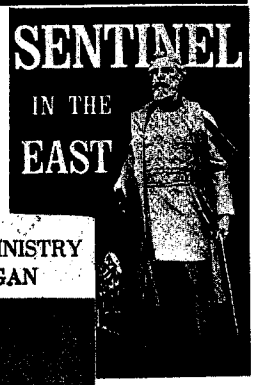

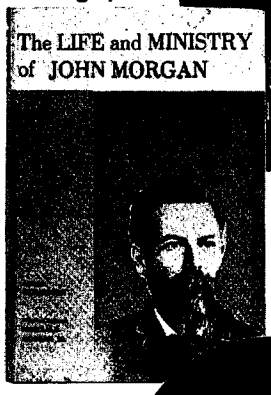

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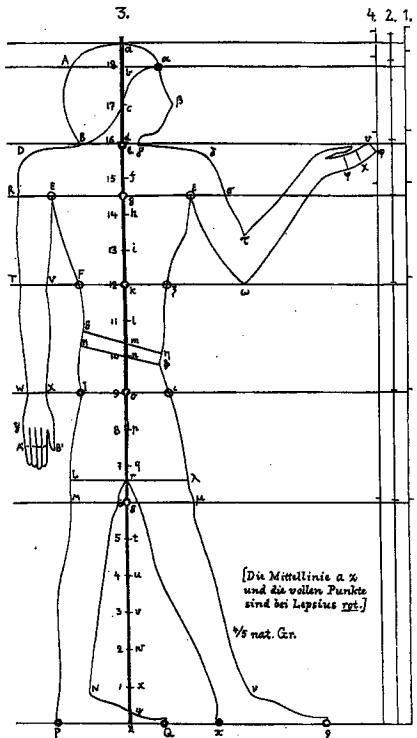

The most famous example of an Egyptian canonical drawing is this figure with guidelines from the tomb of Ma-nefer at Sakkarah. (From R. Lepsius, Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien *[Leipzig,1897],Vol.1, p.234.)*

one of the sudden and phenomenal developments that marked the almost explosive emergence of a full-blown Egyptian culture on the scene.[7] According to de Rochemonteix, we must look upon the figures on the walls of temples and tombs as "gigantic ideograms" whose form and meaning were developed along with and as part of the concept of hieroglyphic writing.[8] Indeed, Schaefer went so far as to insist that one cannot understand Egyptian art without understanding the Egyptian language.

By the 5th Dynasty at the latest, "the many traditional rules had come to be fused," observed Eduard Meyer, "into an inviolable canon of proportions, that had to be learned in the school and schematically applied to every drawing."[9] Such a conclusion was justified by the readily discernible uniformities of Egyptian composition, as well as the testimony of Diodorus (Vol. 1, No. 98, pp. 5-9), though "the Egyptians themselves," as P. Lacau informs us today, "have told us nothing concerning their belief in the efficacy of drawing. It is up to us to understand how their system of decoration . . . could express their ideas as well or even better than a written inscription."[10] Professor Mercer was wrong when he wrote that Egyptian pictures are easier to understand than inscriptions—they only look that way. Many students of Egyptian art have tried to work out the rules by which it was constructed, but there is still little agreement among them. Peculiarities long attributed to the primitive or infantile mentality of the Egyptians, lacking the sophistication to see things as they are, are now generally recognized as the expression of a shrewd and calculated system of communication.

Lacking an Egyptian thesis on the subject, the basic issues are still being debated: What were the proper proportions? How were they related to the Egyptian standard measurements of length? Do repeated pictures signify repeated action (H. Balcz)? Why the strong predilection for profiles? Why do the Egyptians always favor the right profile (Erman's Law)? Was the law of frontality (J. Lange's Law) inviolable (Schaefer) or could it be broken when necessary (H. Senk)? Did the Egyptians have a true perspective (L. Klebs) or not (H. Schaefer)? Why is the leg opposite the viewer always thrust forward? Were the canons of a religious nature (Maspero)? Why does the Egyptian always view things either from the front or the side, never from other angles



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(Schaefer)? Why did the Egyptians in inscriptions and drawings not use the guidelines offered by the joints between buildingstones and bricks as other ancient people did (Senk)? Why with a strong feeling for perspective did the Egyptians never develop any rules for perspective (Klebs)? Why would Egyptian artists sometimes add the usual grid work of guidelines to a composition *after* the drawing was completed? Why did the Egyptians continue to ignore true perspective after the Greeks in Egypt had amply demonstrated its use? Can the peculiarities of Egyptian art be explained on psychological grounds (Schaefer) or not (F. Matz)? Have we a right to say that the Egyptians were observing rules when we cannot agree on what those rules were and the Egyptians do not mention them (von Recklinghausen)? Did the Egyptians deliberately avoid drawing true to life (W. van Os)? Did their canons scorn real appearances (J. Spiegel)? Was the geometric style basic or incidental (Spiegel)? Is *the* sovereign law of Egyptian composition Schaefer's *Geradansichtigvorstelligkeit* (Senk. The word is too good to miss!)? Did the Egyptians regularly employ instruments to preserve the accuracy of the canons (R. Hanke)? Does symmetry of composition indicate regularity of motion (Balcz)? Why was the height of a man 13 units in the Old Kingdom, 19 units in the 18th Dynasty, and 22⅓ units in the 26th Dynasty (F. Petrie)? Are these units (the grid squares) measured by the extended five-fingered hand, the fist, or four fingers (E. Iversen)? Why after experimenting with naturalistic positions in the Old Kingdom did the artists abandon and never return to them (H. Madsen)? Is the direction in which figures face originally determined by the direction of hieroglyphic writing (Schaefer)? Is it determined by the medium—the pen favoring L to R, the chisel R to L (Recklinghausen)? Are the standards of length all based on the human body (Iversen)? Did the Egyptians fear figures that looked directly out of the picture at one (Schaefer)? ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[1]The position of the Church was stated officially by Elder James E. Talmage in 1903 before a senatorial investigation committee in Washington, D.C.:

"Mr. Worthington. What are the accepted standard works of the church which bind all its members? Mr. Talmage: The standard works are four in number—the Bible, King James version or translation; the Book of Mormon; the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. . . . Mr. Worthington. Now . . . let me ask you about this work which you are the author—the Articles of Faith. You say you were authorized by the high church officials to prepare such work. . . . Is that work, or anything in it, binding upon any member of your church? Mr. Talmage. Oh, in no sense. . . . Mr. Worthington. Is there any publishing house authorized to published works and send them out, which works bind the church as an organization? Mr. Talmage. No such publishing house could be named. . . . the only supervision exercised by the church . . . is in regard to reissuing standard works—three of the standard works. *Proceedings before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the U. S. Senate in the Matter of the Right Hon. Reed Smoot,* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1905), Vol. 3, pp. 24-26.

[1a]So H. De Morant, in *Chroniques d'Egypte,* Vol. 10 (1934), p. 207; see esp. A. M. Bakir, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology,* Vol. 53 (1967), pp. 159f.

[2]E. A. W. Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians* (1904), Vol. 1, p. 61; H. Schaefer, *Von aegyptischer Kunst* (4th ed., Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963), p. 36.

[3]A. Scharff, in *Aegypten u. Vorderasien* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1950), p. 73.

[4]So M. de Rochemonteix, in *Receuil des Travaux,* Vol. 6 (1885), p. 21.

[5]H. von Recklinghausen, in *Aegypt. Ztschr.,* Vol. 63 (1928), pp. 34f.

[6]K. Sethe, *Vom Bild zum Buchstaben* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1964), pp. 17ff., 26ff.

[7]S. Schott, *Hieroglyphen* (Wiesbaden: F. Steinen, 1950-54), pp. 51ff.

[8]In *Receuil des Travaux,* Vol. 6, pp. 23, 29.

[9]*Gesch. des Altertums,* Vol. 1, pp. 2, 198.

[10]P. Lacau, in *Revue d'Egyptologie,* Vol. 19 (1967), p. 50.

Time Study

By Betty G. Spencer

My husband, with his *day's work done,*
Said, "You should organize.
Be more effective in your work;
Make plans, dear; visualize!"

I've tried to follow his advice.
I schedule. (He insists.)
And I could be efficient, too—
If I could find my lists!

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

Part 6 (continued)

FACSIMILE NO. 1
A Unique Document

In the previous installment, Dr. Nibley presented considerable evidence to suggest that "Egyptian hieroglyphic is not a naive picture-writing, but a special code governed by strict rules, without a knowledge of which it cannot be read." Turning to a discussion of the three facsimiles of the Book of Abraham, Dr. Nibley says that these facsimiles are "strictly ritual," and that they are directly related to the theme of the Book of Abraham—"the transmission of priesthood and authority. . . ."

● Luise Klebs has argued that the only real rule of Egyptian art was to make everything as unmistakably clear and simple as possible. That, according to her, would explain Lange's famous "law of frontality," according to which everything is always drawn in its most readily recognizable position, so that on a single figure the eyes and shoulders are seen from the front—their most expansive and characteristic image—while the nose and feet are drawn in their most striking dimension—seen in profile. The main thing is to show each thing as it essentially is, and not as it happens to look at a particular moment from a particular angle: if you are drawing a square pool or tank in a garden, you always draw a square with a water-sign inside and trees around it, not because the pool always *looks* square, but because it always *is* square. A distant horse or ox and one close up are drawn the same size because they *are* the same size; that one of them is farther away is indicated by placing it higher up on the scene.[11] Such arbitrary devices, once understood, make for great simplicity and clarity of representation, and require us to view Egyptian pictures as a sort of mechanical drawing, with all the advantages and disadvantages of such. "This typification," writes a modern Egyptian, "is said to be both the strength and the weakness of the whole of Egyptian art." Its weakness, like that of all mechanical drawing, is its inability to grasp "the photographic, the perceptual, the candid, the real, the momentary, and the narrative," while its strength was (in Professor Wilson's words) its genius for conveying "the diagrammatic, the conceptual, the ideal, the static."[12]

Professor von Recklinghausen would have us compare a hunting scene by Rubens with one of Pharaoh's royal hunting reliefs: in the former all is color, movement, confusion, excitement—one catches the spirit of the moment and feels oneself in the midst of the melee, but one would be at a complete loss to report just what happened on the hunt. The Egyptian picture, on the other hand, shows men and animals in neat geometrical array, with an oversized pharaoh (the exact equivalent, says von Recklinghausen, of putting the king's name in giant capital letters), middle-sized officials, tiny servants, and little stylized lions: it is quite quaint, but with a little training anyone can tell at a glance exactly what took place on the hunt. A

supposedly childlike and unrealistic picture is thus far more clear and informative than Ruben's inspired explosion of form and color. "It is the purpose of such art," says our guide, "to present objects more correctly than they appear to the passing impression of the senses."[13] Or, as Petrie put it, "Thus the Egyptian was accustomed to see in one view what we see in different views, and this prevented his regarding such figures as unnatural. . . . His drawings are a portrayal of facts and not a perspective scene."[14] The Egyptian was not depicting but describing; he was not deliberately making his pictures as unreal as possible, as some have maintained, but conveying information as clearly, correctly, and economically as possible. "For the Egyptian," wrote J. Spiegel, "there can be only one true representation of anything; for this it was necessary to have a single standard symbol for each object and to use this object in every context," no matter how incongruous it might look in the picture.[15] Thus "a fixed system of symbols was maintained with marvellous tenacity for 4000 years," the Egyptians continuing to draw things their way even after they knew all about our modern Greek canons of perspective.[16]

See the Big Picture: All this is important in viewing the facsimiles of the Book of Abraham, where nothing is more incongruous to Western eyes than the telling of an intensely dramatic and thrilling story in dry, stiff, scanty little sketches borrowed apparently from the handbooks of funerary art. Does it disturb us to see a man supposedly lying on a couch without touching it, or holding out a vessel that hovers half an inch above his hand? Or a line of deities sitting in state without any visible thrones or chairs to support them? Here the mere lying, holding, or sitting position is enough to show

Prefacing his study of Facsimile No. 1, Dr. Nibley reviews the Egyptian style of art.

us what is going on.[17] A man being doused with water does not need to have the water touch him at all when the position of the vase makes it perfectly clear that he could not possibly avoid getting wet. When mere position is enough to indicate a situation, why clutter up the scene by insisting on an absolute fidelity to detail that can never be attained anyway? ". . . a scene as represented by an Egyptian artist," writes W. S. Smith, "is to be looked at as a more or less diagrammatic rendering of the facts as he knew them to be. . . . he seeks to portray a generalization of an action, not its transitory aspect. . . ."[18] Only the permanent and the universal interested him, all else being mere passing impressions—a trick, a game, an illusion. In his effort "to represent the ultimate, the essential, basic nature of whatever he is drawing," the Egyptian artist dispenses with all needless detail, "striving to give every body and every situation the character of a totality."[19]

Idealized and generalized types of things are bound to be impersonal in nature, devoid of individual quirks and differences. In the marvelous royal portraits, even, "all the heads," according to C. C. Edgar, "are practically of the same type. It is not a portrait, but a rather characterless ideal countenance, which was no doubt used indifferently for successive kings as well as various deities."[20] As impersonal as his subject, the Egyptian artist himself never seems to expect or seek public recognition: why should he? For one thing, he always worked in corroboration with other craftsmen on any masterpiece (one man drew, another carved, and another colored the same relief); and for another his work was designed from the beginning to be hidden in dark tombs and temples and not put on public display. But, most important, the Egyptian artist thought of himself as working in "the sphere of an eternal order, independent of time and place and human awareness," in which "the visual arts, mythology, and ritual were facets of one reality."[21] His reward was in the eternities, for his art "embraces the great structure of the cosmic order in the most literal sense of the word."[22] Indeed, his drawing and carving are, as P. Derchain puts it, "simply a continuation of the original idea of hieroglyphic writing, an application of the rules of analogical thinking to which we owe all the cosmological systems and pre-Greek theological systems."[23] Egyptian art and writing went forth together from the great cult centers of Memphis and Heliopolis as the means of conveying their inspired eschatological teachings.

Though we do not know what the connection was "between the units of the Egyptian system of linear measurement and the units of the canon of proportions," both were sacred and of cosmic and ritual significance.[24] The perfect squares by which every human figure must be drawn are the artist's way of taking his bearing on the universe, like the guidelines used in astronomical charts.[25] The basic rule of frontality, we are now told, "has its origin in the position of religious worship and is not, as so often supposed, a heritage of the archaic period."[26]

The Long Tether: Once the set,

"It must also be borne in mind that not every object found in a tomb or with a mummy is necessarily a funerary object."

prescribed, ritual nature of Egyptian art is understood, it is necessary to take the next step and show how the Egyptian artist was like every true artist an individualist after all, for whom the rules served as a guideline rather than a straitjacket. As Professor Wilson puts it, "a man could roam about at the end of a long tether, but the tether was always there."[27] Men with real artistic talents could and did constantly deviate from the set canons whenever they felt that the ideal type they sought was not adequately represented in the book of models. The run-of-the-mill craftsmen, on the other hand, were only too glad to have their official books of models to fall back on and thereby avoid the risks and pitfalls of creativity.[28] These were "holy books," by consulting which the artist gave his figures that flawless perfection which things designed to endure for eternity must have.[29] "Everything was fixed in advance," writes J. Capart; "the draftsman, formed by the training of the school, knew the canonical proportions of the figures by heart; he leaved through the book of models in order to extract each element he wished to employ in the scene he was about to draw."[30]

Yet with their great artistic feeling the Egyptians were bound to be as offended by mere mechanical repetition as anyone else. "I was no mere copier of models," boasts one artist, "but followed my own heart; no director had to give me instructions . . . for I understood every aspect of my art." He was not free of the rules, but free because he had the rules by heart. On the other hand, we have the record of a self-taught scribe of the New Kingdom who developed his own canons of writing and drawing![31] A Middle Kingdom inscription praises the prince "who distinguishes the true artist and turns his back on mediocrity,"[32] and already in the art of the Pyramid age there is a conscious avoidance of mere repetition, of perfect symmetry, of mechanical reproduction.[33] In the use of color the artist of the Old Kingdom seems "sometimes actuated by a perverse and antic impulse" to play around, so that things are sometimes very oddly colored, and the three identical pots that make up a well-known ideogram may as well as not be each of a different color.[34]

It is always important to remember that nearly all the objects and documents for our examination come from funerary settings, in which a rigid conventionality is to be expected; there is every indication that the secular everyday art of the Egyptians was much freer, more spontaneous and naturalistic.[35] It must also be borne in mind that not every object found in a tomb or with a mummy is necessarily a funerary object, and we have yet to consider whether the facsimiles are really funerary or not.

In viewing any Egyptian composition, such as Facsimile 1, it is quite natural to pronounce it "typical," since in a way every work of art that is recognizably Egyptian is by that token typical. But at the same time, since the Egyptian draftsman was free to deviate from the norm in special cases, we should not be surprised or distressed by deviation, but we should be interested. Even minor irregularities, von Recklinghausen admonishes us, are not to be regarded as mere slips, but as an *"avis au lecteur,"* intentionally put in to call our attention to some unusual aspect of the situation depicted.[36] It should be clear by now that no conclusive evidence can be deduced from the fact that the facsimiles are typical on the one hand (though that has ever been the favorite target of the critics), or on the other hand that they contain irregularities. The mere existence of oddities in the drawings means little until we examine the nature of those oddities.

At first glance it is obvious that the draftsman who made Facsimile 1 has observed the canons, telling his story with strict observance of the conventions. That is what one would expect: the great market for the skill of scribe and artist in Egypt was the funeral business, and one of them boasts on a stella in the Louvre that he controls the full repertoire of a trained draftsman but is especially skilled in drawing scenes for the Book of the Dead—naturally, that was what paid.[37] Anyone wishing to procure the services of an Egyptian artist-scribe would be almost sure to get one who was more familiar with Book of the Dead motifs than anything else, they being his normal source of income. And anything he drew would necessarily betray his background. But we have also seen that Egyptian scribes could use the old familiar school stereotypes when necessary to convey a message or tell a story that was quite different from those to which the well-known forms usually applied. That could happen and did; it was a risky business, we are told, and could get the artist into trouble artistically. As M. Baud explains it, the struggle between what the eye sees in an object and what the brain knows about it leads to a "fierce conflict" between the two for control of the hand,

which puts the artist in an embarrassing position.[38] The eye sees the plate on the table as an oval, but the brain knows it is a circle—which shall it be?

Finding himself faced with a new and unusual situation, the ordinary Egyptian artist would naturally try to play it safe and stick to his book of models as closely as possible, "confining his innovations," as Spiegel explains it, "to details, such as the position of an arm or leg, or an attempt at a complicated crossing of arms or legs, etc."[39] Or, as von Recklinghausen puts it, the Egyptian sacrifices common sense to indicate exceptional situations, and this often leads to "nasty contradictions (*boeser Zweispalt*)."[30]

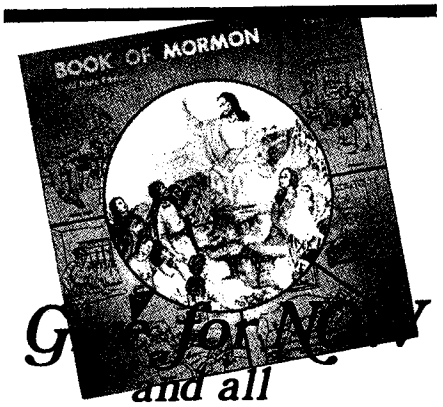
Isn't this very much the situation in Facsimile 1, where the artist does very well until he must indicate the struggle on the altar, when he leaves the victim's legs, the couch, and the priest hopelessly out of line without making any effort to correct them—which could easily have been done in view of the vacant spaces left in the critical area? That he is having trouble with the legs is further indicated by another significant anomaly. "The greatest feature of Egyptian drawing," wrote Petrie, "is the beauty of line. There was no tentative touching and smudging. Each line was drawn in one sweep . . . there was never a quiver or hesitation. The artist must have had the precise form in imagination on the surface before him, and followed with his hand what his mind already saw in place."[40] Now when the composer of Facsimile 1 is dealing with familiar and conventional objects, such as the couch and the bird, that is, when he has "the precise form in imagination," his line is simple and sure; but when he gets to the figure on the couch, and especially the legs, he loses confidence: here we do find "tentative touching and smudging" —the lines are heavy and overdrawn again and again, almost scrubbed into the paper. Plainly the artist is not here tossing off the well-known scenes that he could do with his eyes closed.

Solving a Problem: In Facsimile 1 the first problem that faced the artist-scribe, according to our text (Abr. 1:15), was to represent a man who was both "fastened upon an altar" *and* praying. He solved his problem with strict obedience to the canons of his art in the only way it could be solved. The man is supine, to indicate his incapacity and helplessness; his body does not touch the altar—its position alone is enough to show that he is on it; nor are the binding ropes shown, for the supine position tells us, according to the Egyptian formula, that he is helpless. So far everything is expressed diagrammatically, not realistically. But even though the man is flat on his back, he is taking the correct and conventional attitude of prayer or supplication. We now see why it is important to make clear that Abraham in this scene has both hands before him, for that not only makes this particular lion-couch scene unique, but it also gives the whole drama its meaning. M. Korostovtsev has recently pointed out that the Egyptians placed peculiar emphasis on hand positions to convey ideas, and in Luise Klebs' catalogue of "Formal Gestures of the Egyptians," the "Gesture of Praying"—right foot forward, hands raised before the face—has the honor of being number one.[41]

From the point of view of graphic art, this is indeed an incongruous combination—a man bound and helpless but at the same time waving his arms and legs around—but actually it seems to be a rather sensible employment of the canons of a particular art.

Facsimile 1 Is Not a Picture: A most serious oversight by the critics of Joseph Smith's explanations of the facsimiles has been failure to read with care what is said in those explanations. As a rule one glance at the facsimiles has been enough to assure any scholar that they are familiar Egyptian stuff, and a second glance has made clear that the Prophet's interpretations have no resemblance to those of modern Egyptologists. It has never occurred to any of the experts to ask whether there might after all be something instructive or significant in the explanations. Had they taken the pains to do so, they could have discovered right at the outset that Joseph Smith does not describe the facsimiles as *pictures* of anything: they are symbolic diagrams describing not so much unique historical occurrences as ritual events. Let us explain this more closely.

If we follow the official explanations, some of the most important elements in Facsimile 1, such as "the angel of the Lord," "Abraham in Egypt," "the pillars of heaven," etc., do not have even the remotest resemblance to what they are supposed to represent; they are strictly symbolic and cannot possibly be thought of as pictures until their meaning has been explained. Moreover, we are explicitly told that figures in the facsimiles are "*designed* to *represent*" such and such a thing, not to depict it as it appears, for what it is is apparent only to the initiated: ". . . *as understood* by the Egyptians." It is an arbitrary interpretation that is given to these things, e.g. the hatched lines in Facsimile 1, Fig. 12, "*signifying* expanse, or the firmament. . . ." One does not draw a picture of "expanse"—one can only "signify" it by symbols, whose meaning can only be understood in the context of a particular time and culture: ". . . but in *this* case, in *relation* to *this subject*, the Egyptians *meant* to *signify* [what we Semites would call] Shaumau, to be high. . . ."



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The whole thing is culturally conditioned; Abraham is trying to explain the figures to non-Egyptians and he tells them that they cannot be understood unless they are viewed through trained Egyptian eyes. There are various levels of symbolic representations, since every symbol necessarily has some point of visual contact with the thing it is supposed to represent, and some of the figures in the facsimiles are accordingly nearer to true pictures than others: "And that you may have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation . . ."—here we expect something like a picture, and get one. Likewise, "That you may have an understanding of these gods, I have given you the fashion of them in figures . . ." (Abr. 1:12, 14) refers us to the familiar images by which these particular gods were identified to their worshippers.

But when we are told that Fig. 1 in Facsimile 2 is *"signifying* the first creation," we are dealing with the purest symbols; and when we learn that Fig. 3 "is *made* to *represent* God sitting upon his throne," we can be sure that the artist did not for a moment suppose that God on his throne really looked like that, ibis-head and all. If we doubt it, we are told that Fig. 7, a totally different image, *also* "represents God sitting on his throne," so that these two cannot possibly be thought of as pictures of anything. Fig. 4 *"answers to"* whatever is conveyed in another culture by the word *"Raukeeyang,"* yet at the same time it is *"also* a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand," a clear demonstration of the principle that these figures are not supposed to be pictures of anything but may represent whatever the Egyptians choose to see in them.

To modern eyes it has seemed naive and even comical for Joseph Smith to have Abraham tell a vivid and exciting story and illustrate it with doll-like and lifeless little caricatures of people, making no attempt at aesthetic or emotional appeal. But that was the Egyptian way, as it is the way of Indian glyphs and of ancient oriental art in general. The tableaux on the walls of Egyptian temples, as de Rochemonteix noted long ago, "are not real people: one has the impression of having before his eyes symbolic abstractions rather than human beings."[42] Economy is the watchword: "almost always in his drawing [the Egyptian] seeks to portray a generalization of an action. . . . the narrative element is conspicuously absent."[43] There is no need to worry about bad draftsmanship as long as a drawing is adequate to convey its message. Dr. Mercer contemptuously observed that there was nothing whatever about Fig. 2 of Facsimile 1 or Fig. 3 of Facsimile 2 to remind him of Abraham. If there had been, the drawings would not have been authentic; a real portrait of Abraham or the priest would be as far from Abraham's way of doing things as would be a portrait of the angel. The meager, stiff, lifeless figures apparently do not disturb Joseph Smith, who goes right ahead and gives us Abraham's explanation of the things as purely symbolic quantities.

It Is All Ritual: What made it possible and easy to tell Abraham's story in formal and conventional designs is the fact that the scenes presented and the episodes re-

is a discourse on divine authority,
n is also the theme of the three facsimiles."

counted are *strictly ritual.* This is an extremely important point that must never be lost sight of. These documents are less historical than ritual, though the two naturally go together in Egyptian thinking. Thus it has recently been shown that while certain important battles immortalized in Egyptian literature and art really did take place, still the accounts of them on papyrus and stone are largely ritualized, that is, they describe an ideal battle in which Pharaoh, as God's representative on earth, comports himself in a godlike manner and with a devastating strength and wisdom that belong to the victory motif of the year-rites rather than to the cold facts of history.

The theme of the Book of Abraham is the transmission of priesthood and authority—a subject with which the Egyptians were positively obsessed and which therefore lends itself with special force to Egyptian treatment. The facsimiles illustrate the most significant moments of the patriarch's Egyptian career—his confrontation with Pharaoh as a rival claimant to the supreme authority of God on earth. The battle stories just referred to remind us that there was no such thing as a secular history of the doings of Pharaoh—everything he did, from his morning toilet to victory on the battlefield, was an act of transcendental importance for the human race; his whole life from birth to death was one progressive ritual. Accordingly, the dealings of Abraham with the divine Pharaoh could not be of a wholly temporal or secular nature; everything about them partakes of the nature of ritual, as is made very clear in the Book of Abraham.

Thus in Facsimile 1 we are introduced first to "the Angel of the Lord," then to "Abraham fastened upon an altar" to be offered up "as a sacrifice" to gods to whose idols we are introduced. Abraham is not simply being executed; he is the central figure of an extremely important ritual in which "the idolatrous god of Pharaoh" figures conspicuously, and the competing powers of heaven and hell come into conflict both in their superhuman and their appointed representatives.

Turning to the text of the Book of Abraham, we find the patriarch's whole concern to be with rites and ordinances: the blessings of the fathers, the sacrifice of children to idols, the complicated holding of priestly offices in the mixed cults of Egypt and Asia, local customs of sacrifice: "Now *at this time* it was the *custom* . . . ," strange gods, strange rites, strange names. After an introduction devoted to briefing the reader on the ritual practices of the heathen, Abraham in verse 12 gets down to cases: He, too, was expected to play the game and provide a victim for the rites. He describes the altar, as if that were very important, and then tells how he was delivered from the knife, receiving at the same time the promise of priesthood for himself. (See Abr. 1:18.) Then he goes into a long explanation of Pharaoh's rival priesthood.

All this shall be duly considered in time, but the thing to note here is that the Book of Abraham, far from being merely a diverting or edifying history, is a discourse on divine authority, which also is the theme of the three facsimiles. The explanations to the three plates makes it perfectly clear that they are meant as diagrammatic or formulaic aids to an understanding of the subject of priesthood on earth. Awareness of this may help substantially in understanding the details of the papyri, to which we now turn our attention. ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[11]L. Klebs, in *Aegypt. Ztschr.*, Vol. 52 (1914), p. 19.
[12]W. Sameh, *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 151; J. A. Wilson, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 6 (1947), p. 247.
[13]V. Recklinghausen, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
[14]W. M. F. Petrie, *Wisdom of the Egyptians* (London: British School of Archaeology, 1940), p. 52.
[15]J. Spiegel, in *Mitteilungen des deutschen Inst. in Kairo*, Vol. 9 (1940), p. 157.
[16]V. Recklinghausen, p. 35 (for quote); H. Schaefer, in *Aegypt. Ztschr.*, Vol. 48, p. 142.
[17]J. Spiegel, *op. cit.*, p. 155; H. Senk, in *Aegypt. Ztschr.*, Vol. 75, pp. 110, 112.
[18]W. S. Smith, *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom* (Oxford, 1946), p. xiii.
[19]For the quotes, Recklinghausen, p. 36, J. Spiegel, *loc. cit.*, and H. Senk, *Aegypt. Ztschr.*, Vol. 74, p. 126, resp.
[20]C. C. Edgar, in *Receuil des Travaux*, Vol. 26 (1905), p. 138; Spiegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-70.
[21]Spiegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 164f, and Philippe Derchain, *Rites Egyptiens*, Vol. 1, p. 38, resp.
[22]Spiegel, p. 172; Smith, *loc. cit.*
[23]P. Derchain, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 38.
[24]E. Iversen, *Canon and Proportion in Egyptian Art* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1955), p. 19; C. C. Edgar, *op. cit.*, pp. 138, 148.
[25]See the many charts in *Chron. d'Eg.*, Vol. 7 (1931), pp. 41-53, and E. Lorenzen, *Technological Studies in Ancient Metrology* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag, 1966), introduction.
[26]W. Sameh, *op. cit.*, p. 154; A. Badawy; in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 52 (1952), p. 275.
[27]Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 249.
[28]J. Spiegel, pp. 158f; C. C. Edgar, p. 146; M. Baud, in *Memories de l'Inst. Fr. Archaeol. Or.*, Vol. 66 (1935-8), pp. 18f; H. Balcz, in *Mitt. Dt. Inst.*, Vol. 1 (1930), p. 148.
[29]A. Hermann, in *Mitt. Dt. Inst.*, Vol. 6 (1936), pp. 150f.
[30]J. Capart, in *Chroniques d'Egypte*, Vol. 32 (1957), p. 162.
[31]Cited by W. Spiegelberg, in *Receuil de Travaux*, Vol. 24 (1902), pp. 185-87.
[32]K. Piehl, *Inscriptions Hieroglyphiques* (Stockholm: Leipzig, 1886-1903), Vol. 1, p. 10.
[33]H. Balcz, in *Mitt. Dt. Inst.*, Vol. 1 (1930), pp. 146-7; H. Senk, in *Ann. du Serv.*, Vol. 53, p. 290.
[34]Quote from J. A. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 249; cf. W. Schenkel, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 88 (1963), pp. 147, 131-147.
[35]A. Badawy, *op. cit.*, pp. 276f, 306f; H. De Morant, in *Chron. d'Eg.*, Vol. 10, pp. 108f.
[36]In *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 63, p. 31; cf. N. M. Davies, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 32 (1946), p. 69 (Pl.XIII).
[37]Discussed by G. Maspero, in *Trans. Bibl. Arch. Soc.*, Vol. 5 (1876), pp. 555-562.
[38]M. Baud, *Mem. de l'Inst. Fr.*, Vol. 66, pp. 14f; von Recklinghausen, *op. cit.*, pp. 30f.
[39]Spiegel, *op. cit.*, p. 160; von Recklinghausen, pp. 27, 30.
[40]Petrie, *Wisdom of the Egyptians*, p. 53.
[41]M. Korostovtsev, in *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypt*, Vol. 28 (1947), pp. 1-10. On the gesture see esp. H. Mueller, in *Mitt. Dt. Inst.*, Vol. 7 (1937), p. 61.
[42]De Rochemonteix, in *Receuil de Travaux*, Vol. 6, p. 21.
[43]Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

The Unknown Abraham

A New Look at The Pearl of Great Price
Part 7

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

● *Neglected Evidence:* Until now, all discussions of the authenticity of the Book of Abraham have been based on the assumption that we have to deal with only *two* really important sources of information: the Book of Abraham and the recently published papyri (*Era*, February 1968). Everyone, it would seem, has taken for granted that if we know what the papyri really say, we are in a position to pass judgment on the authenticity of the Book of Abraham—a proposition diligently cultivated by some who have assumed that a knowledge of Egyptian qualifies one to pass judgment on matters that lie completely outside the field. Such a case might stand up if Joseph Smith had specifically designated particular papyri as the source of his information; but he never did so. Professor Klaus Baer begins and ends his exceedingly valuable study with the assertion that Joseph Smith *thought* he was actually translating the so-called "Breathing Permit."[1] Such testimony would not hold up for three minutes in any court of law. The only evidence for what the Prophet *thought* is the arrangement side by side of very brief Egyptian symbols and some lengthy sections of the Book of Abraham, which has led some to the hasty conclusion that the one column is a would-be *translation* of the other. But the strange juxtaposition of the two texts is itself the best refutation of the argument that it is supposed to present: everyone we know who has ever looked at the two columns (and that includes many a puzzled student long before anybody knew what the Egyptian characters really meant) has been satisfied that the one could not by any effort of the imagination be a translation of the other. But what Mormon ever said it was? The opposition has simply assumed it in the face of the clearest evidence to the contrary; and on their own assumption, to which a knowledge of Egyptian has no relevance whatever, they have declared the Book of Abraham a fraud.

Fortunately we have much broader and firmer grounds for testing the Book of Abraham than parapsychological reconstructions of schemes and devices 140 years old. Those grounds are furnished by a wealth of apocryphal sources, mostly Jewish, and an impressive mass of Egyptian and classical references and archæological material to back them up. The nature of these sources will become evident in the course of discussion, but it will be well to point out some significant aspects of their study at the outset.

1. It is now fairly certain not only that the Bible account of Abraham's life is very sketchy indeed, but also that there existed anciently much fuller written records of his activity. As Father de Vaux noted in a recent and important study, "We could never write a historical biography of Abraham . . . nor even write a real history of the patriarchal period" on the evidence supplied by the Bible alone.[2] "There is strictly speaking," wrote Foakes-Jackson years ago, "no material for a connected biography of Abraham, the records being taken from a variety of sources."[3] It is those lost sources that make up the records to which we referred above: Theodor Boehl recently observed that there is obviously a vast body of source material behind the history of Abraham, but that it is nearly all lost.[4] The discovery of the so-called *Genesis Apocryphon* among the Dead Sea Scrolls not only confirms the existence of a very ancient nonbiblical history of Abraham, but also gives us a peep into its contents, which present really surprising

parallels to the Book of Abraham.[5] The world is now willing to accept a proposition that it denounced as blasphemous in Joseph Smith's day: "We must not lose sight of the fact," wrote G. Widengren, "that the Old Testament, as it is handed down to us in the Jewish canon, is only part—We do not even know if the greater part—of Israel's national literature."[6]

2. Both the biblical and apocryphal stories of Abraham contain at least kernels of historical truth. The character of Abraham is so vivid and clear-cut in both traditions, according to Otto Eisfeldt, that he must have been a historical personage.[7] While "the 19th century excluded the possibility that the man Abram or Abraham could have been a real historical person," wrote Martin Buber, today "everyone sees a living person," whose true history, however, "science, lacking other evidence, will only be able to surmise."[8] Gustav von Rad describes this peculiar state of things, which leaves us in the position of the medieval schoolmen, who were completely certain *that* God is, but completely uncertain as to *what* he is: so it is with Abraham today—". . . in spite of the unprecedented progress of modern archaeology, there is still complete disagreement as to the historical reality underlying the patriarchal narratives."[9] Yet there is no more any doubt that there was and is a historical reality. In a study of "the legend of Abraham," M. Mauss concluded that "a number of scholars are beginning to recognize historical foundations to important parts of the tradition."[10] Today there are at last enough documents in the apocryphal area to be checked against each other, so that the resemblances and differences among them really add up to something. Even apparent contraditions are now constructive, as Albright has pointed out: ". . . reconstructing history is quite impossible unless we have different versions of just what happened at a given time and different reactions of contemporaries or successors. . . . Minor discrepancies do not invalidate historicity; they are necessary concomitants of any true history of man."[11]

3. Taken as a whole, the apocryphal accounts of Abraham, whether in Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Greek, Old Slavonic, etc., and whether recorded in manuscripts of early or later date, agree in telling *essentially the same story.* This story is *not* found in the Bible, but *is* found in the Book of Abraham—which means that our next point is very important.

4. Joseph Smith knew nothing about these extracanonical sources for the Life of Abraham. (a) They were not accessible to him: E. A. W. Budge made the significant remark that "the letter press [in the Book of Abraham] is as idiotic as the pictures, and is *clearly* based on the Bible and some of the Old Testament Apocryphal histories."[12] But what could Joseph Smith have known about Old Testament apocryphal histories? Budge was possibly the greatest authority on apocrypha of his day, but that was because he spent his days, mostly in the British Museum, among original manuscripts to which nobody else had access. There were indeed a number of important apocrypha published in Budge's day—but in the 1830's?[12a] Who has access to the apocryphal Abraham materials even today? The first important collection of them was Jellinek's *Bait ha-Midrasch,* first published in 1856, and so rare that we had never seen a copy of it until its reprinting in Israel in 1967. Many Abraham sources were first made known to the world in B. Beer's *Leben Abraham's,* which did not appear until 1859. The extensive Arabic sources were first studied by Schuzinger in 1961. Though Hebrew has been taught on the "graduate level" at the BYU for many years, until very recently none of the basic sources have been available there.

"Abraham qualifies 'to stand as the most pivotal and strategic man in the course of world history.'"

(b) The apocryphal Abraham literature was not read in Joseph Smith's day: As a specialist many years later, Budge recognized authentically apocryphal elements in the Book of Abraham, and duly charged Joseph Smith with having *clearly* drawn on them. Yet those sources were unknown to any of his fellow critics of the Book of Abraham; for them, Joseph Smith's account rang no familiar bells. Over and over again they declared the history to be nothing on earth but the purest product of the Prophet's irresponsible imagination, and repeated with monotonous regularity that there was "not one word of truth" in anything he put down. But if the most learned men in the world detected no other source for the Book of Abraham than Joseph Smith's untutored imagination, what are the chances that the young farmer himself would have had any knowledge at all of an obscure and recondite literature never translated into English? Professor Zucker of the University of Utah has done us the service of showing that the influence of Joseph Smith's Jewish friends and instructors, Seixas and Alexander Neibaur, came much too late to have had any influence on the Book of Abraham,[13] and that the Prophet's knowledge of things Jewish before then was less than elementary; indeed, as Professor Zucker puts it, "A Jew was exceedingly rare in northeastern Ohio in those days . . . before November 9, 1835, few of the Mormons had ever knowingly beheld a Jew."[14]

To come down to the present, in 1968 a Jewish



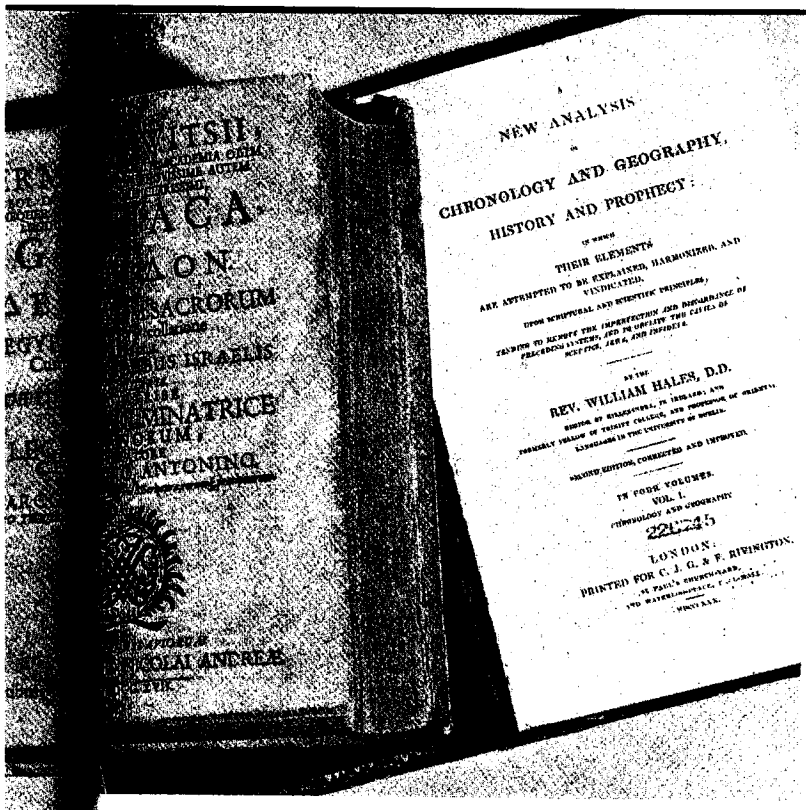
Herman Witz's Aegyptiaca (1717) is perhaps the first extensive treatment of the subject of Abraham and the Egyptians; William Hales's Chronology (1830) contained everything available to Western scholars in Joseph Smith's time. Neither work would have been of much help to anyone composing Book of Abraham.

Rabbi wrote *A Critical Analysis of the Book of Abraham in the Light of Extra-canonical Jewish Writing,* a BYU dissertation, in which for the Life of Abraham he draws upon the Talmud, Josephus, Jubilees, and S. Yetzirah, but makes no mention of any of the sources noted so far in this article or many to follow.[15] Even R. C. Webb, in Chapter 8 of his *Joseph Smith as a Translator,* is impressed only by the *contrast* between the Book of Abraham and the non-canonical sources available to him, which do not include those really important items. So we ask, if rabbis and researchers in the twentieth century can be excused for not knowing about significant writings about Abraham, what were the chances of Joseph Smith's knowing anything about them? They were nil, though we can confidently predict from past experience that as surely as it begins to appear that the story of Abraham in the Book of Abraham can be matched even in particulars by a number of ancient sources, those same critics who have poured contempt on the total ignorance of Joseph Smith will join Professor Budge in charging the Prophet with having lifted extensively from obscure and recondite sources that even the most learned rabbis had never heard of in the 1830's.

The Great Debate: The main theme of the drama of the Book of Abraham is the rivalry between Abraham and a mysterious unnamed king. The king is of "Canaanitish" blood, but he also has enough Egyptian blood to claim the crown of Egypt legitimately. Though four other gods have precedence over "the god of Pharaoh king of Egypt," it is through his Egyptian connections that he "would fain claim . . . the right of the Priesthood" through the line of Ham. Abraham's father was convinced that the claims of the king were legitimate and followed him and his gods.

The rulers of Egypt from the very beginning rested their claim to divine dominion in the earth on the possession of certain documents proving their legitimacy. The most important of such documents were those containing the royal genealogy: it was to preserve them that the "House of Life" was built, and Gardiner even suggested that the main purpose of the Great Pyramid was to house the royal genealogical records on which rested the authority of the king.[16] A recurrent motif in Egyptian literature is the story of the king who spends his days in the temple archives diligently searching for the document that will establish his sure relationship with the gods. The document is never found.[17] Why not? According to the Book of Abraham, the Pharaoh did not possess the all-important papers—because Abraham had them! "But *I* shall endeavor, hereafter, to delineate the chronology running back from *myself* to the beginning of the creation, for the *records* have come into *my* hands, which *I* hold unto this present time." (Abr. 1:28. Italics added.) This, then, was a rebuff and check to the ambitions of the king: it was Abraham who actually held the authority he claimed, and the story in the Book of Abraham tells of the showdown between these two rivals for the honor of bearing God's authority on earth.

This brings us to the main theme of the non-canonical traditions of Abraham, which have become the subject of special research in recent years. The theme of these legends is the mortal rivalry between Abraham and an awesome and sinister would-be cosmocrat who is usually designated by the name of Nimrod. The rivalry begins even before the birth of Abraham, when Nimrod's wise men, studying the stars, foretell the birth of one who will in time completely overshadow the power of Nimrod and possess that divine dominion which Nimrod himself has always coveted.[18] "The wise men of Canaan said: 'Behold, Terah will beget a son who will pervert and destroy the precepts of Canaan.' "[19] This is an interesting indication that the issue is to be between Abraham and the people and religion of Canaan, as in the Book of Abraham account. "On the night of Abraham's birth the astrologers at Terah's feast saw a great star that came from the East . . . and swallowed up the four stars at the four corners," i.e. Nimrod's world dominion.[20] In his eagerness to eliminate the infant Abraham, Nimrod authorized a "slaughter of the Innocents" in which, according to some accounts, 70,000 male babies perished.[21] At once we think of Joseph's dream and of the birth of Jesus, and are confronted with the most baffling and fascinating aspect of comparative religious studies: one sees parallels



everywhere; what is one to make of them? Each must be judged on its own merits. History itself is full of the most disturbing parallels—a new classic example is that of the tragic deaths of Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy—which would seem to show that things do tend to fall into patterns. One does not need to regard the star in the East at the birth of Abraham as a borrowing from the New Testament: according to ancient and established teaching, everyone born into the world has his *tālī'*, his star in the East; and at no time or place was astrology more diligently cultivated than in Abraham's world. As we shall see, the sacrificing of babies on a huge scale was also part of the picture—no need to trace it to King Herod's outrageous behavior centuries later. Among those things which fall into well-known historical patterns are the atrocities committed by rulers determined to secure their thrones—whole scenes from *Macbeth* and *Richard III* could be switched without jarring the structure of either play.

In all accounts Terah, the father of Abraham, is solidly on Nimrod's side, as in the Book of Abraham version, and is usually presented as a high official at the court. According to the Book of Abraham, Abraham's family had long been following idolatrous practices, "My fathers having turned from their righteousness . . . unto the worshiping of the gods of the heathen. . . . Therefore they turned their hearts to the sacrifice of the heathen in offering up their children unto their dumb idols." (Abr. 1:5, 7.) There is much apocryphal substantiation for these statements. "Abraham," says the Midrash, "had no trust either in the words of his father or in the words of his mother."[22] "When he said to his father and his people: 'What are these images to which you are so devoted?' they said, 'We found *our fathers worshipping them.*' He said: 'Indeed you yourselves as well as your fathers have been in manifest error.' "[23] It was especially in the days of Serug, Abraham's great-grandfather, that "the fear of idols came into the world and the making of idols," the people being at that time subjected to the terror and confusion of the great migrations, "without teachers or leaders."[24] And it was especially at Ur that "the prince Mastemah [Satan] exerted himself to do all this, to make the people zealous in the business of idols, and he sent forth other spirits . . . therefore Seroh was called Serug, 'for everyone was turned to do all manner of sin and transgression.' "[25]

There is a strange, almost obsessive, concern with "the fathers" at the beginning of the Book of Abraham: "It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time . . . [from] our first father, through the fathers unto me," etc. (Abr. 1:3-5.) This is just as conspicuous in our extra-canonical sources, and Theodore Reik would trace this fervid appeal to the fathers to an ancestor cult closely resembling the Egyptian system, which crops up in the earliest Jewish tradition but has been consistently discredited and suppressed by the rabbis.[26] The *Genesis Apocryphon* lays great emphasis on "the line of the fathers" (II, 19ff), and the *Manual of Discipline* designates the righteous in Israel as "those who have a claim on the fathers" (*IQS* 2:9). Recent studies of the name of Abraham point to the dominance of the concept. According to R. deVaux, Abram is a contraction of Abiram, "My father is exalted," the name being found not only in the Canaanitish Ras Shamrah texts but even in Egypt and Cyprus.[27] Albright sees in it Abam-rama, a West-Semitic name meaning "He is exalted with respect to Father," i.e., "He is of distinguished lineage."[28]

But "in the case of Abraham," as Cyrus Gordon puts it, "there can be no God of the fathers, because his father Terah is the pagan parent of the first true believer according to tradition."[29] Recent studies have placed increasing emphasis on Abraham instead of Moses as the true founder of the Jewish religion, but according to the older traditions, he was the restorer rather than the first founder of the faith—the first true believer *since Noah:* "Ten generations from Noah to Abraham," said R. Nathan, ". . . and there was not one of them that walked in the ways of the Holy One until Abraham our father. . . ." The tradition is frequently mentioned, making Abraham the founder of a dispensation, the first man to receive revelation after Noah.[30] Abraham is depicted as Noah's successor, and even as his student, in some of the earliest sources, which report that Abraham studied with Noah

and Shem for 39 years.[31] It is therefore interesting that Abraham in the Book of Abraham is described specifically as the successor of Noah, the new Noah: ". . . 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. . . ." (Abr. 1:18-19.)

Many stories are told of how the infant Abraham was born in a cave and spent his first days, weeks and even years still concealed in a cave to escape the wrath of Nimrod.[32] At the very first the babe was saved when a slave child was sacrificed by Nimrod, who thought it was Abraham, thus introducing us to the *substitute sacrifice,* which plays such an important role in the Abraham epic.[33] Being miraculously nourished in the cave, Abraham grew physically and mentally with supernatural speed, and in a matter of days or weeks he was searching in his mind to know who might be the true creator of things and the god he should worship. He was moved to such contemplations by the sight of the heavenly bodies that he first beheld upon coming out of the cave. Nimrod, apprised by his soothsayers, sent a great army to the cave to destroy Abraham, but a violent sandstorm screened the child from their view and threw them into such confusion and alarm that they retreated in panic back to Babylon—a 40-day march from the cave.[34]

All the cave stories—the desertion by father and mother, visitation and instruction by angels, lone vigils under the stars, miraculous feeding, and so forth—aim at emphasizing the all-important point that Abraham was alone with God, dependent on no man and on no tradition, beginning as it were from scratch. Thus, the babe was nourished by sucking milk and honey from his own fingers, even as he acquired wisdom: When a Jewish child displays great precocity or unaccountable knowledge or insight, it is said, "He gets it out of his fingers, like Abraham."[35] Everything points up Abraham's complete break with the past; having no human teachers, he must think things out for himself, until he receives light from above.[36] Intellectually oriented rabbinical Jewry liked to think that Abraham, by purely rational mental processes, arrived at a knowledge of the true nature of God in the manner of the medieval schoolmen, and they depict him demonstrating his wit and his knowledge in formal disputations in which he confounds Nimrod and his wise men with all the old familiar chestnuts of the schools.[37] In the older accounts, however, it is by the light of revelation that he arrives at a knowledge of the truth.[38] But all emphasize that sublime independence which alone qualifies Abraham to stand "as the most pivotal and strategic man in the course of world history."[39]

When Nimrod's army got back to Babylon, they found that Abraham had already arrived there before them, miraculously transported by the angel Gabriel, and was busy going about preaching the True God to the people, including his own family, who were duly shocked and alarmed: "Who rules me?" he asked his mother. "I do," she replied. "And who is your lord?" "Azar [Terah] your father." And who is the Lord of Azar?" "Nemrod." "And who is the Lord of Nemrod?" "It is dangerous to ask more!"[40] To counteract Abraham's dangerous influence, which was already undermining his authority, Nimrod, on the advice of his public relations experts, decided to hold a great seven-day feast at which all were required to be in attendance. The officious Terah brought his son to court "to worship Nimrod in his palace," but instead the youth disputed with the doctors and rebuked Nimrod for not acknowledging God's authority, and when he placed his hand upon the throne of the king, he caused it to shake violently, so that Nimrod and all his court fell on their faces in terror. After lying paralyzed for the space of two hours, the chastened Nimrod raised his head and asked, "Is it thy voice, O Abraham, or the voice of thy God?" And when he learned the truth he declared, "Verily, the God of Abraham is a great and powerful God, the King of kings."[41] So Abraham was allowed to depart and secretly spent the next 39 years studying with Noah and Shem.[42]

Thus Nimrod was again bested in his great debate with Abraham on the subject of divine authority. At their first face-to-face meeting, Nimrod cried out to the youth: "My power is greater than that of your God!" And when Abraham observed that his God had power to give life or death, Nimrod in reply uttered his terrible and blasphemous boast: "It is I who give life, and I who take it away!" and demonstrated to Abraham that he had the power to spare the life of a prisoner, subject, or any other human being, or to take it, as he chose. This was the secret of his ancestor Cain and was anciently regarded as the ultimate blasphemy, the unholy power of the man with the gun (Nimrod's bow) to take or spare life as he chooses. The point of the story, as Schutzinger observes, is that Nimrod is the reverse image of Abraham in everything, being "a projection of the sins of Canaan."[43] At their first meeting, Nimrod even offered to make Abraham his successor if he would only bow down and worship him—familiar motif![44] And of course Nimrod is haunted by dreams in which he sees Abraham push him from his throne.[45] According to the Midrash, Abraham and Nimrod are the arch-types of the righteous and the wicked in this world.[46] The two wage a whole series of combats, with Nimrod always the challenger, culminating in his mad attempt

to fly to heaven (or reach it by his tower) and dispatch the God of Abraham with his arrow. But always his monstrous pretention collapses ludicrously and pitifully; his flying machine falls, breaking his arms and legs; his throne collapses; his tower is overthrown by a wind or an earthquake, and so forth. The classic conclusion is when God sends a tiny gnat (the weakest and poorest of creatures) up the mighty Nimrod's nose while he is asleep to tickle his brain and so bring insanity and death.[47] Though he must admit Abraham the victor in the contest, even in his humiliation Nimrod stubbornly insists that his opponent has won not by real divine power but only by trickery and magic—for that is the issue: who has the real priesthood.[48] "I have a better right to the city than you," Abraham tells Nimrod in the Antar legend, "because it was the seat of my father and my forefathers, before Canaan came and settled here without right."[49] And so the issue is drawn, each accusing the other of being a false ruler and usurper.

The real showdown with Nimrod began with the affair of the idols, the most famous episode from the youth of Abraham. In *Jubilees,* Terah secretly agrees with his son in deploring the worship of idols; but like many another, he is afraid to buck public opinion and advises Abraham to keep his thoughts to himself and avoid trouble.[50] But Abraham was of sterner stuff and protested in public and in private against the errors of the time, so that he finally had to leave home: ". . . thinking of his father's anger, left him and went from the house."[51] As long as he was in Mesopotamia, "the people of the Chaldeans and other peoples of Mesopotamia raised a tumult against him";[52] in particular "the wise men of Chaldea attacked Abraham, our father, for his belief."[53] It was Abraham against the whole society: "When the people of the land led astray, every man after his own devices, Abraham believed in me and was not led aside after them."[54]

Archæology has shown in our own day "that Abraham the iconoclast is not merely a children's tale . . . the extensive findings of Mari gods and goddesses, revealing the elaborate and pervasive cult of idolatry."[55] It was indeed a land of "crass polytheism and demonology, governed by a multitude of priests, diviners, and magicians under the rule of the great temples and their hierarchies. There was no room in that Mesopotamia for an individual who could not join in the worship and in the magical practices of his fellows. Abraham must have felt early the pressing need to remove himself from a stifling environment."[56] This is exactly the situation when the Book of Abraham opens: "In the land of the Chaldeans, at the residence of my father, I, Abraham, saw that it was needful for me to obtain another place of residence." (Abr. 1:1.) "Abraham was alert to the contaminating pagan influence of the ethnic stock from which he came," wrote D. M. Eichhorn,[57] and Leo Trepp reflects that "Abraham's migration established a great principle: to follow the truth is better than culture . . . the motto of Jewish history."[58] We must bear in mind in reading the reflections of modern Jewish scholars on the subject that "nowhere in Genesis is there reference to a battle with idolatry, nor do the patriarchs ever appear as reproaching their contemporaries for idolatry. The tension between Israel and the pagan world arises first with Moses."[59] Thus, the opening verses of the Book of Abraham strike off in a direction completely unfamiliar to biblical tradition.

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[1]Klaus Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hor," *Dialogue,* Vol. 3, No. 3 (Autumn 1968), pp. 111, 133.
[2]R. de Vaux, in *Revue Biblique,* Vol. 72 (1965), p. 27.
[3]F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *The Biblical History of the Hebrews* (Cambridge, 1917), p. 22.
[4]F. M. Th. Boehl, in *Ex Oriente Lux,* Vol. 17 (1963), p. 126, noting that Genesis 14 is a surviving fragment of this lost literature.
[5]N. Avigad & Y. Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1956), p. 23: "The scroll explains the story of Sarai and the King of Egypt in a manner different from that of all the midrashim on the subject . . . . this interesting legend which is not found in Midrashic or Apocryphal literature and of which there is no other version known to us, should be studied very thoroughly," coming from the same Essene and Ebionite environment as the Dead Sea Scrolls are the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and the *Testament of Abraham;* also first appearing in this century are the *Cave of Treasures* and the writings on Abraham by Ka'ab al-Akhbar. First published in 1956 in A. Jellinek's *Bat-ha-Midrasch* are the *Ma'ase Abraham,* an inportant *Midrash on Abraham Our Father,* and a *History of Abraham* from the Pentateuch Commentary of Bekhayi ben Ashi.
[6]G. Widengren, in S. H. Hooke (ed.), *Myth, Ritual and Kingship* (Oxford, 1958), p. 158.
[7]O. Eissfeldt, in *Ex Oriente Lux,* Vol. 17 (1963), p. 160.
[8]Martin Buber, in *Judaism,* Vol. 5 (1956), p. 291. By the time of World War I, "practically all scholars of standing in Europe and America considered these stories fictitious."—S. H. Horn, in *Christianity Today,* Vol. 12 (1968), p. 925.
[9]G. von Rad, in *Expository Times,* Vol. 72 (1960), p. 215.
[10]M. Mauss, in *Revue des Etudes Juives,* Vol. 82 (1926), p. 35.
[11]W. F. Albright, in *Christianity Today,* Vol. 12 (1968), p. 917.
[12]E. A. W. Budge, cited in *Era,* Vol. 16 (1914), p. 342.
[12a]Rev. William Hales, *A New Analysis of Chronology and Geography, History and Prophecy* (London, 1830) in 4 volumes, was the most complete and conscientious work available to contemporaries of Joseph Smith. None of the Oriental sources of episodes of the Abraham story appear in this work. It would have been of no help whatever in writing the Book of Abraham.
[13]L. C. Zucker, in *Dialogue,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Summer 1968), p. 44.
[14]*Ibid.,* pp. 47-48.
[15]Rabbi Nissim Wernick, *A Critical Analysis of the Book of Abraham in the Light of Extra-Canonical Jewish Writings* (BYU dissertation in the Department of Religious Instruction, 1968).
[16]A. Gardiner, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology,* Vol. 11 (1925), pp. 3-4.
[17]We discuss this theme later. A classic instance is found at the beginning of the Neferhotep story, with the king and his court diligently searching the archives; M. Pieper, *Die grosse Inschrift des Koenigs Neferhotep in Abydos* (Leipzig, 1929). "The impression made on the modern mind is that of a people searching in the dark for a key to truth . . . retaining all lest perchance the appropriate one should be lost"—I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt* (Penguin Books, 1952), pp. 27f.
[18]A useful collection and discussion of this phase of the story in H. Schützinger, *Ursprung und Entwicklung der arabischen Abraham-Nimrod Legende* (Bonn: Oriental. Seminar, 1961), p. 23. The most instructive single source is the *Maase Abraham* in A. Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrasch* (3rd ed., Jerusalem, 1967), Vol. 1, pp. 25-34; cf. 118-19. The most valuable Arabic version is Ka'f al-Akhbar, Qissah Ibrahim Abinu, in *Revue des Etudes Juives,* Vol. 7 (1920), pp. 37ff. The completest collection of Abraham apocrypha is by M. J. bin Gorion, *Die Sagen der Juden* (Frankfurt, 1919ff.); the Abraham material is mostly in Vol. 2, 1914.
[19]*The Cave of Treasures* (by Ephraim the Syrian), 25:7-9, 11-14.
[20]L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1908-1938), Vol. 1, p. 202. This is all from the *Ma'ase Abraham.*
[21]*Ibid.,* p. 188.
[22]W. G. Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms* (Yale University, 1959), Ps. 118:11.
[23]Koran, Sura 21:53-55. Traditions recorded in the Koran often go back to very ancient independent Jewish sources; G. Abrahams, *The*

Jewish Mind (Boston: Beacon, 1962), p. 49, n. 1.
[24]*Cave of Treasures*, 25:7-9.
[25]*Book of Jubilees*, 11:2-5.
[26]Theodore Reik, *Pagan Rites in Judaism* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1964), pp. 31, 35-39.
[27]R. de Vaux, in *Revue Biblique*, Vol. 72 (1965), pp. 7-8.
[28]W. F. Albright, in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 54 (1935), p. 179, cf. pp. 193-203.
[29]C. Gordon, *Before the Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 257.
[30]A. Wuensche, *Der Midrasch Bereschit Rabba* (Leipzig, 1881), p. 175. The ten generations of silence followed the first ten generations of Patriarchs, F. Hommel, in *Bibl. Arch. Soc. Proc.*, Vol. 15 (1893), p. 243. A much-discussed topic among the Rabbis was, "When did the Fathers cease to be worthy?" *Sabb.*, fol. 55a.
[31]*Sefer ha-Yashar*, c. 24-27, citing *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, Ch. 26 (G. Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* [New York: Hermon, 1965]). The Pseudo-Enoch makes Terah a flood-hero, according to S. Kraeling, in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 66 (1947), p. 292, whose "name could be an abridgment of Atrabasis or Atarhasis," the Babylonian flood hero. In Arabic sources, Terah is regularly called Azar.
[32]Cave stories are collected by B. Beer, *Leben Abraham's* (Leipzig, 1859), pp. 2ff, 102; B. Chapira, in *Revue des Etudes Juives*, Vol. 69 (1919), p. 95; B. Heller, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, Vol. 85 (1928), p. 117; Noel & Millin, *Dizionario*, Vol. 1, p. 33. The motif is part of the tradition of divine kingship, G. Binder, *Die Aussetzung des Königskinds Kyros und Romulus* (Meisenheim/Glau: Hain, 1964), p. 27. *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, Vol. 26, p. 187, says "he was hidden underground for 13 years without seeing the sun or moon."
[33]S. *ha-Yashar*, 24-27; *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, Ch. 26; B. Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[34]Sources in Beer, p. 3 (with notes); B. Chapira, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-96, 103; L. Wolf, *Falasha Anthology* (Yale University, 1951), p. 26; Tha'labi, *Qissas al-Anbiya* (Cairo, 1921), p. 51. On the importance of Tha'labi as an early Jewish source, see H. Nibley, in *Revue de Qumran*, Vol. 18 (1965), pp. 177f.
[35]It is even said that God "appointed the two reins of Abraham to act as two teachers and that they . . . taught him wisdom every night," J. Goldin, *The Fathers According to Rabba Nathan* (Yale University, 1955), p. 131.
[36]*Bereshit Rabba*, 39:1; see E. S. Speiser, in *Israel Exploration Journal*, Vol. 8 (1957), p. 21.
[37]A. Cohen, *Everyman's Talmud* (New York: Dutton, 1949), pp. 1-2; B. Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 86; Tha'labi, *op. cit.*, p. 52; *Koran*, 6:79f.
[38]Convinced that his father was in error, "he began to pray to the Creator of all things that he might save him from the errors of the children

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Richard L. Evans

The Spoken Word

Some laws too seldom considered . . .

In our concern for liberty, and law, and lawlessness, and what is or isn't legal or moral or permissible, there sometimes seems to be too much complexity. The endless process of passing many laws and the endless legal quibbling and contention suggest the need for something simpler—something too seldom considered—even something seldom if ever read or seldom heard by some: something such as the Ten Commandments. While they may not cover all the intricacies of modern life, they do provide the basic principles. "And the Lord came down . . . and . . . called Moses up to the top of the mountain. . . . And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him . . . saying:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. . . .
"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them. . . .
"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. . . .
"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
"Thou shalt not kill.
"Thou shalt not commit adultery.
"Thou shalt not steal.
"Thou shalt not bear false witness. . . .
"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, . . . thy neighbour's wife, . . . nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

"And all the people answered together, and said, all that the Lord hath spoken we will do. . . . And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, . . . that ye sin not. . . . And the Lord said, . . . Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven."[1] It is nowhere written, that we know of, that these principles have been repealed—but only added unto, so far as we are aware. And despite all technicalities, all attempt to dispute, to dilute, to rationalize the law, these are the commandments God has given—these, with others from the same source—which would make a good place to begin to solve our problems, to heal the heartaches, to halt the violence, to clean out the clutter of sin, and to quiet the sorrow in the lives of perplexed people. This is the way; this is the counsel God has given.

[1]See Exodus 19, 20.

*"The Spoken Word" from Temple Square, presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System October 20, 1968. ©1968.

of men," *Jubilees*, 11:16f. The early sources of Abraham's conversion are given in G. H. Box, *Apocalypse of Abraham* (1918), pp. 89-96. "But how Abraham became a worshipper of the Lord, or why God singled him out . . . is left to surmise," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 85.

[39]J. M. Adams, *Ancient Records and the Bible* (Nashville, 1946), p. 187. The whole world was in error "until Abraham came and preached the doctrine of immortality," *Nishmat Chayim*, fol. 171.

[40]H. Schutzinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-87; B. Chapira, *op. cit.*, p. 96; *Ma'ase Abraham*, in *Bait ha-Midrash*, Vol. 1, pp. 25ff. The dialogue is in Noel, *Dizionario*, Vol. 1, p. 33.

[41]*Ma'ase Abraham*, in *B. H. M.*, Vol. 1, pp. 24-30; L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 194; Beer, *Leben Abraham's*, p. 5, citing P. R. Eliezer and Jubilees; a twelfth century geniza, cited by B. Chapira, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[42]Beer, *loc. cit.*, citing P. R. Eliezer and S. Hayashar.

[43]Schützinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 93f, 113f, 126; Tha'labi, pp. 52-53. For sources on Nimrod's boast, Chapira, *REJ*, Vol. 69, p. 106; discussed by us in *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 2, (1949), pp. 339ff.

[44]Schutzinger, p. 178; cf. F. Weber, *System der altsynagogalen Palästinischen Theologie* (Leipzig, 1880), p. 257.

[45]W. G. Braude, *Midrash*, on Ps. 1, 13.

[46]For the series of combats, Schützinger, pp. 96-100, 38f, 110f; for Nimrod's childishness, G. Weil, *Biblische Legenden der Muselmänner* (Frankfurt, 1845), pp. 51f. Sources for the gnat story are given by D. Sidersky, *Origines des Legendes Mussulmanes dans le Coran et dans les Vies des Prophetes* (Paris, 1933), p. 41.

[47]Sidersky, *loc. cit.* Cf. the fallen Goliath's protest that he has been tricked, in the *Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, Vol. 61, p. 8 (ed. M. R. James, London: SPCK, 1917), p. 235. Terrified by Abraham's challenge, Nimrod cries, "This man is crazy—take him away!" though he is the crazy one; Schützinger, p. 38.

[48]*Antar*, cited by Schützinger, p. 103.

[49]*Jubilees*, 12:1ff, 6, 8.

[50]L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 211.

[51]G. H. Box, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, p. 88.

[52]Rab. Saadia, quoted by A. Franck, *The Kabbala* (Hyde Park, N.Y., 1967), p. 31.

[53]*Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, Vol. 23, p. 5.

[54]E. Feldman, in *Tradition*, Vol. 7 (1965), p. 72.

[55]M. H. Segal, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 52 (1961), p. 45.

[56]D. M. Eichhorn, *Conversion to Judaism* (New York: Ktav, 1965/6), p. 14.

[57]L. Trepp, *Eternal Father, Eternal People* (Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 5.

[58]A. D. Matthews, in *Church Quarterly Review*, 1965, p. 141.

If I Were Satan

By S. Dilworth Young

If I were Satan,
I would not need
To be on hand to win
My cause.
I'd need but to pause
Long enough
To whisper in an ear
Some envious thought,
Or some thin hint
Of greedy gain
From some advantage bought
By bribing men.

I'd hint but once about
seduction,
Or power from a rigged
election.

From then the evil men
Of earth, of their free will—
God's gift, not mine, perverted
To my purposes—
Would win the world for me,
And circumvent the work
Of God and Christ.

enjoy a unique RENT-FREE vacation

. . . anywhere in the world!

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The Unknown Abraham

A New Look at The Pearl of Great Price
Part 7
(Continued)

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

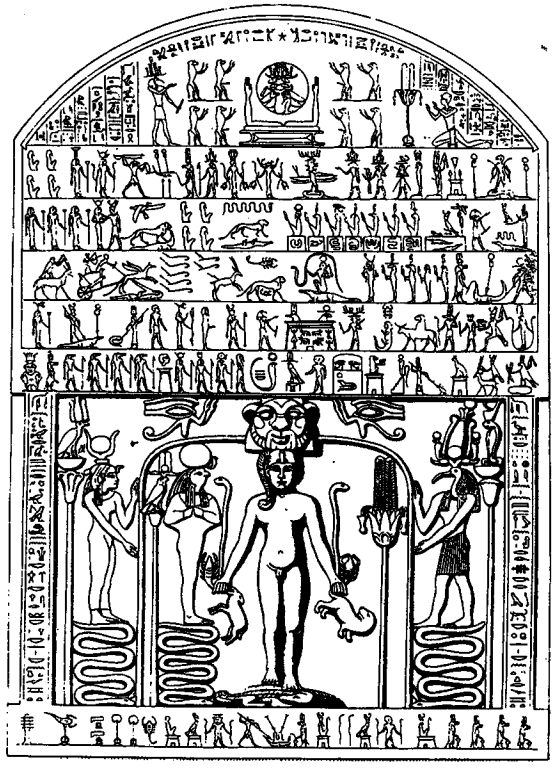
● Abraham's particular objections, according to the Pearl of Great Price account, were to idolatry and human sacrifice, which went together in the system, ". . . offering up their children unto their dumb idols, and hearkened not unto my voice, but endeavored to take away my life. . . ." (Abr. 1:7.) According to the traditions, "in the days of Terah the people began to sacrifice their children to the Devils and to worship images."[60] In one account Abraham sees a vision of human sacrifice on an altar and receives the surprising explanation: "This is God's temple, but the image in it is my wrath against the people who sprung from me, and the officiating priest is he who allures people to murderous sacrifices."[61] The episode might almost be illustrated by our own Facsimile 1. It was in the days of Serug, Abraham's great-grandfather, that the people "began to look upon the stars, and began to prognosticate by them and to make divination, and to make their sons and daughters pass through the fires."[62] So here they were, as the Book of Abraham reports, "offering up their children unto their dumb idols (Abr. 1:7), with Abraham protesting and thereby getting himself into serious trouble. Nimrod's sacrifice of 70,000 babies may well be an echo of the practice, and have nothing to do with the story of Herod.

A recent study of J. G. Fervier quotes an ancient source describing how the sacrificing was carried out, and traces the survival of the atrocious practices among Semitic peoples right down to the end of the ancient world. Indeed, there has been considerable discussion in recent years as to whether the sacrifice of Isaac is not itself clear evidence of a custom of human sacrifice prevailing in Abraham's time, a custom to which he put an end.[63] As the rite is described in the Fervier document, the parents would "hand the child to a priest who would dispatch it in a mystic manner, i.e. according to a special rite; after the child had passed down the length of a special trench . . . then he placed the victim on the extended hands of the divine statue, from which it rolled into a brazier to be consumed by fire," while the crowd went wild.[64] It is not a pretty picture. Indeed, Albright finds the picture in Egypt shortly after this time "singularly repulsive. . . . Ritual prostitution . . . was rampant. . . . Snake worship and human sacrifice were rife."[64]

Abraham's two attacks on the idols are both very well attested in the documents. In one story the hero at the age of 10 or 12 or 20 or 40 or 50 or 60 goes forth to sell the idols that his father and brother have made, in order to help out the stringent finances of the family; in discussing things with his customers, he points out to them the folly of worshiping "dumb idols" made by men and ends up converting some of them and even dragging the idols in the dirt.[65] In the other story Abraham arises by night and burns all the idols in the shop, and even the house and family! This, according to some, was when the lukewarm Nahor, the brother of Abraham, who had announced that he would wait to see who came out on top in the struggle between Abraham and Nimrod and declare his allegiance to the winner, was burned to death trying to put out the fire.[66] But the most common version has Abraham plead sickness when the family goes off to the great festival at Nimrod's palace; and being left behind and finding himself alone with the idols, he destroys them. Terah on his return is enraged, and Nimrod even more so when he learns what has happened; but Abraham answers all questions by insisting that the idols fought among themselves and destroyed each other—if the objection to that is that the idea is impossible and absurd, then Abraham's accusers have called the idols helpless with their own mouths.[67] This is the sort of clever Aggadah that the schoolmen love; in one tradition Abraham goes right into the national shrine and smashes idols;[68] the soberest version is that of Maimonides, that Abraham when he was 40 "began to refute the inhabitants of Ur of the Chaldees. . . . He broke the images and commenced to instruct the people. When he had prevailed over them with arguments, the king sought to slay him. He was miraculously saved and emigrated to Haran."[69] The stories of selling the idols

or smashing them in the shop or the shrine may be regarded as aetological tales (Aggadah), explaining how it was that Abraham came to argue with the people, and how he finally came to his dramatic confrontation with Nimrod. Everything leads up to that.

At first Nimrod tried to silence Abraham by locking him up in prison to starve to death. There Gabriel sustained him for ten days, or an entire year—or for three years or seven or ten.[70] Maimonides says that Abraham continued to combat false doctrine while in prison, so that the king finally had to banish him to Syria after confiscating all his property.[71] But the usual story is that Abraham was taken out of prison

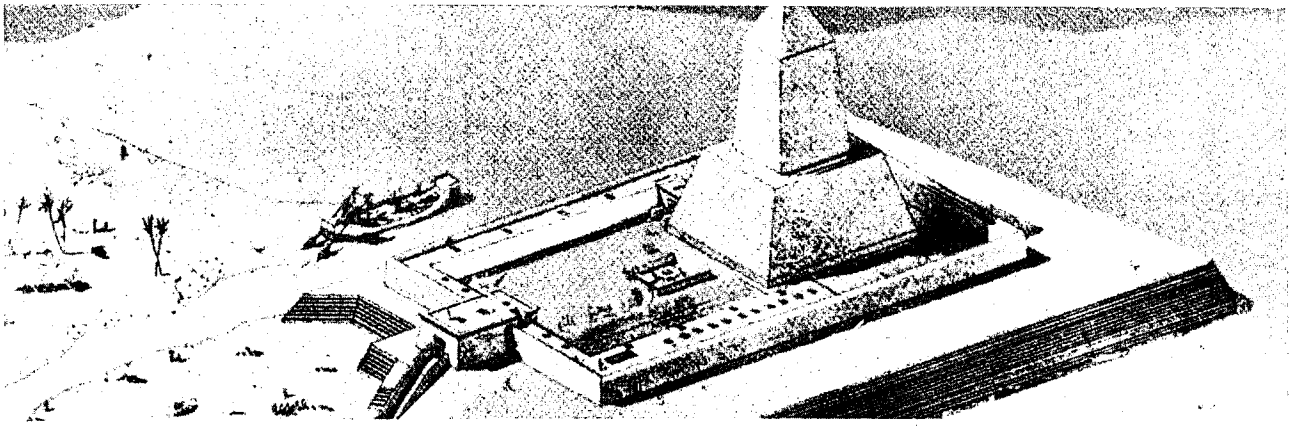


The Metternich Stele, containing dramatic episodes from the childhood of Horus that closely match legendary accounts of the infancy of Abraham.

only to be delivered for sacrifice. It is said that with the aid of Jectan, a sympathetic official in the court of Nimrod, 12 of Abraham's companions who were in the prison with him were able to escape to the mountains, "until the anger of the populace should cool," but Abraham refused to escape with them.[72] Abraham was to pay for his opposition to the local cult by himself becoming a sacrificial victim of that cult. According to the Book of Abraham, he was not the first to be punished in such a manner, for "this priest had offered upon this altar three virgins at one time . . . because of their virtue; they would not bow down to worship gods of wood or of stone, therefore they were killed upon this altar, and it was done after the manner of the Egyptians" (Abr. 1:11); accordingly "the priests laid violence upon me, that they might slay me also, as they did those virgins upon this altar. . . ." (Abr. 1:12.) The three virgins, we are assured, were "of the royal descent directly from the loins of Ham . . . and it was done after the manner of the Egyptians." (Abr. 1:11.) It is necessary to specify this last point repeatedly, because the drama is unfolding not in Egypt but in Canaan, and indeed the particular rites we are discussing seem to have been common to Egypt and Syria if not the whole Near East.[73] What rites? Rites in which young women were obviously supposed to act as hierodules.

One of the oldest Abraham sources reports that it was Nimrod's *courtesans* who persuaded him to get the best of Abraham by inviting him to attend a great year-feast that the king and his court were wont to celebrate in the territory of Koutha-Rya, but that Abraham refused to come, pleading sickness.[74] This gives us the larger ritual setting of the drama—the now well-known year-rites in which we are on more or less familiar ground. Then while Abraham was in prison for his recalcitrance, the courtesans and the court again met for the year-feast, and this time they advised Nimrod to make a sacrifice of Abraham by throwing him into an immense brazier.[74] It is interesting that in the Egyptian royal rites it is the lady and courtesan Hathor who advises the king to sacrifice his enemies: As the throat of the victim is cut, Horus (the king) says: "I have slain thine enemies who are massacred by thy knife . . . slain upon thine altar!" To this the lady replies: "Your Majesty! I burn . . . thine enemies. This is Hathor . . . the Lady of Heaven, *Wsrt* the burning flame against thine enemies."[75]

Classical writers have described Egyptian sacrifical rites as witnessed in various lands. In Ethiopia, Achilles Tatius reports, a virgin with hands bound behind was led around an altar by a priest chanting an Egyptian hymn; then "all retired from the altar at a distance," the maiden was tied down, and a sword was first plunged into her heart and then slashed her lower abdomen from side to side, after which the remains were burned, cut to pieces, and eaten.[76] The Pseudo-Plutarch tells how the first Pharaoh in bad years was ordered by the oracle to sacrifice his own daughter and in grief threw himself into the Nile.[77] This may be an indication of the antiquity of the rite. As Heliodorns explains it, the Egyptians of the late period selected their sacrificial virgins from among people of non-Egyptian birth, and so the Greek heroine of Heliodorus's romance is chosen to be sacrificed to Osiris. The rule was that men were sacri-



The famous shrine of the sun god Re at Abusir. The sun-stone stands upon an artificial mound or hill, before which stands an altar. The setting is like that described in Abraham 1:8-10.

ficed to the sun (so Abraham, in Abr. 1:9), women to the moon, and virgins to Osiris, equated here to Bacchus.[79] Here the girls are plainly meant as consorts of the god, in the usual ritual marriage of the year-rite, common to Egypt and Syria.[80] Indeed, there is a legend that Nimrod's own daughter Radha fell in love with Abraham and tried to come to him in the sacrificial fire.[80] The name is interesting; since Rhodha, Rhodopis, a name popularly given the Sphinx in late times, was the Egyptian sacred hierodule.[80] This is a reminder that from the 21st Dynasty onwards, the title "God's Wife," formerly reserved for the wife of the Pharaoh, was "transferred to a king's daughter who became the consecrated wife of the Theban god, and to whom human intercourse was strictly forbidden."[81] This was "the line of virgin priestesses . . . who enjoyed a position which at Thebes was virtually royal. . . ."[82] So here we have the august virgins of the royal line set apart as spouses of the god, and as such expected to engage in those activities which would make them ritual hierodules. Strabo says that "the Egyptians sanctified the fairest princess, a virgin of the royal line, to be a hierodule until her physical purfication, after which she could marry."[83] Here is plain indication that such princesses "of the royal descent" as described in Abraham 1:11 were expected to jeopardize their virtue, and if they refused to do so they could still be forcibly dispatched in the manner of the hierodules. Herodotus and Diodorus tell of the king of Egypt named Pheros (here Pharaoh is actually the *name* of the king) who exactly like Nimrod desired to rule not only the human race but the elements as well, and was chastised for his presumption with blindness. A seer from Bouto told the king that his only hope of cure would be through a woman of perfect and proven virtue. The king's wife failed the test and so did many others: only one woman passed with flying colors and the king married her, subjecting all the pretenders to a sacrificial death "in the city of the Red Soil."[84]

According to Wainwright, the ladies in the story represent the "spirit of fertility . . . an adulteress is one in whom this spirit is emphatically incarnate."[85] In the annual fertility rites, Wainwright explains, royal princesses, even the queen herself, were expected to function as courtesans.[85] The rationale for such behavior has become household knowledge since Frazer—we need not expatiate on it here. An example would be Nephthys, "a fertility goddess of the Old Religion, and very reminiscent of [the later] Nitocris, who . . . accomplished the sacrifice in the fire . . . and was later thought to have been a courtesan. Seshat [the king's private secretary] was one of her forms." In the beginning she was no less than the Mother Goddess herself, and as such, consort to the king.[86] In short, "after the manner of the Egyptians" royal princesses sacrificed both their virtue and their lives on ritual occasions as indicated in the Book of Abraham.

In the Jewish legends are a number of remarkable parallels. Thus, a Pharaoh who treats Moses exactly as Nimrod does Abraham, who builds a great tower, as does Nimrod, which falls as does Nimrod's, who is alarmed by Moses's preaching against him and puts to death Moses's converts, etc., sacrificed his own daughter "because she no longer honored him as a god"—again the uncooperative virgin put to death.[87] One thinks here of the daughter of Nimrod with the Egyptian name of Ratha who fell in love with Abraham, a treasonable virgin if there ever was one, and sought to join him in the sacrificial flame. Most suggestive is the account of how the three virgin daughters of Lot were sacrificed ("burnt upon a pyre") in Sodom because the eldest of them would not follow the wicked customs of the land.[88] The first daughter was called Paltit, a name that clearly designates her as set apart to be a ritual hierodule.[89] According to the Book of Jubilees, Tamar (a doublet of Paltit) was condemned to death by fire for playing the harlot with Judah, "according to the judgment of Abraham."[90] The *three* virgins remind one of the three daughters of Minyas who, when they refused to join in the Dionysian revels, were driven mad, one even devouring her own son in a cannibalistic rite of human sacrifice.[91]

Diligent research into the pattern of ritual and myth in the ancient Near East has made it clear just what

sort of goings on are here indicated; but until the efforts of the Cambridge School began to introduce some sort of sense and order into a scene of wild and meaningless confusion, such passages as those about the virgins in the Book of Abraham could only appear as the most wanton fantasy: "Now, this priest had offered upon this altar three virgins at one time . . . because of their virtue; they would not bow down to worship gods of wood or of stone . . . and it was done after the manner of the Egyptians." (Abr. 1:11.) What nonsense, to be sure—but historical nonsense just the same.

The ancient and honorable designation of Abraham as "he who came forth from the fire of the Chaldees" has been explained by almost anybody who has had access to a Hebrew dictionary as a misunderstanding of the expression "Ur of the Chaldees." Thus, one of the latest commentators writes, "Ur of the Chaldees, not then known to be a place-name [!], was translated by the Rabbis into 'the fire of Chaldea. . . .'"[92] But the fiery element is not so easily brushed aside; references to sacrificial fires in the Abraham traditions (such as the Haran episode and the story of the fire-bricks) are much too numerous and explicit and the historical parallels too many and too obvious to be traceable to the misunderstanding of a single monosyllable.[93] The constant references to both the sacrificial knife and the fire make no difficulty, however, since the normal procedure in human and animal sacrifice in Egypt as elsewhere was to cut the victim's throat and then cast the remains on the fire.[94] H. Kees notes that the Typhonian enemy of Osiris is always slaughtered and then burned, both rites being considered sacrificial.[95] In the Levitical sacrifices, the *zebah* (with the knife) and the *kalil* or *'ola* (holocaust) did not usually go together,[96] but then Abraham is careful to specify that everything he is reporting is "after the manner of the *Egyptians*." There is evidence that the Egyptians practiced dedicating victims by passing them through the fire, and even knew the practice of ritual fire-walking.[97] This point deserves mention because of the peculiar persistence of strange fire-motifs in the story of Abraham, biblical and legendary. It is interesting, however, that the Book of Abraham makes no mention of fire in connection with the attempted sacrifice of Abraham; the *earliest* sources likewise make no mention of it and nearly all scholars agree that it is a later addition.[98] ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[90]*Cave of Treasures*, 20:10.
[91]*Apocalypse of Abraham*, Vol. 25, pp. 2-7.
[92]*Philo's Biblical Antiquities*, Vol. 4, p. 16.
[93]Already in the seventeenth century H. Witsius, *Aegyptiaca* (Herborn in Nassau, 1717), p. 299, saw the main theme of the Abraham story to be "God's disapproval of human sacrifice among the Phoenicians, Egyptians, and surrounding people." The theme is much discussed today, e.g. A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (New York: Henry Holt, 1932), p. 3; D. S. Shapiro, in *Tradition*, Vol. 4 (1962), p. 218.
[94]J. G. Fervier, in *Revue des Etudes Juives*, Vol. 3 (1964), p. 16.
[95]Beer, pp. 9ff; Chapira, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, Vol. 69, pp. 97f; E. A. W. Budge, *Kebra Nagast* . . . (British Museum, 1922), pp. 9-11.
[96]According to Jubilees, this was when Abraham was 60 years old, *Jubilees*, 12:12-14.
[97]Tha'alabi, p. 53, on *Koran*, 37:90-93; 21:56-61; *Maase Abraham* b. Elia Cohn, in Beer, pp. 13-14; *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 5:4, 9-11; 6:7, etc.
[98]*Apocalypse of Abraham*, 1:3-6.
[99]Cited by N. N. Glazer, in *Faith and Knowledge*, 1963, p. 37.
[70]Ginsberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 199 (1 year); *Babba Bathra*, fol. 21a (10 years); Beer, p. 14, for the other lengths of time.
[71]Maimonides, *Dalalat*. III, xxix (ed. O. Zeller, Osnabruck, 1964), Vol. 3, p. 20.
[72]*Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, Vol. 6, pp. 5-15. In contrast, the 12 servants of the hesitant Haran were consumed by fire, *Bet ha-Midrash*, Vol. 1, pp. 32-34.
[73]G. Rinaldi, in *Aegyptus*, Vol. 34 (1954), pp. 193-210.
[74]Cit. Chapira, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, Vol. 68, pp. 98-99.
[75]Philo Derchain, *Le Sacrifice de l'Oryx* (Brussels: Fondation Reine Elisabeth, 1962), p. 43.
[76]Achilles Tatius, Vol. 3, p. 15. Among the Scythian Taurians, "a princely stranger . . . is killed with a sword by the goddess's virgin priestess; and she throws the corpse into the sacred fire," though some say it is not the priestess that does the killing. The rite was Egyptian, and the sources are given in Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Penguin Books, 1955), Vol. 2, pp. 74, 77.
[77]Ps. Plutarch. *De fluviis*, Vol. 16, p. 1 (in Th. Hopfner, *Fontes Historiae Religionis Aegyptiacae* [Bonn, 1922], Vol. I, p. 397).
[78]Heliodorus, Vol. 1, p. 18; Vol. 10, pp. 7-8; discussed by Lefebure, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 36 (1915), p. 275.
[79]G. Rinaldi, in *Aegyptus*, Vol. 34 (1954), pp. 193-210.
[80]B. Beer, *Leben Abrahams*, p. 112.
[81]A. H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford, 1961), p. 343.
[82]J. W. B. Barns, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 52 (1966), p. 191.
[83]Strabo, *Geography*, Vol. 17, p. 1 (816).
[84]Herodotus, *History*, Vol. 2, p. 111; Diodorus, *Lib.*, Vol. 1, p. 59. It is interesting that Herodotus calls the place of sacrifice "Red Soil," while Diodorus calls it "Sacred soil," indicating access to separate—and Egyptian—sources, since the words for "red" and "sacred" are the same in Egyptian in this case, *dsr.t*.
[85]G. A. Wainwright, *The Sky-Religion in Egypt* (Cambridge Univ., 1938), pp. 89-90.
[86]Wainwright, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 26 (1941), pp. 30-31.
[87]G. Weil, *Biblical Legends of the Muslims*, p. 120.
[88]*Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, Vol. 25, pp. 182-85; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 255; B. Beer, *Leben Abrahams*, p. 41. Another virgin, the daughter of Admah, was ritually executed (stung to death by bees) for refusing to conform to the evil practices of the Sodomites, Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 250. In some versions it is Lot who refuses to participate in the orgies, and to purchase immunity he offers both the virtue and the lives of his daughters; bin Gurion, *Sagen der Juden*, Vol. 2, pp. 220-23, 226-28. Also, Abraham's first convert was a woman who denounced Nimrod as a fraud and was sacrificed; Maase Abraham, in *Bet ha-Midrasch*, Vol. 1, p. 31.
[89]Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 249. Paltit is the same as Palakis, whence the name Bilqis, borne by the Queen of Sheba as royal companion of Solomon in a large cycle of tales dealing with ritual prostitution.
[90]*Jubilees*, 41:28. The Tomyris of the Cyrus story, Herodotus, Vol. 1, pp. 205f, 212-14, is the Bilqis (Tadmor-T amar) of the Solomon cycle, in Tha'labi, pp. 216ff (also published in Brunnow's *Arabic Chrestomathy*).
[91]R. Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Vol. 1, p. 105, citing Plutarch, *Greek Questions*, p. 38. The Minyans were people living in the area of Sodom and Gomorrah.
[92]G. Abrahams, *The Jewish Mind*, p. 49.
[93]Abraham was thrown into a furnace of fire-bricks for refusing to make fire-bricks; *Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, Vol. 6, pp. 3-5. G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, Vol. 2, p. 106, notes suspicious parallels between Nimrod's furnace and the three youths in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace—both were in the Plain of Dura. J. Garstang, in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 8, p. 146, discusses the ritual conflagrations in the brick royal tombs of the 20th Dynasty.
[94]Lefebure, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 36, p. 283; a typical instance is given in Herodotus, Vol. 2, p. 40. Amon's enemies are slaughtered each morning on a sacrificial block at the place of burning, S. Morenz, in *Aegypt. Ztschr.*, Vol. 82 (1958), pp. 63f; the adversary is pierced with a spear and "hurled into a fiery pit daily," E. A. W. Budge, *Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum* (1910), Pt. 1, Col. ii, pp. 14-18; the main year rites of the Egyptians were called "the Great Burning" and "the Little Burning," according to A. H. Gardinaie, *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 10 (1955), p. 29. In Babylonia the cutting of the throat and sacrifice by burning "seem to have been in use absolutely contemporaneously," E. D. VanBuren, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 24 (1955), p. 30.
[95]H. Kees, *Totenglauben . . . der alten Aegypten* (Leipzig, 1926), pp. 44-45, noting however that royal cremation was an "unegyptian" practice.
[96]J. G. Fervier, in *Revue des Etudes Juives*, Vol. 3 (1964), p. 9.
[97]G. Jequier, in *Receuil de Travaux*, Vol. 32 (1910), p. 169; L. Koenen, in *Chroniques d'Egypt*, Vol. 37 (1962), pp. 167-74; and *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 27 (1941), pp. 139f; G. A. Wainwright, *Sky Religion*, pp. 55, 89, and *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 18 (1932), p. 164.
[98]M. R. James, *Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, p. 46, notes that the older work of Jubilees "seems to show . . . and intentional avoidance" of the fire-theme. B. Beer, *Leben Abrahams*, p. 114, notes the absence of the fire-motif in the earlier versions, and cites Nachmanides as saying that Abraham was rescued "from great danger and from Nimrod in the land of the Chaldees," but that we do not know what the danger was.

A New Look at The Pearl of Great Price
Part 7
(Continued)

The Unknown Abraham

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

Potiphar's Hill: One of the most interesting aspects of the many stories of Abraham's narrow escape from a sacrificial death is the strange and puzzling setting of the drama. There has never been any agreement among commentators as to just where all this is supposed to have happened. The Book of Abraham puts it on Asian soil under Egyptian hegemony. To Dr. John Peters, who had actually supervised archaeological diggings in Babylonia, the overlapping of Egyptian and Chaldean elements in the Book of Abraham "displays an amusing ignorance," since "Chaldeans and Egyptians are hopelessly mixed together, although as dissimilar and remote in language, religion and locality as are today American and Chinese."[1] Though Mercer rushed to the defense of Peters, his unfortunate remark played right into the hands of the Mormons, for with the progress of archaeology, the cultural and religious ties between Egypt and Mesopotamia have become steadily more conspicuous and significant. Within a few years of Peter's pronouncement, Jacques de Morgan entitled an epoch-making study of the early royal tombs of Abydos "The Chaldean Origin of Pharaonic Culture in Egypt."[2] In this vast field of comparative study, all that concerns us here is the situation depicted in Facsimile No. 1, the location of the story being pinpointed for us in graphic detail in Abraham's account.

First we are taken to the far-flung area known as Chaldea (see Abr. 1:20, 30; 2:1), and then to what would seem to be a more limited territory designated as "the land of Chaldea" (Abr. 1:8). The common expression "the land of So-and-so" nearly always limits an area to the region around a particular religious or political center, and this would appear to apply in the present case as the camera brings us closer to a still more limited area within the land of Chaldea, namely "the land of Ur, of Chaldea." (Abr. 1:20.) This is not the well-known city of Ur, for what we see is an open plain, "the plain of Olishem" (Abr. 1:10), and as the camera zooms in still closer we are swept to one end of the plain and our attention is directed to a hill; finally at the foot of the hill we are brought to rest before an altar at which a priest is in the act of making a sacrifice. (Abr. 1:9-11.) According to the other accounts, the plain was full of people at the time, and Abraham was the victim.

Of recent years attention has been drawn increasingly to the significant fact that all the main events of Abraham's life seem to take place at ancient cult-centers.[3] The patriarchs, O. Eissfeldt observes, "seem to have worshipped at established cult-places, where they set up their own altars," and though many problems are raised by this strange situation, the study of those cult places and their activities offers "a great deal that gives the authentic picture of the Patriarchal Age."[4] J. C. L. Gibson suggests that Abraham's family probably only visited Ur as pilgrims, and observes that such a world-famous center of pagan worship offered a peculiarly "appropriate setting . . . for Abraham's confrontation by a God who was greater than Sin. . . ."[5] Professor Albright has pointed out that in all the wanderings and vicissitudes of Abraham's career, "only

The painting "Abraham," by Harry Anderson, is one of several paintings of Old Testament prophets used for display purposes at the Church's visitors centers.

places are mentioned which are known to have been important in the donkey caravan trade of that age."[6] These would also be cult places. But one must distinguish between the daily liturgies of local shrines and temples and the great year-rites at which vast numbers of people assembled. According to all the traditions, it was at the latter type of celebration that Abraham was offered up, and the legends throw some light on the kind of place chosen for the rites. The main fixtures are a plain and an elevation.

In one account we learn that the King of Sodom and the other kings round about used to repair "to the valley of Sava, the place where all the star-worshippers were wont to assemble," and that there on one occasion Abraham was honored by being placed upon a high tower-like structure made of cedar while the people hailed him as "their king, a lord and a god"; Abraham, however, refused to play the game, telling the people that they should take God for their king instead of a mortal.[7] The fact that the people already had kings presiding at the ceremonies, and the ritual setting of the event, including the cedar tower, which ample parallel instances show to be a sacrificial pyre, make it quite clear what kind of king Abraham was expected to be—a substitute and sacrificial king. We are reminded of Abraham the royal victim in Facsimile No. 1, followed by Abraham on the royal throne in Facsimile No. 3. Even more striking is the resemblance to King Benjamin on his tower at the great year-rite of Zarahemla, laying down his office and telling the people that instead of him they should take God for their king.[8] This is another reminder that there are probably far more authentic Hebrew traditions in the Book of Mormon, including extensive quotations from ancient writings (Benjamin's speech is full of them), than anyone has so far suspected.

Another report of what seems to be the same tradition tells us that south of Sodom and Gomorrah there was a broad plain half a day's journey long, where every year the people of the whole region would gather at a spot marked by green meadows and a spring to indulge in four days of promiscuous and orgiastic rites during which every young woman was expected to make herself available to any who approached her.[9] This is the well-known fertility aspect of the year-rite, not overlooked in the Book of Abraham, which tells of princesses being sacrificed "because of their virtue" as part of the ceremonies. (Abr. 1:11.)

In these accounts the setting is typical of the ancient cult-places with their broad "plain of assembly," the elevated mound, hill, or tower (hence pyramid and ziggurat), and the altar for sacrificing. As we have noted, the legends emphasize the importance of having the sacrifice of Abraham take place at the great



New Year assembly, with Abraham as a more or less routine victim, a situation clearly reflected in the Book of Abraham. (Abr. 1:10-12.)

But why *Potiphar's* Hill? As Richards Durham observes, "this would indeed seem (at least in the thinking of a good many adverse critics of Joseph Smith) to be a highly unsophisticated borrowing from Genesis 37:36 . . ."—a desperate attempt to fill up the story with something that sounds Egyptian.[10] But the name is not confined to the Bible and seems to have definite ritual associations.[11] It is found on a small limestone stele of the early 21st Dynasty belonging to one Putiphar and containing also the names of his sons Petusir and Petuneit.[12]

This illustrates well the nature of those names beginning in Petu- Puti- Poti- (eg., *pa-di-*) meaning "given of" or "appointed by" such-and-such a god. Putiphar means "The one whom the god Re has given," or has appointed, while his sons Petusir and Petuneit are the gifts of Osiris and Neith respectively.[12]

Scholars have not been able to agree as to whether the Potiphar who bought Joseph (Gen. 37:36, 39:1) has the same name as the Potiphara whose daughter he married (Gen. 41:45, 40; 46:20). F. Cook suggested that the last syllable of the latter name may refer not to Re but to Pharaoh, "if we take *pr* here in the meaning of the Palace or metaphorically the Sovereign."[13] But it is agreed that the name of Joseph's father-in-law should be "Given of Re" because he was the high priest of Heliopolis or On, the center of prehistoric Egyptian sun worship.[14] The cultic significance of the name is also indicated by its appearance on a sacred w*d*at-eye amulet, cut in Aramaic letters which date it to the end of the seventh century B.C., about the same time as the Ptuiphar stela.[15]

Potiphar's Hill would be "the hill of the one whom Re has given, or appointed," which makes good sense since Re is the sun and we are explicitly told that Potiphar's Hill was a sun shrine, the "god of Pharaoh" being worshiped there in company with a god who definitely was the sun. (Abr. 1:9.) Classical historians have recorded that the Egyptian name of Joseph, son-in-law of the priest of On, was Peteseph,[16] and that Moses not only went by the name of Osarsiph but was himself "a priest of Heliopolis."[17] Peteseph, plainly suggested by Io-seph, could mean "He (God) has given increase," while Osarsiph would be "Osiris is increase." What is noteworthy here is the intimacy between the family of Abraham and the Potiphar complex. We must not overlook the fact that the name *Iwnw* or Heliopolis, occurring twice in the inscription around the rim of Facsimile No. 2, definitely associates the facsimile with the Heliopolitan cult.

The Jews and early Christians alike had a special reverence for Heliopolis. When the Jews in Egypt under the leadership of Onias undertook to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 19 by building a temple in Egypt after the pattern of that at Jerusalem, the spot they chose for the sacred edifice was the site of the ruined temple of Heliopolis.[18] And the early Christian Clementine writings go to "the altar of the sun" at Heliopolis to find their most compelling illustration and proof of the reality of resurrection in the tradition of the Phoenix bird.[19]

Heliopolis ("Sun City"), the On of the Old Testament (eg., *Iwnw*), was "the most important cult-center of Egypt."[20] A great "Megalithic" complex of prehistoric antiquity, it was the model of the "normal pyramid complex" of later times, though instead of the usual pyramid at its apex, it had "a rather squat obelisk perched on a square base like a truncated pyramid. The obelisk recalled a very ancient stone at Heliopolis known as *bnbn*, etymologically perhaps 'the radiant one,' which undoubtedly symbolized a ray or rays of the sun."[21] This monument stood on a raised platform, and directly before it stood "a large alabaster altar."[21] Here at "the periodic renewal of the kingship . . . the gods of the two halves of the country assembled to honor the Pharaoh," their images taking up their positions in a row before the altar in the "vast Jubilee court," the place of assembly.[22]

The great central stone and its bases, from which the later pyramids were derived, "was the specific Heliopolitan form of the Primeval Hill," either resting on or representing the "High Sand," the first solid ground to emerge from the waters of the flood on the day of creation.[23] Though the design of this monument differs from place to place, it is always the Primeval Hill from which the sun arose on "that momentous sunrise of the First Day."[24] The common Egyptian verb *khai*, used to signify the appearance of the King in glory, "is written with a hieroglyph depicting the sun rising over the Primeval Hill," for "the concepts of creation, sunrise, and kingly rule are continually merged."[25] Not only was the hill the central object of every solar shrine, but "each and every temple was supposed to stand" on the Primeval Hill.[26]

Nothing of the old Heliopolitan complex has survived, and its reconstruction is based on copies of it (as Gardiner calls them) in other places. But Egyptian ritual and literature often give us fleeting glimpses of the setup at On. Thus a late Egyptian romance tells of a fierce contest between the champions of Pharaoh and the ruler of Ethiopia, both rivals bearing the name of Hor, in which the false pretender from the south is "cast down from upon the hill on the

"The mixing of gods and nations, especially those of Egypt and Canaan, was the order of the day in Abraham's time"

east of On" to sink into the waters of death at its foot.[27] The losing ruler must in the end submit to a terrible beating, which was originally meant for Pharaoh himself, i.e., the King's rival is sacrificed in his place after a ritual combat at the Sun-hill of On.[27] We see the same motif in the Metternich Stele, which tells how "Hor was pierced in the field of On on the north of the altar," but was miraculously healed. This refers to the New Year's combat between Horus and Seth for the rule of the world, only instead of the hill, it is the plain and the altar which receive mention.[28]

If Heliopolis was the most venerable of sun shrines, it was by no means the only one; at least six kings of the 5th Dynasty are known to have constructed their own complexes, "each with its own name, like 'Pleasure of Re,' 'Horizon of Re,' 'Field of Re.'"[29] Note that all the names end with Re. So does the name of Potiphar, "Given of Re." The predominance of the name of Hor or Horus in the stories (Horus being the type of the living Pharaoh mounting the throne) suggests another cult-place and one closely tied to Abraham. For Phathur or Petor, if it is not actually a corruption of Potiphar, means perhaps "Given of Horus," and was originally the name of Aram Naharaim, Abraham's native city, when it was first settled by Aram and his brother Rekhob—there is much in the story to indicate that Phathur was an old cult-place.[30] If the story shows a fine disregard of chronology, we must remember that nothing makes a hash of chronology like ritual does, since ritual deals with real but *repeated* events.

It is clear enough that Abraham's escape from the altar took place on Asiatic soil, which was at the time under Egyptian domination. The officiating priest, though properly "the priest of Elkenah," was "*also* the Priest of Pharaoh." (Abr. 1:7.) This was only a temporary state of affairs, however, for Abraham's "now at *this* time it *was* the custom . . ." definitely implies that at the time of writing it was no longer so. Theodor Boehl's observation that when the curtain rises on the patriarchal dramas "Egypt no longer rules Canaan" suits well with the picture in the Book of Abraham where Pharaoh rules in Canaan only at the outset.[31] Also consistent with the modern reconstruction of the picture is the mixture of outlandish "strange gods" (Abr. 1:5-6, 8), among whose number was counted "a god *like unto* that of Pharaoh" (Abr. 1:13), a clear implication that Pharaoh's authority is being honored on non-Egyptian territory. We are reminded of the situation in Byblos, where Pharaoh's god and glory came and went in the temples, depending on whether Egypt had power locally or not.

That we have to do with an overlapping of Egyptian and Canaanitish or Amorite customs is apparent from the double nomenclatures used in Abraham's story. The holy place was "*called* Potiphar's Hill," a very proper designation for the indispensable central object, the sun hill, of a shrine operating on the pattern of Heliopolis under the auspices of Pharaoh. But the plain itself, having existed from time immemorial, bore its local Semitic name, "the plain of Oli-shem." (Abr. 1:10.) But since Oli-shem can be readily recognized by any first-year Hebrew student as meaning something like "Hill of Heaven," "High-place of Heaven," or even possibly "Sun-hill,"[32] the Plain of the High Place of Heaven was probably a holy center before the times of Egyptian influence. This is borne out by Abraham's careful specification that the sacrifices were made "even after the manner of the Egyptians" (Abr. 1:9), clearly implying that there was another tradition. We learn in verses 8 and 9 that "at this time" *two* deities shared the honors of the great shrine, the one "the god of Pharaoh" and the other "the god of Shagreel," who, we are flatly told, "was the sun" (*ibid.*).

Note, however, that it was not Shagreel who was the sun but "the god *of* Shagreel." And who was Shagreel himself? Another happy guess: The old desert tribes, whose beliefs and practices, as A. Alt has recently demonstrated at length, are of primary importance in understanding the background of the Abraham traditions,[33] worshiped the star Sirius under the name of *Shighre* or *Shaghre,* and Shagre-el in their idiom means "Shagre is God." Sirius is interesting in ritual because of its unique association, amounting at times to identify, with the sun. Shighre, according to Lane's *Dictionary,* designates *whatever* star is at the moment the brightest object in the heavens, and it has recently been discovered, as R. Anthes notes, that "the heavenly Horus was a star as well as the sun . . . whatever body happens to be presiding over the sky."[34] The King of Egypt in the rites of On is able, "with the Dog Star (Sirus) as guide," to find the place of resurrection at "the Primeval Hill, an island . . . pre-eminently suitable for a resurrection from death."[35] The most important event in the history of the universe, according to the Egyptians, was the Heliacal Rising of Sirius, when Sirius, the sun, and the Nile all rose together on the morning of the New Year, the Day of Creation, as officially proclaimed from the

great observatory of Heliopolis.[36] Without expanding on the theme, it will be enough here to note that the sun, the hill, and Sirius are inseparably connected in the rites, as they are in the Book of Abraham, where we find "the god of Pharaoh, and also . . . the god of Shagreel . . . the sun" receiving sacrifices side by side at Potiphar's Hill. (Abr. 1:9.)

If we have not yet located the site of the doings indicated in Facsimile No. 1, we have at least been given a pretty good idea where to look and an even better idea of what to look for. "Much careful thought has of late been devoted to . . . questions connected with the sun-temples," wrote Gardiner, "but only with limited success through the lack of positive evidence."[37] Certain main features stand out clearly, however, and if we are not obliged to leap to conclusions, we are obliged by what little we have seen to look further. At the great complex of Niuserre, examined by Burchardt, we see all the gods "from all over the land" standing in order before the altar that stands at the foot of the Hill of the Sunrise.[38] Is that not much the situation that meets us in the Abraham story? In both cases there is a shrine devoted to the worship of the sun, entirely under the auspices of Pharaoh, held at a sacred Hill of the Sun whose theophoric name ends in Re, which stands at the head of a vast flat assembly place, by a sacrificial altar, before which stand the images of the deities of the whole land. (Fac. 1, Figs. 5-8, Abr. 1:13; Fac. 2, Fig. 6.) All such holy places have their origin and prototype in Heliopolis, and that goes for Abraham's shrine as well, as the name Potiphar makes clear; as at On, so at Potiphar's Hill, the sun and Sirius were worshiped side by side.

Only recently has the common meeting ground of Mesopotamian and Egyptian religion become vaguely discernable—in Canaan. Until 1929 no direct connection was known between the cults of Mesopotamia and Egypt, but in that year was discovered at Tel-el-Ghassul in what was once Canaan the now famous mural with its eight-rayed disk representing either the sun or Sirius in an impressive cult scene.[39] M. H. Segal suggests that it was the Israelites, and Abraham in particular, who furnished an important link between the great year-rites of Babylonia and Egypt, since "it may be conjectured that the principal beliefs associated with these two festivals [the principal year-rites] in Judaism were already well-known to ancient Israel in Egypt from their Mesopotamian heritage."[40] Abraham, Cyrus Gordon reminds us, "was not an isolated immigrant, but part of a larger movement from Ur of the Chaldees [and similar communities] into Canaan," which carried strange gods to Ugarit on the Syrian coast "and even penetrated through Canaan into Egypt."[41] The mixing of gods and nations, especially those of Egypt and Canaan, was the order of the day in Abraham's time, and nowhere is the phenomenon more clearly in evidence than in the Book of Abraham.[42] ○

FOOTNOTES

[1]In F. S. Spalding, *Joseph Smith as Translator*, p. 28.
[2]J. de Morgan, *La Prehistoire Orientale*, Vol. 2 (Paris, 1926), Ch. 6.
[3]The relationship of the Patriarchs to these ancient centers raises many problems, discussed by A. Alt, "The God of the Father," in his *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), pp. 3-77.
[4]O. Eissfeldt, in *Ex Oriente Lux*, Vol. 17 (1963), p. 161.
[5]J. C. L. Gibson, in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. 7 (1962), p. 58. The importance of the moon-cult in the Abraham histories has been greatly overdone, according to E. König, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 22 (1931/2), p. 124. Actually the legends say nothing of the moon-cult but tell only of a showdown between Abraham and a king to whom he was obnoxious. König notes in this connection (p. 126) that "it is not true . . . that the importance of the Bible lies in monotheism."
[6]W. F. Albright, *Archaeology, Historical Analogy and Early Biblical Tradition* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana, 1966), p. 126.
[7]Midrash Bereshit Rabba, Vol. 42, pp. 4, 7, 8; Vol. 53, pp. 2-4, cit. in M. J. bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, Vol. 2 (Frankfurt, 1914), pp. 170f.
[8]Mosiah 2. We have treated the subject at length in *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (1957), Ch. 23, and in *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake, Deseret, 1967), pp. 279-83.
[9]Sefer Ha-Yashar, pp. 35b, 36a, in bin Gorion, Vol. 2, pp. 211f.
[10]R. Durham, *'Potiphar's Hill' and the 'Canopic' Complex of Gods* (private issue), pp. 1-2. This work should be better known.
[11]Because it is found only in late Egyptian documents, scholars have concluded that the biblical story of Joseph must contain anachronisms, but A. Hamada, in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 39 (1939), p. 273, and J. Leibovitch, *ibid.*, Vol. 43 (1943), p. 89, show that the Egyptian forms of the name they study indicate that the name has come down from much earlier times.
[12]Hamada, *op. cit.*, p. 274.
[13]*Ibid.*, p. 276, with disapproval.
[14]Leibovitch, in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 43, p. 89.
[15]*Ibid.*, pp. 87-89.
[16]Chaeremon of Alexandria, cited by Josephus, *contra Apionem*, I, 290.
[17]*Ibid.*, I, 26.
[18]Josephus, *Ant.*, Vol. 13, 3:1-3.
[19]Clemens Romanus, *Ep. ad Cor.* 1:25; *Constitutiones Apostolicae*, 5:7; cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, Vol. 10, p. 2 (2-5).
[20]H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, p. 543.
[21]A. H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, pp. 85-86.
[22]Gardiner, *ibid.*, and *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 30 (1944), p. 27.
[23]H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 153.
[24]*Ibid.*, p. 154. Cf. H. R. Hall, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 10, p. 187.
[25]Frankfort, *op. cit.*, pp. 57, 151-52; cf. Gardiner's Sign-list, N 28.
[26]Frankfort, p. 81; Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, pp. 85f; *Apostolic Constitutions*, 5:7.
[27]F. L. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis* (Oxford, 1900), pp. 61-64. The waters were the great Acherousian marsh bordering on "Heliopolis, the Gate of the Sun," Diodorus, Vol. 1, p. 96.
[28]C. E. Sander-Hansen, *Die Texte der Metternichstele* (Copenhagen, 1956), p. 50, Spruch IX, lines 89-90. Sander-Hansen renders the altar-sign as a proper place-name, Hotep, but the symbols mean literally "the place of the altar," the basic meaning of the *htp*-sign being "altar," *Woerterbuch*, Vol. 3, p. 183.
[29]Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 85.
[30]Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 299. The name of Rekhob alone would guarantee its religious background. On the origin of Near Eastern cities as cult-places, see our study in the *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1966), pp. 599ff. The spelling Phethur is after *Sefer ha-Yashar*, 42b-43a. Certainly the old center of Ptho (Pitru) from which abominable rites of prostitution of the cult of Balaam were imported into Israel and which lay "towards the borders of Anatolia" was a cult center; see Z. Mayani, *Les Hyksos et le Monde de la Bible* (Paris: Payto, 1956), p. 188. Ptho would be the later (Coptic) form of Pet-hor.
[31]T. Boehl, in *Ex Oriente Lux*, Vol. 17, pp. 131f.
[32]Gesenius, *Hebrew-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1952), p. 752; " *'al*, 'height,' "; p. 1029f: "Shamah, Shami, 'visible heavens, sky,' " etc. Philo, in Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, X, 1, says that "the Egyptians think the Sun is the only God, and call it Beel-sham," meaning Lord of heaven but definitely designating the sun.
[33]A. Alt, *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 31ff.
[34]R. Anthes, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 25, p. 159; already Breasted, *Religion and Thought*, p. 101, noted that the rising dead is a star—the brightest star, but he is also the sun.
[35]Frankfort, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
[36]Plutarch, *De sollicitudine animae*, 20, in T. Hopfner, *Fontes historiae religionis aegyptiacae*, p. 265; Diodorus, I, 11. Chalcidius, cited in Hopfner, p. 512, says the Egyptians measured the small and the great year by Sirius, which they called *ach*, i.e. the symbol of the sun rising over the Primeval Hill. See R. Faulkner, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 25, pp. 159f.
[37]Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 86.
[38]*Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.
[39]A. Mallon, in *Melanges Maspero*, Vol. 1, i, pp. 55-59.
[40]M. H. Segal, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 53 (1962), p. 254.
[41]C. Gordon, *Before the Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).
[42]The situation is dramatically described by C. Gordon in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 13 (1954), pp. 58f.

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price
Part 7
(Continued)

The Unknown Abraham

By Dr. Hugh Nibley



Courtesy University of Utah Art Library

Abraham, from an etching by the Dutch painter Rembrandt (1606-1669), "Hagar leaving Abraham."

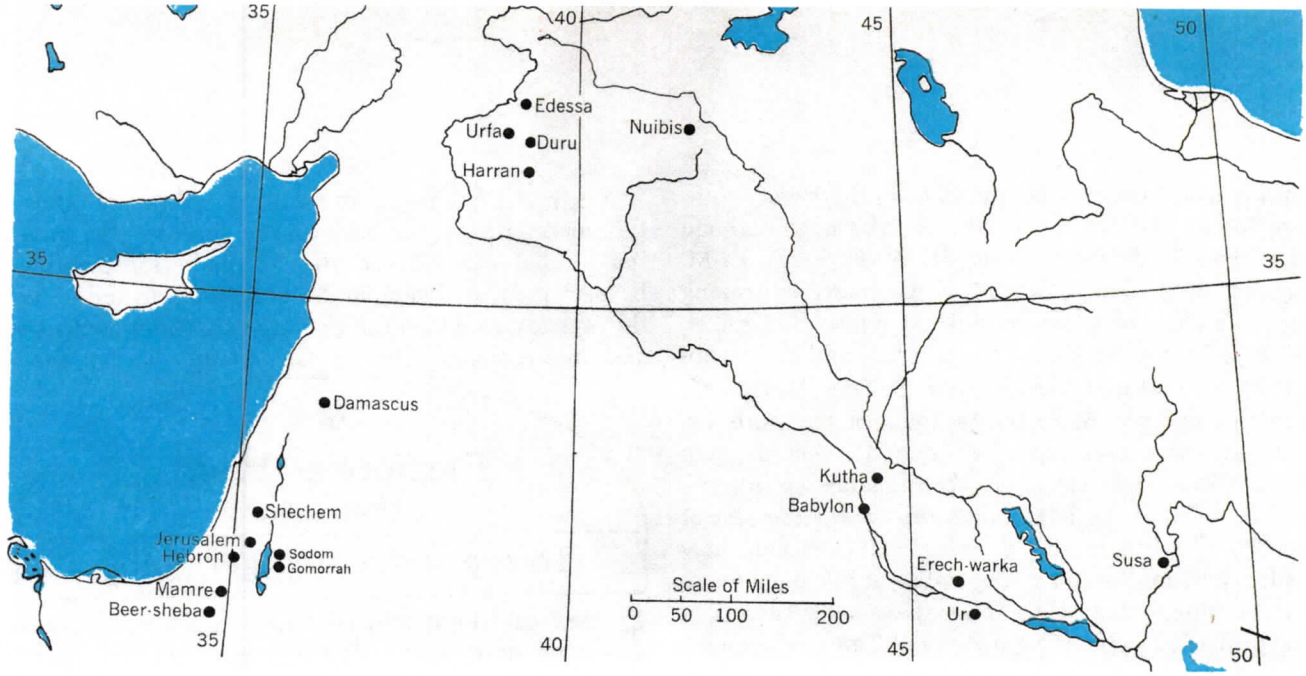
• *Which Ur?*—But we have still to deal with Ur of the Chaldees—where was that? It is interesting that the Book of Abraham only speaks of "the land of Ur, of Chaldea," as if to distinguish it from other Urs, and takes us not to the famous city or to some great temple for the sacrifice, but to a typical *panegyris* in an open plain. Though the Bible does not tell us where "Ur of the Chaldees" was, commentators ancient and modern have generally agreed with Beer's dictum that "the sense of the biblical information definitely points to Abraham's birthplace in northern or northeastern Mesopotamia."[42] Today H. C. L. Gibson concludes that Genesis 24:4, 7 "seems unmistakably to imply that the place of Abraham's nativity was Aram Naharaim," in northern Mesopotamia.[43] A famous commentary of "Eumolpus" states that Abraham was born "in Kamarina, which some call Uria, meaning City of the Chaldeans," following which many scholars have sought the prophet's birthplace in Urfa, once called Urhoi, near Edessa.[45] "The learned disagree as to the place where Abraham was born," wrote Tha'labi, following the learned Jewish informants of his day. "Some say it was in Susa in the land of Ahwaz [Ahwaz in Kusistan, ancient Susiana], while some say it was in Babylon in the land of Suwadi in the region called Kutha; and some say it was in Warka [Uruk, Erech]. . . . Others say he was born in Harran, but that his father took him to Babel."[46] While some have located his birthplace at Kamarina in Armenia or Asia Minor, others have found it at the other end of the world in distant Suza.[47] Maimonides read in the books of the Sabaeans that Abraham grew up in Koutha, which some locate just south of Baghdad and others in the heart of Iran.[48]

What adds to the confusion and the license of speculation is the high mobility of Abraham's people, *Habiru,* meaning " 'Refugees' or 'displaced persons,' " as Gibson notes, for which reason he would view them either at Ur or Harran as mere temporary residents—campers, in fact.[49] Typical of the confusion is the momentous debate about the young Abraham's ten-year imprisonment: one school says that he was in jail seven years in Kardi and three in Kutha, and the other that it was three years in Kardi and seven in Kutha.[50] It is interesting that the youthful Abraham, like the youthful Joseph Smith (and even the youthful Jesus),[51] seems to have been in trouble with his society, and though today the legends reach us only through the pro-Abraham channels, it is obvious that he caused a great stir and annoyance in his society. When we read of an obscure and innocuous young man exciting general uproar throughout the length of Mesopotamia or causing a mighty monarch to spend sleepless nights, we smile and brush the thing aside as the stuff of legend; the overwhelming verdict of scholarship for the past century, in fact, has detected in the name of Abraham only a code word to designate a large tribal movement. Such things, we say, just don't happen in real life. Only oddly enough, there is an exception—in the case of real prophets they do happen, as modern history attests. What would students say 3,500 years from now to the proposition that thousands of years before there lived a naive, uneducated, and guileless country boy in a small village somewhere in the woods beyond what were known as the Allegheny Mountains, who by a few tactless and unbelievably artless remarks created the greatest excitement in the large seaboard cities of the continent, was hotly denounced in thousands of pulpits throughout the civilized world, and was given front-page coverage in the major newspapers of the capitals of Europe? Could a less plausible story be imagined? Abraham probably had a much smaller and more compact population to impress, and in the great cult-places he had a perfect means for spreading his teaching throughout the world.

Nachmanides and Tha'labi report respectable traditions that Abraham was born in southern Mesopotamia, but that his family moved north immediately after his birth.[52] Another tradition, reported by Tha'labi, reverses the order: ". . . some say he was born in Harran, but that his father took him to Babel." Still other traditions have it that for fear of Nimrod the family took the newborn Abraham south and settled at Warka.[52] The very old Book of Judith 5:6-8 supports the story of a flight to the south after a birth in the north. A common legend is that Nimrod's army, after failing to catch young Abraham at home, returned to Babylon by a march of 40 days, a march which Ka'b al-Akhbar describes in terms of a genuine migration of Nimrod's people, "with their goods and their families and their children . . . to the land of Iraq," i.e. from the north.[53] In all accounts the journey between Abraham's childhood home and Babylon is a long one. Just as there are episodes and aspects of early Latter-day Saint history which may never be cleared up because of the individual and collective mobility of the people, so, Theodore Böhl reminds us, "we must not underestimate the great mobility and historical memory of the Patriarchs."[54]

At the same time Böhl observes that "the key figure" to the patriarchal history is Nimrod[54]—and in the history of Nimrod two things are outstanding, M. Gemoll discovers: (1) "he always turns up as a contemporary of Abraham," and (2) his activities take place in the north countries.[55] This is a reminder that "the valley *northward*" from the Plain of Shinar in very early times was called "Nimrod . . . after the mighty hunter," in all probability an ancestor of our friend. (See Eth. 2:1.) Most commentators in the past identified Ur of the Chaldees with Babel simply because Nimrod, who plays such an important role in the early life of Abraham, ruled at Babel;[56] but he ruled there only after having conquered the land and added it to his empire, his home base being to the north.[57] Micah 5:5 places "the land of Nimrod" in Assyria, and the Sibylline writings say that he built his famous tower in Assyria.[58] His original kingdom was Shinar (Sinear), and there are a number of very old traditions that after the generation of Noah the people deserted the inspired leadership of Shem, "migrated east to the land of Sinear, a great plain, and there threw off the government of heaven and made Nimrod their king."[59] "Tradition has it," writes Beer, "that Shinear is the plain of northern Mesopotamia, ruled over by Nimrod."[60] Though H. Altmann maintains that the name Shinear designates Babylonia in general whenever it appears in the Bible, he goes on to point out that "the classical Singara, Gebel Singar was in northeastern Mesopotamia," being in the time of Abraham "an integral part of the kingdom of Mitanni."[61] Nachmanides says that when Terah left the "Hamitic" land of Shinear, he went south to Mesopotamia, and again after the birth of Abraham he returned to "the land of the Chaldees in the north."[62] Böhl says that in Abraham's day Sinear denoted not the Babylonian plain but a city-state on the middle Euphrates.[63]

One may hold with T. E. Peet that there may originally have been separate Ur and Haran traditions about Abraham that have nothing to do with each other,[64] but none may deny the importance of Harran



Every city labeled at the southern and northern extremities of Mesopotamia has been claimed by scholars as the authentic birthplace of Abraham. All are agreed that he sojourned at the places indicated in Palestine. The relationship between the three areas in the life of Abraham has proven as devious and complicated as the astronomical problem of three bodies.

and the north country in the early family background of the patriarch. Haran and Nahor are twin cities in the north, and Haran was the name of Abraham's brother while Nahor was his grandfather; Terah, Serug, and Peleg are all names of towns near Haran.[65] However dubious the status of the southern Ur, "there can be little doubt," Gibson reminds us, "concerning the authenticity of the tradition connecting the Patriarchs with the Harran district."[66] Kordu-Qardi, where Abraham was imprisoned, has been identified with Hatra and with a place called Ur near Nisibis; Moses Landau said it was Kardi in Bythinia, and others identify it with the Kurdish country.[67] Indeed, Tha'labi insists that Nimrod was a Kurd.[68] Though from the Cassite period on all of Babylonia was known as Karduniash, which is also the rendering of Chaldea in the Amarna Tablets,[69] "the appearance of the Kaldu in southern Babylonia is considerably later than the vaguely accepted but unprovable dating of Abraham," according to C. J. Gadd, who points out that "if Abraham lived about the time of the 1st Dynasty of Babylon, the Babylonian Ur was not then 'of the Chaldees,'" while on the other hand "if his time was later, the Babylonian Ur was . . . of little importance, and the northern orientation of the Abraham stories would then correspond better with the historical situation."[70] That is, any way we look at it, Abraham's "Ur of the Chaldees" was not the great city of the south identified in the 1920's by Sir Leonard Woolley. As Gordon points out, "there are two Chaldean localities quite distant from each other,"[71] and while the northern Chaldea seems to go back to prehistoric times, the "Chaldees" held sway in the south of Sumer only in later times—long after Abraham.[72] The Chaldeans are designated as *Kesed* in the Hebrew Old Testament, and that name also points to the north, where the descendants of Kesed "established themselves opposite to Shinear, where they founded the city of Kesed, the city whence the Chaldees are called Kasdim."[73] Gensenius identified Ur of the Chaldees with the northern Assyrian province of Arpakshad = Arpa-kesed or "Chaldean Country."[74]

The Genesis account, according to Kraeling, has the line of Shem begin in upper Mesopotamia and pass through Eber and his son Peleg to Terah and his son Haran.[75] The "Cave of Treasures" recounts that in Terah's time the black arts appeared "in the city of Ur, which had been built by Horon, the son of Eber."[76] A "Sabaean" source reports that it was Noah who built the city of Harran upon leaving the Ark, and that "near Harran is the Sabaean temple on the hill which was raised by Abraham"—another early high-place connected with Abraham.[77] Though the name of Jacob is at home in northern (not southern) Mesopotamia, that of Abram "is commoner in the Phoenician than in the Aramaic group,"[78] and in one of the oldest Abraham stories the two counselors of Nimrod are Jectan of the line of Japheth (a humane person and the friend of Abraham) and Phenech, a Phoenician,[79] putting the story in the Syro-Phoenician area. Terah's second wife and the mother of Sarah was Nahariath, "the Naharaim woman"[80]—wherever we look the family names take us to that part of western Asia from which the blood of the Pharaohs was replenished from time to time.

There have always been arguments for placing Abraham's Ur both in the south and in the north; "traditions of respectable antiquity exist in favor of

both places," as Gadd puts it, both in the Ur of southern Sumer and "in the northwest, the neighborhood of Harran."[81] E. G. Kraeling, H. W. F. Saggs, E. M. Speiser, R. de Vaux, and W. F. Leamans are among the defenders of a southern Ur,[82] while H. Gunkel, W. F. Albright, M. Parrot, C. Gordon, and Z. Mayani are for the north, as were formerly B. Beer, M. Gemoll, and F. Oppert.[83] As to the meaning of the word Ur, "modern opinion is equally divided," according to B. Z. Wacholder, between the Sumerian (southern) *uru,* "city," and the Babylonian *uru-uniki,* "the seat of light" (cf. Olishem and Potiphar's Hill).[84] One may realize how foolish it is to dogmatize at this point when one considers that while Thebes was the capital of Egypt for 200 years, the great city of Tanis, which may have been Abraham's Egyptian residence and which was the capital for 350 years, has to this day never been located.[85]

What leaves the door wide open to discussion is the existence in western Asia of a number of different Urs. Ur in the south was a great trade center once, and since Abraham was a merchant, one should expect to find him there. But on the other hand that same Ur had founded merchant colonies far to the north and west at an early date, and some of those settlements, as was the custom, bore the name of the mother city.[86] Hence, C. S. Gordon maintains that "the Ur of the Chaldees where Abraham was born seems to have been one of the northern Urs," "a commercial settlement in the general area of Harran," founded by the mother city about 2000 B.C.[87] That would explain Abraham's association with a city of Ur as well as the inescapable northern affinities of the Abraham traditions. What suggested a northern Ur in the first place was the impossible detour of a route from Ur in Sumer to Canaan via Harran.[88] The best-informed scholars of Joseph Smith's time thought of Ur as lying about 150 miles due east of Harran.[89] The legends also have the young Abraham living on the northern route: the best customers for his father's idols, we are told, were caravaneers on their way from Fandana in Syria to Egypt to barter Syrian goods for papyrus.[90] According to the Pseudo-Philo, Abraham migrated directly west from the scene of Nimrod's tower into Canaan,[91] and Jubilees (12:12) reports that when Abraham had to get out of the country in a hurry after destroying the idols, he fled directly to Lebanon. All of which puts Abraham's home squarely on the northern route. Even in the Bible, Gordon insists, "all the connections of the Patriarchal narratives are northern, with no trace of direct contact with Sumer and Akkad," and the accumulation of new documents tends ever more to favor the northern Ur.[92]

Nimrod-Pharaoh: In getting Abraham onto Egyptian territory, we have also to consider the question: What can Nimrod the Asiatic terror possibly have to do with Pharaoh? A good deal, to judge by the legends, in which the two are constantly confused and interchanged. In the *Clementine Recognitions*

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The Spoken Word

Richard L. Evans

To see something get going

Life," said Benjamin Disraeli, "is a tumble-about thing of ups and downs,"—with its sick hurry, its divided aims," Matthew Arnold added. There are times when all of us feel overburdened, with debts, with obligations, so many things undone, so many undone things to do—worries, problems, and sometimes our share, it seems, of sorrows. And we wonder how we can be everywhere we ought to be, do all we ought to do, meet the obligations, and carry the weight of our worries, as we seem to divide ourselves in too many different directions, too many ways at once—not feeling that we are completing or disposing of or quite in control of anything—just a reshuffling of papers, a reshuffling of problems. To all of this, some gentle advice from an unnamed source proposes the "one-at-a-time" approach: "Mountains viewed from a distance," it says, "seem to be unscalable, but they can be climbed, and the way to begin is to take the first upward step. From that moment the mountains are less high. The slopes that seem so steep from a distance seem to level off as we near them." Any task in life is easier if we approach it with the one-at-a-time attitude. One step—a beginning: doing something about something, beginning to see something get going—gives assurance that we are on our way and that the solving of problems is possible. To cite a whimsical saying: "If you chase two rabbits, both of them will escape." No one is adequate to everything all at once. We have to select what is important, what is possible, and begin where we are, with what we have. And if we begin—and if we keep going—the weight, the worry, the doubt, the depression will begin to lift, will begin to lighten. We can't do everything always, but we can do something now, and doing something will help to lift the weight and lessen the worry. "The beginning," said Plato, "is the most important part."

*"The Spoken Word" from Temple Square, presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System January 26, 1969. Copyright 1969.

"... the Pharaohs really were concerned with the validity of their claim to divine authority..."

(3:61) the dispensations of the gospel, following an ancient Jewish formula, are given as ten, each being established by a prophet and revelator who finds himself opposed by a satanic rival and pretender; when we get to Abraham (the third dispensation), we expect his opponent, in view of the rabbinic traditions, to be Nimrod, but it is not: it is Pharaoh. Why is that? In the legends, B. Chapira notes, "Nimrod has become the equivalent of Pharaoh," yet he is already Pharaoh in the oldest of the legends, the one edited by Chapira himself.[92a] Wacholder has noted that while Nimrod is indeed the archenemy in the rabbinical accounts, in the *older* "Hassidic" versions he is Pharaoh, a clear indication that the original stories go back to a time "when Egypt was a major power," when "the encounter between Pharaoh and the traveler from Ur of the Chaldees seemed a crucial event in the history of mankind"; only later, "in the rabbinic sources, Abram's journey to Egypt is relatively ignored."[93] W. Foerster has observed that "the highlights of . . . divine action" in the history of Israel are "firstly, the basic event of Abraham's call, God's covenant . . . secondly, the deliverance from the 'furnace of Egypt.' "[94] The furnace of Egypt is here the equivalent of the "furnace of the Chaldees," the most venerable epithet of Abraham being "he who was delivered from the furnace of the Chaldees."[95] Of the moment of delivery a very old account says, "From that day until today it is called Kaladwon, [signifying] what God said to the children of Israel: 'It is I who brought you forth from Egypt!' "[96] The confusion of Egypt and Chaldea in the Abraham story is typical.

The legends make Hagar an Egyptian woman of the royal court and even a daughter of Pharaoh,[97] so that when the old Jerusalem Targum on Jeremiah says that Hagar belonged to those very people who threw Abraham into the furnace, we are obliged to view his attempted sacrifice as an Egyptian show.[98] Even more specific is the Pseudo-Jonathan, which reports that Hagar was "the daughter of Pharaoh, the son of Nimrod," which makes Nimrod, if not a Pharaoh, the father of one.[98] It is interesting that there is no sign of Pharaoh on the scene in Facsimile No. 1, while in Facsimile No. 3 the royal family fills the stage: it is quite possible that after overcoming the antipathy of the father in Asia, Abraham should sometime later have been royally received by the son in Egypt—but this is the merest speculation. In one of the better-known stories, when Sarah lost her temper with Hagar (and it is significant that we have here the same sort of rivalry between Sarah, the true "princess," and Hagar the Egyptian woman as we do between Abraham and Nimrod), she complained to Abraham, accusing her rival of being "the daughter of Pharaoh, of Nimrod's line, he who once cast thee into the furnace!"[99] Having Pharaoh as a son or descendant of Nimrod neatly bridges the gap between Asia and Egypt: one of the most famous foreign potentates to put a son on the throne of Egypt did in fact bear the name of Nimrod—we shall have more to say of him later.

The sort of thing that used to happen may be surmised from an account in the Sefer ha-Yashar, according to which "at the time Abraham went into Canaan there was a man in Sinear called Rakion [also Rikyan, Rakayan, suggesting the famous Hyksos ruler Khian]. . . . He went to King Asverus [cf. Osiris] in Egypt, the son of Enam. At that time the King of Egypt showed himself only once a year." In Egypt this Rakion by trickery raised a private army and so was able to impose a tax on all bodies brought for burial to the cemetery. This made him so rich that he went with a company of a thousand richly dressed youths and maidens to pay his respects to Asverus, who was so impressed that he changed the man's name to Pharaoh, after which Rikian judged the people of Egypt every day while Asverus only judged one day in the year.[100] This would not be the first or the last time that a usurping Asiatic forced a place for himself on the throne, but the ritual aspects of the tale—the annual appearance of Osiris, the rule over the necropolis, the 1,000 youths and maidens (as in the story of Solomon and Queen Bilqis)—are also conspicuous. We are also told that that wily Asiatic who came to the throne by violence and trickery was the very Pharaoh who would take Sarah to wife.[101] Since the Pharaonic lines all went back to Asiatic or Libyan families, the question of legitimacy could be handled, and no one disputes that Nimrod was of the blood of Ham through Canaan, or that the Pharaohs were also of the blood of Ham—on those points all sources agree.

The close resemblance between Nimrod's treatment of Abraham and Pharaoh's treatment of Moses has often been noted.[102] And just as the careers of Abraham and Moses can be closely and significantly matched (which is not surprising, since the founders and makers of dispensations of the gospel necessarily

have almost identical missions), so in the Koran, Nimrod and Pharaoh represent a single archtype—that of the supremely successful administrator who thinks he should rule everything.[103] Likewise in the Koran (Sura 40:37) it is not Nimrod who builds the tower to get to heaven, but Pharaoh—a significant substitution. Even in the Jewish accounts, Pharaoh and Nimrod are like identical twins: both call themselves "the Great Magician,"[104] try to pass themselves off as God, order all the male children to be put to death, study the heavens, pit the knowledge and skill of their wise men against the powers of the prophet.[105] The palace in which Nimrod shuts up the expectant mothers has conspicuous parallels in Egyptian literature, and is designated in the Jewish traditions as the Palace of Assuerus—the Osiris or King of Egypt in the Rikan story above.[106] When the young Moses refuses to worship Pharaoh as the young Abraham does Nimrod, the idolatrous priests accuse both heroes of magic and trickery, the converts of both are put to death by the king, the subjects of both rulers offer up their children to idols, and Pharaoh like Nimrod finally declares war on God and builds a great tower, which falls.[107]

One can appreciate the wisdom of the rabbinic distinction between Pharaoh and Nimrod, without which the wires would be hopelessly crossed between a Moses and an Abraham who go through identical routines with the same antagonist—Pharaoh. Yet in the original versions it was Pharaoh in both cases: the Nimrod who calls his magicians and wise men to counter the claims of Abraham, who loses the contest and ends up bestowing high honors on his guest, turns up as Pharaoh in the *Genesis Apocryphon*, the oldest known version of the story. But we have to do here with a characteristic and repeated episode—this repetition of motifs does not begin with Jewish speculations. The Battle of the Magicians, in which Pharaoh's authority is defended against the pretensions of a dark adversary, is a favorite theme of Egyptian literature and goes back to the prehistoric ritual rivalry of Horus and Seth. It also happens that the Pharaohs really *were* concerned with the validity of their claim to divine authority, so that the actual history of Egypt can be partially interpreted in terms of Pharaoh's dealings with those who presume to challenge his right and power—the documents of Ramses II are eloquent on this subject, but no more so than those of the kings of Babylon and Assyria, so that we need not assume that the stories of Abraham are simply borrowings from late Egyptian romances. Kings have always been hypersensitive to the operations of rivals, pretenders, relatives, and popular religious leaders.

More in the nature of myths are the extravagant infancy stories of Abraham and Moses, parallels of which may be found in India and Java, though the Egyptian versions are the oldest known.[108] There are close resemblances between the infancy tales of Moses and the infant Horus,[109] but even closer between the latter and the infancy stories of Abraham: Hōrus's mother, like Abraham's, hides the newborn child in a cave and goes about "as a vagabond and beggar for fear of the Evil One, seeking support for the child."[110] Both babies are sustained in the cave by being given a finger to suck,[111] and it is common knowledge that the baby Abraham was miraculously supplied with milk and honey either from his own fingers (and the infant Horus is commonly represented sucking his finger), those of an angel, or from the dripping stalactites of the cave.[112] Now, though Abraham's mother goes by many names, the commonest one is Emtelai, which scholars early recognized as a form of Amalthea, Amalthea being the goddess who took the form of a goat and suckled the infant Zeus with milk and honey in the Dictaean Cave.[113] Though the mothers of Horus and Abraham both fear that their child has expired of hunger in the cave, they find the babes filling the place with a miraculous radiance shining from the infant faces.[114] Heller noted that while the stories of the infant Jesus are also very close to those of Moses and Abraham, they come closest of all to the cycle of the infant Joseph.[115] In every case the tales point to Egypt—even Jesus immediately after his birth is taken to Egypt, which is the scene of the infancy gospels.[116]

Where we get these characteristic and repeated stories, the ritual element is not far from the surface. Thus, when Abraham is washed, anointed, clothed in a garment, and fed with bread and wine and/or milk and honey in the cave, we cannot escape reference to the basic ordinances of temple and church.[117] Or when Abraham, after escaping death on the altar, an event which he is said to have considered as the equivalent of his own resurrection,[118] goes to his eleven companions who are hiding out in the hills and there instructs them for 40 days in the mysteries, who can fail to recall the "40-day" accounts of the resurrected Lord?[119] And what are we to make of it when we find the completest version of the story of the attempted sacrifice of Abraham in an early Eastern Christian tale in which the hero is not Abraham but St. Elias?[120] The fact that the St. Elias story turns up in the very place where Abraham is supposed to have suffered offers another illustration of the astounding survival of very ancient history in local legends throughout the Near East. But the ritual infancy stories? There is no reason in the world why we should regard them as originating with Abraham or

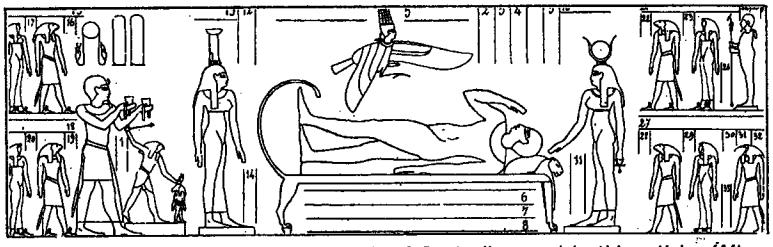
Moses, to whose biographies they have been conveniently annexed. Such doublets and repetitions are, as Gordon reminds us, "typical of Near Eastern literature . . . the taste of the Bible world called for duplication," as when Joseph and Pharaoh have identical prophetic dreams[121]—to say nothing of Nephi and Lehi.

However annoying we may find it, it is important to realize that we are dealing here with neither pure history nor pure myth—indeed, in the strictest sense neither history nor myth is ever completely pure. How the two may be mixed is dramatically illustrated in the case of Nimrod's notorious boast: It was when Abraham called upon Nimrod to acknowledge God as the giver of life that the latter intoned what has ever since been his slogan and device: "It is I who give life and I who take it away!" The historical part of the thing is that this actually was the slogan of the Pharaohs from the earliest times. When the king first appears in the Pyramid Text as the conquering hero from the East spreading terror before him, his heralds announce to all the world: "If he wants you to live, you live! If he wants you to die, you die!"[122] And at the coronation of later kings the Pharaoh was introduced to his subjects as "the Merciful One who gives you back your heads!"[123] Finally, in the silver sarcophagus of Sheshonki I, the founder of the 22nd Dynasty, is a cryptogramatic inscription in which the king boasts that (as Horus) he slays the slayers of Osiris and also is "the Great One who grants life as the Living One."[124] This particular Sheshonk was the son of a great warlord named Nimrod, whom Petrie believed to be an Elamite from Asia, the leader of a band of warriors, who made himself useful to Pharaoh and finally seized the throne; he was noted for his piety, and in founding a new dynasty also restored the old rites of human sacrifice; he also was the one Pharaoh most closely tied to Israel, marrying his daughter to King Solomon and later conquering Palestine and financing his empire with the plunder of the Temple of Jerusalem. It is an interesting coincidence that the name of Sheshonk (or Shishaq) is the one hieroglyphic word readily identified and unanimously agreed upon by the Egyptologists who have commented on Facsimile No. 2, where the name appears as Figure 8. How all this fits into the picture remains to be seen. ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[43]B. Beer, *Leben Abrahams,* p. 99, noting that Gen. 11:28 allows only a general inference.
[44]H. C. L. Gibson, in *Journal of Semitic Studies,* Vol. 7 (1962), pp. 54-55.
[45]B. Z. Wacholder, in *Hebrew Union College Annual,* Vol. 34 (1963), p. 99.
[46]Tha'labi, *Qissas al-Anbiyah* (Cairo, 1922), p. 51.
[47]H. Weill, *Biblical Legends of the Muslims* (1856), p. 47. The Eumolpus text is in R. Riessler, *Altjüdisches Schrifttum* (Heidelberg, 1966), p. 11.
[48]Maimonides, *Dalalat,* Vol. 3, pp. 217-19.
[49]Gibson, *op. cit.,* p. 58.
[50]H. Schützinger, *Ursprung des Abraham-Nimrod Legendes,* p. 151; Beer, *op. cit.,* p. 14.
[51]See our article in *The Instructor,* January 1965, pp. 35-37.
[52]Tha'labi, *op. cit.,* p. 52; Beer, *op. cit.,* p. 98.
[53]Ka'b al-Akhbar, text in *Revue des Etudes Juives,* Vol. 70 (1920), p. 39; B. Chapira, in *Revue des Etudes Juives,* Vol. 69 (1919), pp. 97, 103f; bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden,* Vol. 2, p. 4.
[54]T. Boehl, in *Ex Oriente Lux,* Vol. 17, p. 131.
[55]M. Gemoll, *Israeliten und Hykos* (Leipzig, 1913), p. 31.
[56]The Talmud, Midrash, and Arabic sources follow this line of reasoning, according to Beer, *Leben Abrahams,* pp. 97-98.
[57]"Nimrod became king over the children of Ham and founded his empire in Babel, Erech, Akkad and the Land of Sinear," b. Gorion, *Sagen der Juden,* Vol. 2, p. 25; Bar Hebraeus, *Chron.* 1:8 (Budge).
[58]*Sibylline Oracles,* c. 99.
[59]P. Rab. Eliezer, cit. Beer, *Leben Abrahams,* p. 7; Pseudo-Philo, VII, 1-VIII, 1.
[60]Beer, *op. cit.,* pp. 98-100.
[61]A. Altmann, *Biblical Motifs* (Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 76.
[62]Beer, *op. cit.,* p. 98.
[63]Boehl, *Ex Oriente Lux,* Vol. 17, pp. 131f.
[64]T. E. Peet, *Egypt and the Old Testament* (Liverpool, 1922), p. 57.
[65]Gen. 10:25, 11:20-23, 16-19.
[66]Gibson, *Journal of Semitic Studies,* Vol. 7, p. 54.
[67]Wacholder, *op. cit.*
[68]Tha'labi, *op. cit.,* p. 51.
[69]F. Hommel, *Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orients* (Munich, 1904), p. 357, n. 1013.
[70]C. J. Gadd, in D. W. Thomas (ed.), *Archaeology and Old Testament Study* (Oxford, 1967), p. 94.
[71]C. Gordon, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies,* Vol. 17, p. 30.
[72]Ch. Virolleaud's insistence, in *l'Ethnographie,* N.S. 48 (1953), pp. 3ff, that Chaldea was always a designation of Sumer and that its inhabitants were always called Chaldeans rests on a circular argument.
[73]Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews,* Vol. 1, p. 299.
[74]Cit., M. Gemoll, *op. cit.,* p. 35.
[75]C. E. Kraeling, in *Journal of Biblical Literature,* Vol. 66 (1947), p. 290.
[76]Cave of Treasures 26:1.
[77]M. Chwolsohn, *Die Sabaeer* (Moscow, 1856), Vol. 2, pp. 553f.
[78]Gibson, *op. cit.,* p. 51.
[79]Pseudo-Philo 6:14.
[80]Cave of Treasures 28:17.
[81]C. J. Gadd, *op. cit.,* pp. 93f.
[82]R. de Vaux, in *Revue Biblique,* Vol. 72 (1965), p. 19; C. E. Kraeling, *Brooklyn Museum Papyri,* p. 6. W. F. Leemans, in *Ex Oriente Lux,* Vol., pp. 436-37.
[83]M. Gemoll, *Israel and the Hyksos,* pp. 32-35; Beer, *op. cit.,* p. 99; Z. Mayani, *Les Hykos et le Monde de la Bible* (Paris: Payot, 1956), pp. 218ff.
[84]Wacholder, *op. cit.,* p. 101.
[85]J. von Beckenrath, *Tanis u. Theben* (Glückstadt, J. J. Augustin, 1951), p. 31.
[86]Oppenheim, in *Journal of American Or. Society,* Vol. 74 (1954), pp. 6-13; Gordon, *Before the Bible,* pp. 27, 288f.
[87]Gordon, *op. cit.,* pp. 27, 56, and *JNES,* Vol. 17 (1958), pp. 28ff.
[88]Beer, *op. cit.,* p. 99; Gordon, *JNES,* Vol. 17, p. 30.
[89]W. Hales, *Analysis,* etc. Vol. 2, p. 108.
[90]Apocalypse of Abraham 2:3.
[91]Pseudo-Philo 7:2, 8:1.
[92]Gordon, *Before the Bible,* p. 287.
[92a]B. Chapira, in *Revue des Etudes Juives,* Vol. 69 (1919), p. 101.
[93]Wacholder, *op. cit.,* Vol. 35 (1964), p. 43.
[94]W. Foerster, *From the Exile to Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 141.
[95]e.g., in the Song of Debbora and Barach, in Ps. Philo, 32:1.
[96]Falasha *Anthology,* p. 28, n. 195.
[97]B. Chapira, in *Revue des Etudes Juives,* Vol. 69, pp. 94 and 59:5; bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden,* Vol. 2, p. 188.
[98]Beer, *op. cit.,* p. 148.
[99]Beer, *op. cit.,* p. 35, n. 341.
[100]bin Gorion, *op. cit.,* pp. 148-53.
[101]Beer, *op. cit.,* p. 128.
[102]Esp. by I. Levi, in *Revue des Etudes Juives,* Vol. 48 (1904), pp. 8-11; and Vol. 59 (1910), pp. 9ff.
[103]B. Heller, in *R.E.J.,* Vol. 98, p. 17.
[104]B. Chapira, *R.E.J.,* Vol. 69, p. 94; Yalkut 182; Cor. 28:38.
[105]Chapira, *loc. cit.,* and I. Loeb, *R.E.J.,* Vol. 4 (1882), p. 304.
[106]Chapira, *R.E.J.,* Vol. 69, p. 94, n. 3.
[107]G. Weill, *Biblical Legends of the Muslims,* pp. 91ff, 105f, 109, 117, 120, etc.
[108]M. Cosquin who discovered the legends in the Far East believes them to have originated there; I. Levi, *R.E.J.,* Vol. 59, p. 11.
[109]V. Vikentiev, "Horus et Moise," in *Annales du Service,* Vol. 48, pp. 21-41.
[110]Sander-Hansen, *Metternichstele,* p. 11, Spr. XIV.
[111]E. A. W. Budge, *Egyptian Religion,* p. 71.
[112]For the finger stories, B. Chapira in *R.E.J.,* Vol. 69, p. 95.
[113]Ernst Fürstenthal, *Abraham* (Berlin: Jüdische Buch-Vereinigugn, 1936), Part 1, contains the fullest collection of Emtelai stories, in romantic form.
[114]Sander-Hansen, *op. cit.,* p. 71, Spr. XIV.
[115]B. Heller, in *R.E.J.,* Vol. 69, p. 95.
[116]*The Instructor,* January 1965, pp. 35-37.
[117]Chapira, *loc. cit.*
[118]Beer, *op. cit.,* p. 113.
[119]Pseudo-Philo 6:18.
[120]In G. Foucart, *Bibliotheque d'Etudes Coptes,* Vol. 1 (Cairo: Institut Francais d'archeologie Orientale, 1919), Fol. Vr. to XIII.
[121]C. Gordon, in *Christianity Today,* Nov. 23, 1959, p. 132.
[122]Pyramid Texts, Nos. 153, 153c, 155, 155d, 157, 157d, 159a, 159e, etc.
[123]H. Altenmueller, in *Ex Oriente Lux,* Vol. 19, p. 433.
[124]E. Drioton, in *Kemi,* Vol. 12 (1952), pp. 28, 33.



The "lion couch" scene from the Temple of Opet, discussed in this article. (After M. de Rochemanteix, in Bibliotheque Egyptologique, *Vol. 3, [1894].)*



"Abraham's Offering," a painting by Jan I. Levens

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price
Part 8
(Continued)

The Unknown Abraham

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

• *The Paradox of Abraham and the King*: In a recent translation and commentary on the so-called "Sensen" papyrus of the Joseph Smith collection (*Era,* Feb. 1968, p. 40-H), Professor Klaus Baer of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago pointed out "that 'Facsimile No. 3' reproduces a part of the same manuscript that 'Facsimile No. 1' does," and that No. 3 follows No. 1 in normal sequence.[1] This is very important in view of the wondrously strange interpretation given to both vignettes in the Book of Abraham,

"A growing number of studies show that 'Egyptian art is not essentially a funerary art'"

the equally strange turn of events in Jewish Abraham traditions, and the peculiar way in which "lion-couch" scenes of the type of Facsimile 1 are regularly followed by a coronation scene in the Egyptian record. In the Pearl of Great Price version we first find Pharaoh's agents somewhere in Canaan trying to sacrifice Abraham on an altar, and in the next scene we see the hero not only safe and sound but actually sitting on Pharaoh's throne in Egypt, wearing *his* crown and bearing *his* royal insignia!

Here, if ever, is a paradox. And yet the *same* paradox meets us in the old stories of Abraham's dealings with Nimrod and Pharaoh. In one scene we find both Nimrod and Pharaoh doing their level best to put Abraham to death, and in the very next scene, behold, Nimrod and Pharaoh are loading their erstwhile victim with royal gifts and honors! In the Egyptian presentations (to be considered below) we are shown the king and/or god lying helpless upon the lion-couch, beaten by his cruel rival and at the very point of death, praying desperately for deliverance: and in the very next scene, the scene that always follows, the same king is sitting safely restored and triumphant on his throne.

What has brought about this miraculous turning of the tables? In every case it is the same thing—the direct intervention of God, who sends a delivering angel in response to the prayer of the man on the altar. The reader can study the story for himself in the Book of Abraham; now let us see what happens in the Nimrod legends and their predecessor, the Genesis Apocryphon.

Briefly, this is the story. Abraham is bound on a specially constructed altar (to be described hereinafter) and raises his voice in prayer to God. As the priest brings the knife near to the victim's throat, God sends an angel who offers to rescue him from his dire predicament; but Abraham refuses the proferred help, saying that it is God and God alone who will deliver him. At that moment God speaks to Abraham, the earth trembles, fire bursts forth, the altar is overthrown, the officiating priest is killed, and a general catastrophe fills the land with mourning. All this is so close to the Book of Abraham story, in which we are even told how "the Lord broke down the altar of Elkenah, 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 . . ." (Abr. 1:20), that one is tempted to play a game with the reader: we have deliberately omitted all footnotes at this point—they will come later—so that the reader can amuse himself by locating sources for the story just told among writings available to Joseph Smith. We know of none.

But back to our tale of wonder, for what happens next is stranger yet. Nimrod, baffled in every attempt to dispatch his arch-rival, is convinced at last that Abraham possesses a power greater than his, and suddenly turns from cursing the prophet to honoring him, humbly soliciting the privilege of personally offering sacrifices to the God of Abraham. More surprises: Abraham refuses the astonishing offer, saying, "God will not accept from thee after the manner of thy religion." To this Nimrod replies, "O Abraham, I cannot lay down my kingship, but I will offer oxen, and after that time [he] left Abraham, whom God had delivered from his power, in peace."[2] Here we have the strange paradox of a king who was, as the Book of Abraham puts it, blessed in the kingship "with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed . . . as pertaining to the Priesthood." (Abr. 1:26.) This puts everybody in an embarrassing situation: the proud monarch has made an unheard-of concession to Abraham, but Abraham refuses to meet him half way—he *cannot* give him what he wants. It was a painful and awkward impasse to which there was only one solution: Nimrod loaded Abraham with royal gifts and ordered his entire court to pay obeisance to him, after which "the king dismissed Abraham."[3] In the oldest version of the story, Pharaoh, after being rebuffed and offended by Abraham, whom he had "sought to slay," swears a royal oath to him, loads him with the highest honors, and orders him out of the country.[4]

We can appreciate the king's position, which is well explained in an apocryphal story of Joseph in Egypt. Pharaoh complains to Joseph that when the two of them ride out together in the royal chariot, the king cannot tell whether the people are cheering him or Joseph. This is an impossible situation, since there can be only *one* king in Egypt; and so the Pharaoh regretfully orders Joseph to descend from the chariot. Even so, Nimrod-Pharaoh cannot deny that Abraham's power is superior to his own, yet he *cannot* give up his kingship, nor can he take second place to any man in his own kingdom. And so he does that strange and paradoxical thing: he bestows the highest honors—kingly honors, including a purple robe and a royal escort—on his guest, and then banishes him from the country. Abraham must leave, even if he leaves with

the honors of victory and the trappings of a king. Such was the equivocal position and baffling behavior of a ruler who was, according to the Pearl of Great Price, both blessed *and* cursed.

O, Dry Those Tears: But what about the Egyptian sources? After all, the facsimiles are Egyptian. First of all, we look, of course, for *lion-couch* scenes, and soon discover that they are available in quantity. We also discover that there is quite a variety of such scenes, of which only a few resemble our Facsimile No. 1. It is these that interest us particularly, and it is gratifying to learn that a number of highly qualified Egyptologists have recently turned their attention to just these particular items and discovered first of all that they are *not* properly funerary. Indeed, a growing number of studies are now correcting the "other-worldly" myopia of Egyptological thinking in general, showing us that "Egyptian art is not essentially a funerary art" but is "entirely oriented towards the living,"[5] that rites performed for the dead king were really "a replica of the daily ceremonial toilet of the living king,"[6] that even such thoroughly funerary stuff as the Coffin Texts were largely "of a non-funerary character," and that "many, if not all, of the Coffin Texts were primarily used in *this* life. . . ."[7]

These non-funerary materials turn up in graves and coffins only because they have been adapted to the funerary situation. Sethe explains how an old Heliopolitan coronation text could be converted into a "typical text for the dead" by describing the king's ascension to heaven in terms of his coronation,[8] and notes that though the Pyramid Texts are all found in tombs, many of them are not *Totentexte* at all but describe birthday celebrations, royal banquets, royal progresses, etc.[9] The freedom with which the Egyptians borrowed texts and pictures originally describing one situation to illustrate a totally different situation provides the student with unlimited opportunities for speculation and reconstruction,[10] in which, to quote S. Schott, "it is often difficult to distinguish pictures of this world from those of the eternal world, since death itself passes as 'repetition of life' and the dead participate actively, especially in the great festivals, just as they would during their earthly existence."[11] Of particular interest is the recent study of A. Bakir, who after examining the early tomb-pictures in general comes to the surprising conclusion that "there is no evidence that a connection is intended with the hereafter. What is intended is rather a record of the deceased's activities in this world, the purpose clearly being to establish the *identity* of the owner of the tomb, and to provide a biographical survey of his achievements."[12] It was considered especially important to record "activities connected with the deceased's office in this world,"[12] in particular (as we learn from numerous funerary steles and biographical tomb inscriptions) those occasions which brought him into proximity with the Pharaoh—always the height of human bliss and attainment.

Now according to the Book of Abraham and the legends, the Patriarch enjoyed at least two significant contacts with Pharaoh, and that is the sort of thing that no Egyptian would fail to immortalize in some sort of biographical text—funerary or otherwise. We learn from Jubilees (39:6) that the descendants of Abraham living in Egypt used to *read* his story to their children, and there is no reason to deny the many reports that Abraham did write a biography—a number of early apocryphal writings claim the honor of being that book, which is now lost. Could the facsimilies be biographical in nature? If so, their obviously ritual "canonical" appearance would effectively obscure the fact. Gardiner is suspicious of all "hackneyed representations" put forth by the Egyptians as historical pictures, because they "may merely belong to the world of imagination and make-believe."[13] By the same token, however, they *may* be authentic history; the great battle and festival reliefs, no matter how hackneyed and unreliable in their details, are at least the best evidence that certain important battles and festivals really did take place. For all their stereotyped monotony, they are recollections of actual historical events. Likewise, if our facsimiles seem rather conventional and unimaginative, it is because, as we have insisted all along, the events they indicate are (aside from the restricting conventions of Egyptian art) of a strictly ritual nature, but that does not prevent their being historical as well. The long-established article of faith, that pictures found in tombs represent "never the real world, but only the Other World, the land of religious imagination,"[14] must now be abandoned in favor of the proposition that most of those pictures show things that really took place in the world of the living.

The "Lion-couch" Museum: It is a happy coincidence that leading Egyptologists should very recently have chosen the lion-couch motif as a specific lead to exploring the baffling relationships between history, ritual, and myth in the Egyptian record. Let us imagine that the most important lion-couch scenes have all been gathered together in a single hall of the museum, where we have gone to view them. Dick and Jane are being conducted through the museum by the curator, Mr. Jones, who shows them things and tells them stories. Mr. Jones has a handbook that tells him everything.

To help readers understand the complex issues, the author gives explanatory dialogue

Dick: Look, Jane, look! Here is a wonderful picture of a man on a bed that looks just like the man and the bed in Facsimile No. 1.

Mr. Jones: That is a famous relief, found in the temple of Opet at Luxor.

Jane: But why is it in this dark room?

Mr. Jones: This is one of three chambers, arranged (according to the infallible handbook) "like three stations in the divine epoch."[15]

Jane: What's an epoch?

Mr. Jones: An important story. These pictures tell a story. If you will come here to the opposite chamber, the one on the south side, after passing through the middle room (which has a special meaning of its own), you will notice that it is a counterpart of the first room; only here, instead of lying on a bed, the man is sitting on a throne. This is the happy ending of the story that seems to be going so badly in the other room. Let us go back there again: According to Professor Varille, "a famous scene in the sanctuary shows 'Osiris who is in the midst of Thebes' [that's what he is called in the inscription] in the aspect of a young man stretched on a bed which had the form of a lion; he is in the act of reviving." You can tell that, because he "begins to bestir himself, bending his right arm and raising his left foot."[16]

Dick: Why does he hold his hand like that?

Mr. Jones: Because he is praying as well as waking up. In a little while we shall read his prayer. Notice also that the position of the hand and even the feet, according to the handbook, is "the position of prayer."[17] Prayer is indicated whether the hands are turned in or out; the accepted way is to show both hands in the same position.[18]

Jane: This is much nicer than the Abraham pictures. The hands there are a mess.

Mr. Jones: Yes. In Egyptian pen-pictures "the hand is rarely drawn true to nature. . . . In hasty drawings . . . many times . . . there is no means of distinguishing a right hand from a left hand"—it is that bad.[19]

Jane (pointing to figures in the forecourt): The ladies are raising their hands like that, too. Are they praying?

Mr. Jones: Some have suggested that the hands of the man in Facsimile No. 1 are in the position of "bereavement," but that is silly, since the dead person is never the bereaved. Look, sometimes they're weeping but not always: at Denderah the lady standing by the couch with her hand in the same position says, "I raise my hand to protect thy members."[20] Sometimes the ladies are neither praying nor weeping but making magical passes to restore the dead.

Dick: Is the man dead?

Mr. Jones: He is and he isn't; that's just the wonder of it. It says here that the death chamber is also the birth chamber, or rather "the place where Osiris is begotten . . . where he dies to be reborn."[21] Here "death is conceived as the beginning of a new life." In other words, the man on the couch is both the dead king, Osiris, and the living king, Horus.[22]

Jane: How can he be both? Who is he, anyway?

Mr. Jones: Perpend. "The temporal father of the young Horus is Osiris who revives *in* his son, whose spiritual father, however, is the life-giving Amon."[23]

Dick: So he's three people at once?

Mr. Jones: He's more people than that—he's the king, too![23]

Jane: That's silly.

Mr. Jones: No. The picture is telling us more than just what happened at one moment. This one picture recounts a whole series of events. The man on the couch is in great distress, he has been beaten by his enemy, he is on the point of death; he cries out to his father Amon to come to his aid, and sure enough, there is Amon, the bird flying above him. Some say it is his own soul returning to him, and it can be that also. That is the nice or annoying thing about Egyptian, as Professor Speleers says: one thing can be a number of different things at the same time—which doesn't make very good sense to us. But the man's return to life is only part of the answer to his prayer: notice that just behind the lady Isis, a real fight is going on. A man with the head of a hawk is about to club the daylights out of a contemptibly small long-eared creature whose arms are tightly bound to his sides. He is the Typhonian beast, the Seth animal, Death, the arch-enemy of the man on the couch, and he is now about to get the same type of punishment he handed out—the tables have been turned, the prayers have been answered, the hawk Horus has come to rescue his father from death. It is very much the same drama that meets us in Facsimile No. 1.

Dick: How do you know all that?

Mr. Jones: Because this is not the only lion-couch picture. If you will step over here, you will notice a number of reliefs in which the lion-couch appears not just in one scene but in a number, and also that these scenes go together and show the unfolding of some sort of ritual or drama. Here is the most famous of all, the series discovered by Mariette at Denderah,[24]

and here are others from the tombs of nobles at Thebes, and more from the tombs of Rameses IV and Rameses IX.[25] This should teach you when you have seen one "lion-couch" scene not to take it for granted that you have seen them all. Any one of them can be understood only as part of a longer story. Look, here is a coffin with three lion-couch scenes on it, and here is another with the same three scenes. Notice how different the episodes are: in one the mummy simply lies in state; in the second, Anubis is working busily over it; and in the third, the lion has started to walk with bold strides; the figure on the couch is also walking, and grain is springing up exuberantly all around him—a very different story from pictures one and two![26]

Jane: It looks dark and scarey.

Dick: This Opet room is dark and scarey too!

Mr. Jones: It is supposed to be. It "represents the western heaven in which the god is supposed to die and which will also be the tomb in which he will rest. . . ."[27]

Dick: That's gloomy enough.

Mr. Jones: But that isn't the whole story—let us read on: "But he only dies in order to be reborn; he falls beneath the blows of his enemies only to triumph with greater splendor."[27]

Jane: But are these real people?

Mr. Jones: This one is: come over here to this other temple, the Temple of Seti I. Here you see the very same lion-couch scene, only in this case we know that the man on the couch is a real person; it is King Seti I himself. "Seti I," says the handbook (1965), "dressed in a shroudlike garment . . . stretched out on a bed ornamented with lion heads."[28]

Jane: Why is his face green?

Mr. Jones (reading): "The king's face is shown painted green because he was considered dead."

Dick: So he was dead after all.

Mr. Jones: Not so fast! That one word written above the bed is "Awake!" And the man is doing just that. Here in the lower register "the king has turned from his back, and the posture resembles that of a sphinx rather than a mummy or a dead person."[28] He is just about to get up and dress, in fact, look how "below the bed there are spread out the royal regalia . . . of which the king would presently take possession after his rebirth."[28] And what do you think he is going to do after he puts on all that royal regalia?

Dick and Jane: Sit on the throne.

Mr. Jones: Right. That is the next act. Now look at this scene. It is the same thing again, this time much older, from the great shrine of Niuserre. Remember that was a center of Sun-cult, with its imposing Hill of the Sunrise, and its altar of sacrifice and all the rest.[29]

Dick: Just like "Potipher's Hill," in the Book of Abraham, eh?

Mr. Jones: It certainly looks like it.[30] Do you see what that suggests? That this lion-couch business took place on just such a great ritual occasion and at just such a place as that described in the Pearl of Great Price. The guidebook says this relief of Seti I showing the king on his back represents nothing less than "the supreme moment of the *Sed*-festival . . . the climax of the festival. . . ."[31] ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[1]Klaus Baer, in *Dialogue*, Vol. 3 (Autumn, 1968), p. 127; cf. 113, 133f.

[2]Quote is from Tha'labi, Qissas al-Anbiyah, p. 55; sources in H. Schützinger, *Urprung u. Entiwicklung der arab. Abraham-Nimrod Legende* (Bonn, 1961), pp. 30f.

[3]*Pirke R. Eliezer*, c. 16c; other sources in B. Beer, *Leben Abrahams*, p. 18.

[4]*Genesis Apocryphon*, XX, 9. Pharaoh seeks to slay Abraham to possess Sarah (22); he is told that Abraham cannot pray for him unless he gives up Sarah (26-27); he angrily complains that Abraham has tricked him (as Nimrod does) and orders him to leave the country, but first beseeches him to give him a blessing (28), in return for which he heaps royal honors upon Abraham (30-32). The Genesis Apocryphon represents portions of one of the original seven scrolls found near the Dead Sea in 1947 that have been translated and appear in the book *A Genesis Apocryphon*, by Nahman Avigad and Yigael Yadin. The book tells part of the story of Abraham's sojourn into Egypt.

[5]J. Capart, in *Chroniques d'Egypte*, Vol. 32 (1957), p. 177.

[6]A. M. Blackman, in *Rec. de Travaux*, Vol. 39 (1921), p. 47; and in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 5 (1918), p. 124; J. Cerny, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 102.

[7]W. Federn, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19 (1960), pp. 245f, 250. (Italics added.)

[8]K. Sethe, *Uebersetzung u. Kommentar zu den altaeg. Pyramidentexten* (Glückstadt-Hamburg, 1934), Vol. 1, pp. 118f, 121.

[9]Thus coronation rites in *Pyramid Texts* No. 220:191ff, 222:199-206; birthday celebrations in No. 220, banquets in No. 223:214a; a royal progress in No. 223:215b and 224.

[10]Thus, while some say that the famous Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus was originally a coronation rite for Sesostris I and later adapted to the funeral of Amenemes I, others reverse the interpretation: it was Sesostris's funeral and Amenemes's coronation! W. Helck, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 23 (1954), p. 383; H. Altenmueller, in *Ex Oriente Lux*, Vol. 19 (1966), p. 440.

[11]S. Schott, *Das schoene Fest vom Wuestentale* (Mainz: Akad. der Wiss., 1952), p. 7. Quite recently it has been shown that Papyrus Salt 825a, heretofore dismissed as "a somewhat uninteresting manual of magic," actually "contains the remains of an authentic ritual" of considerable interest and importance; J. G. Griffiths, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 53 (1967), p. 186; H. Altenmueller, in *Chron. d'Egyptol.*, Vol. 42 (1967), p. 81.

[12]A. Bakir, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 53 (1967), pp. 159f. The "series of depictions" was "tantamount to the use of narration," being elaborated "according to the theme and according to the space available" (p. 160).

[13]A. H. Gardiner, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 36 (1950), p. 7.

[14]Ed. Naville, *Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch* (Berlin, 1886), p. 20.

[15]M. de Rochemonteix, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 3 (1894), p. 185.

[16]A. Varille, in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 53 (1955), p. 111.

[17]L. Klebs, *Reliefs . . . des mittleren Reiches*, VII-XVII . . . (Heidelberg, 1922), p. 177.

[18]H. Mueller, in *Mitteilungen des deutschen Instituts in Kairo*, Vol. 7 (1937), pp. 70, 94.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 60.

[20]Rochemonteix, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

[21]*Ibid.*, p. 317.

[22]A. Varille, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

[23]*Ibid.*, p. 111. He is Osiris, Re, "the King himself," and several versions of Amon, according to Rochemonteix, *op. cit.*, pp. 272, 274-75.

[24]M. Mariette, *Dendereh*, IV, 65, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 75, 88, 89, 90, reproduced in R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, V. Plates 268ff, along with other lion-scenes, and in E. A. W. Budge, *Osiris*, N.Y.: University Books, 1961), Chapter XV.

[25]G. Maspero, in *Memoires de l'Inst. Francais d'archeol. Orientale du Caire*, Vol. 5 (1894), p. 446 (Tomb of Montouhikhopshouf), p. 515, and Pl. iii (Tomb of Neferhotpu), Pl. IX (Tomb of Aba).

[26]J. Capart in *Chron. d'Egypt.*, Vol. 19, p. 195, figs. 26-28 (Coffin of Moutardis), 29-30 (Djed-Bastet-Ioufankh).

[27]Rochemonteix, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

[28]E. Uphill, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24 (1965), p. 379.

[29]*Ibid.*, pp. 177-78; H. Schaefer, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 37 (1899), pp. 1-9, and L. Borchardt, *ibid.*, Vol. 38, pp. 94ff.

[30]*Era*, Vol. 72 (March 1969), pp. 76ff.

[31]Uphill, *op. cit.*, pp. 377, 379.

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price, Part 7
(Continued)

The Unknown Abraham

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

(Editor's Note: Continuing his imaginary discussion between two students and a museum curator, in order to help readers better understand the complex issues of the case, the author has just established "that this lion-couch business" takes place on "great ritual occasions" as described in the Book of Abraham; such an occasion was "the supreme moment of the Sed*-festival.")*

• *Dick:* If it was so important, why don't we find it everywhere?

Mr. Jones: We do, if we know what to look for, but they deliberately covered it up; our guidebook says the event "was perhaps rarely illustrated."[31] It is only found in royal tombs and shrines that were strictly closed to the public.

Jane: What is the *Sed*-festival?

Mr. Jones: It was the greatest of all the Egyptian celebrations, "the great national *Panegyris*," when men and gods met at the sun-shrine of Memphis to renew the corporate life of the nation and the world.[32] It was *the* year-rite, beginning on "the first day of the first month of the year,"[33] and the most ancient and venerable of rites, amply attested to in prehistoric documents;[34] it celebrated the founding of the kingdom and the creation of the world.[35] It was also the most persistent of traditions, and though, of course, during the many times it was put on, the five-day show was bound to undergo many alterations and adjustments,[36] by virtue of deliberate archaistic revivals based on the study of old records it was possible to celebrate the *Sed*-festival in the very last dynasties of Egypt in a manner "astoundingly" like that of the very first dynasties.[37] It was the king's own show: "For the nature of kingship in Egypt, it is, above all, the Sed festival which is instructive," writes H. Frankfort; everything centers on "the solitary figure on the throne of Horus."[38] As "the founding of the kingdom, in which all the gods and potentates of the land participated," it corresponded, of course, to the coronation rites.[39] Every coronation could not be expected to fall smack on the 30-year Jubilee of the rule, but that was the sort of problem that gave the Egyptians no trouble.[40]

Dick: Thirty-year Jubilee?

Mr. Jones: Yes, that is what the *Sed*-festival was. You will notice that Bonnet in the handbook lists it only under that title: Thirty-year Festival.[41] The usual explanation is that originally, since the prosperity of the land in every sense depended on the king, he could not be allowed to become weak, so that when he showed signs of running down at the end of 30 years of rule, it was necessary to renew his powers, and so he was "ceremonially put to death."[42]

Dick: That's a funny way to renew anybody's powers —to kill him!

Jane: Yes, what could he do if he was dead?

Mr. Jones: Well, he would just get up again, renewed and invigorated, succeeded by himself in the person of his son, in whom he was reembodied. It was "abdication followed by replacement . . . a renewal," says Professor Moret.[43] According to Professor Frankfort, we should not even use the word succession. "It is not a succession," he said, "but a renewal . . . a true renewal of kingly potency, a rejuvenation of rulership."[44]

It was especially the occasion on which the king's divine authority was proclaimed, "a periodic commemoration festival," as H. Kees puts it, "in which special rights were conceded and energetically brought to mind for the benefit of the ruling house."[45] Author-

ity is the big thing; the king always appears as a victor in the rites, and many scholars believe that the *Sed*-festival was, in fact, a prehistoric celebration of victory over the rebels of the North, with the king as the conquering Horus.[46] The other theory is that the *Sed*-festival originally belonged to Osiris, the king of the dead, which of course complicates things.

Dick: Why do they always have to drag that old Osiris into the picture?

Mr. Jones: Nobody drags him in—he is always there. But, as H. Schaeffer says, Egyptologists don't need to go overboard and think he is the whole show just because of that.[47] Some, like Moeller and Helck, think that the *Sed* originally belonged to the king alone and that Osiris later moved in on him: the king's rites were "reinterpreted in terms of Osiris."[48] Yet Moret saw in the *Sed*-festival nothing less than the "Osirification of the King."[49] The trouble is that in the earliest representations of the rites the king wears exactly the same festival costume as Osiris.[50]

Dick: So the king is Osiris after all.

Mr. Jones: That is what Professor Frazer thought, of course, but Gardiner and Kees and Wainwright and others thought it was just the other way around—it is Osiris who is borrowing the king's costume; he came late and took it over. But there was nothing wrong with that, because *as a king* Osiris would have a perfect right to the royal duds as well as the privilege of "having 'countless *Sed*-festivals' " of his own.[51]

Dick: What difference does it make which comes first?

Mr. Jones: Bravo! That is just what an Egyptian would say. After all their arguing, the same experts agree: "Yet it seems likely that the accession of Horus was *equivalent* to renewal of the reign of Osiris himself, since . . . every Horus-king was a potential Osiris";[52] Osiris and Horus, the royal funeral and the royal succession "coalesced into a single celebration,"[53] even though the king is no Osiris, "the two are thought of as equivalent *[entsprechend]*" in this particular operation.[54] King, Horus, Osiris—all the same. And you can see why, if you just think about the meaning of the rites. A *Sed*-festival had to be immediately preceded by a funeral: "The old king must be buried so that the 'new king' can mount the throne."[55] They had to come so close together as to belong to the same celebration.

Jane: Why so close? Couldn't they wait awhile after the funeral?

Dick: "Thrift, thrift, Horatio!"

Mr. Jones: No, it wasn't that. During the transition from one reign to another, there was always a moment during which the throne was empty, when the world was without a ruler; it was, as H. Altermueller says, "the moment of utmost danger" to the whole world order, and so it had to be made as short as possible.[56] So the funeral impinges on the rites from the first, and that led scholars to confuse the *Sed*-festival with the mysteries of Osiris: From the very first, says Dr. Helck, "the old prehistoric mysteries of Abydos necessarily included both the funeral of the dead king and "the installment of his successor."[57] It was always assumed accordingly that the Osirian mysteries originated as prehistoric royal funeral rites, but "more recently," according to Professor Kemp, "connection with the *Sed*-festival has been suggested."[58] This is a recent development, as the man says, and it is an important one.

Dick: Why important?

Mr. Jones: Because it explains the lion-couch. To be renewed instead of succeeded, the king had to do two things. One, he had to stay alive, and two, he had to get a transfusion from somewhere. Remember, there *had* to be a funeral as part of the show, and it had to be his funeral: how do you think he could manage that and still stay alive?

Jane: By having a make-believe funeral. Kids like to play that.

Dick: By getting a substitute to get killed for him.

Mr. Jones: You are both right. Here we see King Seti I on his lion-couch; what the whole scene suggests to Professor Uphill is "that there was a mock funeral and burial, followed by a reawakening ceremony, taking place after the king had entered the tomb."[59] Even earlier, Dr. Edwards, the great authority on the pyramids, suggests, a special tomb-chamber connected with "the earliest stone building in the world" may have contained "a dummy, designed for use in the symbolic sacrifice of the king during the *heb-sed*. . . ."[60] So you see, the idea of an imitation sacrifice occurred to the Egyptians very early. So did the idea of a substitute, and that is not surprising either, for who, as Homer might say, enjoys being sacrificed?[61] Already in the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom we read of kings who were lucky enough or clever enough to "escape the days of death."[62] Sometimes a king would pointedly ignore the priests who ordered him to submit to sacrifice, as did Pepi II, who "had no intention of being sacrificed,"[63] and sometimes a king would openly defy them, or even turn the tables and make *them* the sacrificial victims.[64] And why not, if the Pyramid Texts themselves are, as Professor Breasted called them, "a passionate protest against death"?[65] All the great Pyramid Builders from King Zoser on were able to beat the game and evade the summons of ritual death, until the last one, King Mycerinus, who gave in to the priests and got himself sacrificed.[66] As a reward, Mycerinus

was hailed forever after in the priestly annals of Egypt as the greastest, noblest, and holiest of all the kings, the restorer of the temples and the rites which those wicked apostate Pharaohs, Cheops and Chephren, had abollished.[67] Well, the one way a king could fulfill the funerary requirements of the *Sed*-festival and still stay alive was to have a substitute be put to death in his place, and this device was early adopted and forever retained. For you see, it fulfilled all the requirements at once: it got the king out of a tight fix, it supplied the blood necessary for his transfusion, and it gave him victory over his enemies—remember, the *Sed*-festival had to be a victory celebration.

Dick: But where does the victory come in?

Jane: And the transfusion?

Mr. Jones: It is the person of the sacrificial victim that makes all the difference. The most obvious substitute for a man is his son, and there are cases of pharaohs whose sons were sacrificed on their behalf.[68] But that was hardly more satisfactory than liquidating the king himself. No, there was a much better solution since time immemorial: "Foreigners, and especially prisoners of war all the world over have provided an obvious supply of substitutes."[69] The enemy, and especially the enemy chief, who had placed himself in open rivalry to Pharaoh, was a natural candidate for his sacrificial sword or ceremonial mace, and in many a monument the King of Egypt is seen personally dispatching his rival. Right out here in the hall you will see Rameses II personally executing defeated enemy kings and princes, and here are other Pharaohs doing the same thing, right back to the beginning. The scene "occurs again in reliefs of all periods."[70]

Dick: Isn't that just for fun?

Mr. Jones: Hardly. For the Egyptians, there was a holy necessity behind it. Actually, the Egyptians did not like bloody sacrifice, and they detested human sacrifice, so that for a long time scholars seriously debated whether they ever practiced human sacrifice at all.[71] But that question has been settled for good: they did, but it was a ritual business from which even cannibalism was not excluded.[72] The idea centered around "the eating of the flesh and blood of the enemy, whose powers are regenerated in the eater."[72a] That's well known. Look, here is the oldest of all the royal sacrifices, in which the king personally offers a gazelle; but from the liturgy that accompanies the rites, it is clear that the gazelle represented the enemy of the king, an enemy chief, in fact, nay, his arch rival Seth himself. During the sacrifice the king says: "Long live the fair god . . . the hero who slaughters his adversaries." And as the royal "butcher slaughters his enemy before the divine throne," the cry is raised: "Long live the fair god . . . rejuvenated youth!"[73] The rite is entitled "Slaying the Antelope . . . that the King might be endowed with life," and in preparation the officiant says, to the king: "I sharpen thy knife to slay thine enemies," announcing that the officiant will be "appeased when she has drunk their blood."[74] As Moret puts it, "the King got a substitute for the Sed killing, whom he decapitated with his own hand, or had a priest shed the blood of a prisoner of war, whose throbbing life assured a new lease on life to the senile monarch."[75] Here we have the transfusion taken care of at the same time that the enemy is punished.

Jane: But if the victim is a substitute for the king, then the king must be killing himself!

Mr. Jones: That is another interesting thing. The victim is the substitute for the king. By his death he does the king a great service—only through him, in fact, can the king achieve his great goal; and so in dying he is purged of all the evil of his former nature; he has "atoned."[76] The qualifications for the royal substitute make that clear: he must be a stranger (thus representing the original hostility that Pharaoh is to subdue), he must be of royal blood (to be the real rival and substitute for Pharaoh),[77] and he must be blond or redheaded.

Dick: Come again?

Mr. Jones: From the earliest times the enemy of Horas who tried to slay him was his brother Seth, or Typhon, who is always represented as being redheaded. That is why redheaded victims were sacrificed "on the solar tomb" at Heliopolis and at Busiris.[78] These were the "Typhonian men put to death by Pharaoh";[79] this is what Professor Moret said: "A victim was sacrificed and its life taken, in order that its life . . . might enter the body of Osiris. Sometimes the victims were men, prisoners of war, Libyans with red hair, recalling the image of Seth, who had red skin and hair."[80] The Greeks told many stories of Pharaohs who seized noble Greek visitors to Egypt, where blonds were hard to come by, as sacrificial victims.[81]

Dick: Yes, but those are just myths.

Mr. Jones: Come over to the case here. Do you know what this is? This is a seal for marking sacrificial animals in Egypt, to show that they had passed the rigorous qualifications for a holy offering.

Dick: A sort of government meat inspection, eh?

Mr. Jones: Yes, and a very necessary one. A priestly medical doctor also examined the blood to make sure it was ritually "pure."[82] Herodotus (II, 385) says that in his day it was a capital offense to sacrifice an animal that had not been properly stamped or sealed.

Jane: Why?

Mr. Jones: Because every animal had to be very

"...we are facing some royal lion-couch scenes that look just like" Facsimile No. 1

carefully inspected to make sure that it was the right *color.* If it had just *one* black or white hair, it was disqualified! It had to be all red—light brown.[83] Now what do you see on the seal?

Dick: A man kneeling down with his arms tied behind him and a great big knife—I guess it's a knife—at his neck.[84]

Mr. Jones: It is a knife, and you see that it means the victim was originally human.[81] The Egyptians, like other people, early substituted cattle for people in their sacrifices (the gazelle, for example); Osiris is said to have abolished the sacrifice of humans and put oxen in their place, and finally the people ended up sacrificing wax models and even oxen made of bread—once you admit the principle of substitution, there is no limit to how far you can go.[85]

Jane (yawning): What has all this to do with Abraham?

Mr. Jones: A great deal, as you will soon find out if you can only be patient. Let's get back to the man on the lion couch. What is going on here is called the climax, the supreme moment of the *Sed*-festival, no less.[86] And the man who says that hastens to add that it is *not* a funerary scene, really: "Although the context of this scene is undoubtedly funerary, it also depicts a ceremony that would be difficult to enact unless the king was really alive. . . ."[86] It is a funeral with a happy ending, a funeral at which the king only pretends to be dead.

Jane: But why do they go to all that trouble—couldn't they just say "Presto!" instead of making such a fuss?

Mr. Jones: Oh, but the fuss is the most important thing! That is what proves to the world that the king is the king: he proves that he has the life-sustaining power by overcoming the supreme enemy—death itself; he enters the dark chamber of the tomb, and he emerges triumphant.

Dick: That sounds like Easter to me.

Mr. Jones: Well, a highly respected Egyptologist recently put it this way: he said that the coffins and mummy cases of the Egyptians teach a double lesson, expressing the reality of both death and resurrection, "which can be summed up in the words of the Christian creed, 'He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven.' "[87] After all, the primitive Christians did not hesitate to find the most convincing demonstration of the resurrection in Egypt.[88] Now here we are facing some royal lion-couch scenes that look just like the picture in the Joseph Smith papyrus; they are from the shrines of Niuserre, of Seti I, Tutankhamen, the tombs of nobles at Thebes, the temples of Opet and Denderah, and they are all found in dark inner chambers, secret crypts. The oldest one here is King Niuserre's and represents "the climax of the festival"—the *Sed*-festival—when "the king goes down into his tomb" where a lion-couch awaits him, above which is a damaged inscription about the resurrection of the flesh.[89] Remember I. E. S. Edwards's suggestion that the granite tomb-chamber of one of the earliest pharaohs was "designed for use in the symbolic sacrifice of the king during the *heb-sed*"; that shows how old the idea is. Both these chambers were found in complexes of what we have called the "Potiphar's Hill" variety.[90] But for the climax of the whole business, the crypt was the thing, the tomb-chamber, the *abaton.*

Jane: What is an *abaton*?

Mr. Jones: The same as an *adyton,* the most inaccessible shrine of a temple; an inner chamber in which no mortal may set foot. In Egypt it represented the tomb of Osiris, the chamber between the upper and lower worlds, the place of both death and resurrection.[91] Notice here how the tomb of Tutankhamen dramatizes the king's rebirth by a series of chambers, passages, and doors—the king must pass through some sort of underworld before he can emerge triumphant; here King Tutankhamen "comes as Osiris to his tomb, where a cycle of transformation is going to begin again."[92] It is not just one event, but a series of events that takes place. Here at Denderah, for example, are three surviving tableaux showing funeral, resurrection, and coronation, in that order, though Professor Derchain reminds us that these pictures probably bear little, if any, resemblance to what really went on.[93]

Dick: Why is that?

Mr. Jones: Because the scenes are very abbreviated—they haven't any intention of being complete—and sometimes they are all jumbled around, being adapted to expressing several ideas at once.[94] Here are four successive scenes from the tomb of Rameses IX, where the king, who starts out as Osiris, is resurrected in four stages: first he is lying on his back, then he has turned over on his face, then he is moving his arms and legs, and finally he is standing upright.[95] A "very rare" vignette from the Book of the Dead shows such "rites of rebirth" using three lion-couches in succes-

sion.[96] A complete illustration would perhaps call for 24 pictures, because each hour of the day represented a phase in the rites of Osiris.[97]

Dick: How can we really know what went on, then?

Mr. Jones: By the written records and by comparison with what went on in other places. Let us take this crypt business, for example. Many Greek and Roman writers tell us that it was still the custom in Egypt in their day for the people yearly to go into mourning for Osiris, hidden away in the earth in a dark crypt;[98] there is evidence for such practices at every period of Egyptian history—this crypt of Tutankhamen, for example, into which the king and even the sun-god Re himself must enter, is labeled "the cavern which is in the place of annihilation."[99] In Babylonia the king at the great coronation and New Year's rites was hidden away for three days in an underground chamber, where he suffered the utmost degradation; during that time a make-believe king sat on his throne; then the substitute (who, of course, was treated exactly like the real king) was put to death, and the real king emerged triumphant from the tomb, where he had suffered an imitation death. A. Moortgat noticed that many of the early royal graves of Sumer had the bricks removed from the crypt just over the king's head, and that in every such case the king's body was missing, even though the treasures of the tomb are left untouched—and this only happens in the case of kings, never of other people, including queens. Which suggests to Professor Moortgat that this is not the work of tomb robbers, but an attempt to make it look as if the king had indeed risen from the tomb.[100] After the sacrifice, when the coast is clear, "the old king who has been shamming dead in a tomb" emerges safe and sound.[101] The same sort of thing seems to have been going on in Egypt from early times.

Dick: What makes you think so?

Mr. Jones: Well, look here, for example—the so-called Bent-Pyramid, one of the early experimental monuments of the pharaohs. Here the tomb-chamber was found broken open—but not robbed! And the king was missing.[102] Here in a pyramid text a resurrection rite is compared with the removing of bricks from the royal vault.[103] Coming down a little later, here is a coffin text that reads, "O Osiris So-and-so [naming the king or noble] . . . the walls about thy tomb are knocked down. . . . Awake, arise! All thy members are restored. Thou art not dead!"[104] The Classical writers have described the wild rejoicings that followed the mourning for Osiris when his faithful followers discovered "the empty tumulus of Osiris."[105] If this sounds surprisingly Christian, let me refer you to a very early Jewish-Christian writing called the Epistle of Barnabas, which says that the king at the New Year had to be represented by *two* ritual animals because he "on the same day wore a royal robe *after* he had been cursed, ridiculed and crucified."[106] That is, the old Jewish rites represented this very sort of thing, which in Barnabas's belief prefigured the sufferings and victory of the Lord.

Dick: More Easter business.

Mr. Jones: The atmosphere of excitement and wonder in the rites of Osiris certainly does remind one of an Oriental Easter celebration of a medieval Holy Week. It is terribly dramatic and, in fact, took the form of a real play. I can't tell you about it now, but the most dramatic moment of all, the crucial moment of truth on which the whole story hinges, was that unbearably tense instant in which the world held its breath awaiting the decision of eternal life or death. Come over here and look at these writings all over these big coffins: these are the Coffin Texts, and they tell us all about it. These texts on the wall from the Book of the Dead and the Classical writers will eke out the story. Let us take it step by step. ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[32]A. H. Gardiner, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 30 (1944), p. 28.
[33]*Ibid.*, p. 30.
[34]See the note in *Chron. d'Egypt.*, Vol. 38 (1963), p. 73, and G. A. Wainwright, *The Sky-Religion in Egypt* (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 23f, 80.
[35]S. Schott, in *Akad. der Wiss. u. Lit.* (Wiesbaden, 1954), No. 5, pp. 167f.
[36]G. Moeller, *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 39 (1901), pp. 71f; W. Helck, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 23 (1954), pp. 385, 383; H. Altenmueller, in *Ex Or. Lux*, Vol. 19, p. 442; H. Kees, *Der Goetterglaube im alten Aegypten* (Leipzig, 1941), p. 379.
[37]H. Kees, *Totenglaube . . . der alten Aegypter* (Leipzig, 1926), p. 16; A. H. Gardiner, in *Jnl. of Egypt. Archaeol.*, Vol. 24 (1938), p. 165.
[38]H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (University of Chicago, 1948), p. 79.
[39]Kees, *Goetterglaube*, p. 296: though every Sed has a coronation, the reverse does not apply.
[40]Altenmueller, *op. cit.*, p. 441.
[41]H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der Aegyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 158-61.
[42]Wainwright, *Sky Religion*, p. 4; quote is from I. Edwards, *The Pyramids*, p. 56.
[43]A. Moret, *La Mise a Mort du dieu en Egypte* (Paris, 1927), p. 49.
[44]Frankfort, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
[45]Kees, *Goetterglaube*, p. 191.
[46]Bonnet, *op. cit.*, p. 159; Kees, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
[47]H. Schaefer, *Mysterien des Osiris in Abydos* (Leipzig, 1904), p. 21.
[48]G. Moeller, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 39, p. 73; quote is from W. Helck, *Orientalia*, Vol. 23, p. 383; cf. C. de Wit, *Chron. d'Eg.*, Vol. 42, pp. 78ff.
[49]A. Moret, *Mysteres Egyptiens* (Paris: 1913), p. 73.
[50]Moeller, *op. cit.*, p. 74 & next note.
[51]A. H. Gardiner criticizes Frazer, and cites Kees, *in Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 2 (1916), p. 124. Cf. Wainwright, *op. cit.*, p. 20, n. 1.
[52]Gardiner, *loc. cit.* J. Cerny, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 35, suggests that Osiris was "originally a human king who became deified after his death."
[53]Frankfort, *Kingship*, p. 194.
[54]K. Sethe, *Komment. zu den Pyramindentexte*, Vol. 1, p. 84, on No. 219: 167b.
[55]Altenmueller, in *Ex Or. Lux*, p. 441.
[56]H. Altenmueller, in *Chronique d'Egyptol.*, Vol. 42 (1967), p. 81.
[57]W. Helck, in *Archiv Orientalni*, 1952, pp. 72ff.
[58]B. J. Kemp, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 52 (1966), p. 13.
[59]E. Uphill, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24 (1965), p. 379, *Pyramid Texts* 12-13, 17-21, 32.
[60]I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids* (Pelican, 1956), pp. 61-63; cf. A. Moret, *Le Culte Divin*, p. 224.
[61]On "the sacred king's unwillingess to resign" see R. Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Penguin, 1955), Vol. 1, p. 153, passim.
[62]*Pyramid Texts*, No. 570: 1453-5, 1467-8, 1450. M. A. Murray, in *Ancient Egypt*, 1928, p. 8, was first to comment on the significance of these passages.

[63]Wainwright, *Sky Religion*, p. 28.
[64]*Ibid.*, p. 52. A dramatic turning of the tables is recounted in Diodorus III, 6.
[65]J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (Harper Torchbooks, 1959), p. 91.
[66]Wainwright, *op. cit.*, pp. 88, 65f, gives sources.
[67]Herodotus, II, 127-130.
[68]G. A. Wainwright, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 26, p. 38. Conversely, Alexander the Great regarded himself as the son and reincarnation of Pharaoh Nectanebos, whom he sacrificed by throwing over a cliff, Pseudo-Callisthenes, I, 34, and I, 14. C. Alred notes that every king of the 18th Dynasty had a junior partner whom he completely ignored and who may have been his double and substitute in the *Sed*-festival, *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 94 (1967), pp. 2-3.
[69]Wainwright, *Sky Religion*, pp. 60-61.
[70]W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altäg Kulturgesch.*, Vol. 2, Pt. i, Taf, 57a, Pt. ii, Taf. 163, 164, 184a; quote is from Budge, *Osiris* (1961), Vol. I, pp. 197f.
[71]M. G. Kyle, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 27 (1905), pp. 161ff, vigorously denied human sacrifice in Egypt. The idea of cannibalism at any time is rejected by G. Ebers, *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 36 (1898), p. 106f, by S. Schott, *ibid.*, Vol. 74 (1938), p. 93, and E. A. W. Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), Vol. 1, p. 28.
[72]G. Maspero, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 1, p. 156: "Human sacrifice was never completely abolished in Egypt." Human sacrifice to Osiris is treated by M. Lefebure, *ibid.*, XXXVI, 287f. See the important studies of A. Moret, *Mysteres Egyptiens*, pp. 51-53, and Maspero, in *Memoires* of the *Inst. Francais d'Archeol. Orientale du Caire*, Vol. 5, pp. 439-46. The "immolation of servants" is apparently in early royal tombs of *abydos*, A. H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 409f. W. F. M. Petrie, in *Ancient Egypt*, 1914, p. 18, reports evidence of cannibalistic rites, as does J. Garnot, *Vie Religieuxes*, p. 3; cf. Ed. Meyer, *Gesch. d. Altertums*, I, 2, pp. 91f, and especially J. Baillet, in *Bulletin de l'Inst. Fr. d'Arch. Orientale*, Vol. 30 (1931), pp. 61-72. The fullest treatment is in E. A. W. Budge, *Osiris* (N.Y.: University Books, 1961), Vol. 1, pp. 167-230.
[72a]G. Thausing, *Der Auferstehungsgedanke in aeg. religioesen Texten* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1943), p. 25, citing Pyr. Text No. 460.
[73]Ph. Derchain, *Rites Egyptiens, I Le Sacrifice de l'Oryx* (Brussels, 1962), p. 55, cf. *Pyr. Text* 510: 1138.
[74]Derchain, *op. cit.*, p. 53, cf. p. 40.
[75]A. Moret, *Mysteres Egyptiens*, p. 191.
[76]A. Varille, in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 53, p. 117; the victim becomes the benefactor of gods and men, P. Derchain, op. cit., pp. 21ff. Though according to K. Sethe, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 50 (1912), pp. 57-60, the idea of blood-vengeance (*Blutschande*) was not Egyptian, the earliest Egyptian sacrificial victim was treated as a kind of scapegoat, P. Derchain, *Rites Egyptiens*, Vol. 1, p. 17, citing Herodot. II, 39. "Smiting a man, or animal . . . was an act of consecration or dedication" imparting special virtue to the victim, E. A. W. Budge, *The Book of Opening the Mouth* (London, 1909), Vol. 1, p. 39. In Babylonia, cir. 1800 B.C., a "purely human victim" was "slain as atonement (zur Strafe) and for the creation of new beings," D. Opitz, in *Archiv fuer Orientforschung*, Vol. 5 (1928-9), p. 88. The word *hotep* in its meaning of "peace" or "satisfaction" may "point to a remote period when the true idea of expiation . . . may have been represented in the Egyptian sacrifices," M. T. Kyle, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 27, pp. 169. The idea of expiation is clear in *Coffin Texts* I, 295, "The wounding [of the Eye] which is in thee is made good by him who caused it." See A. Moret, *Mysteres Egyptiens*, pp. 43-44, 191, 193.
[77]If a real king was not available, the substitute would still have to dress up in the proper royal regalia—a substitute substitute king! Wainwright, p. 4.
[78]G. Lefebure, in *Bibliotheque Egyptol.* Vol. 36, pp. 280-83, 287, citing Manetho and Plutarch, *de Iside*, 73; cf. Athenaeus, IV, 72; Heredot., III, 28.
[79]A. Moret, *Culte Divin*, p. 135, n. 1; Plut, *de Iside.*, 32; Diodor., I, 45, 88; Strabo, XVIII, 1, 3; Lefebure, *op. cit.*, pp. 288f; Wainwright, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[80]A. Moret, *Kings and Gods of Egypt*, p. 85.
[81]J. G. Griffiths, in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 48 (1948), pp. 410-16; Lefebure, *op. cit.*, pp. 301, 294f; Wainwright, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-45.
[82]J. Leibovitch, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 12 (1953), pp. 59f.
[83]Plutarch, *de Iside*, 31, discussed by Th. Hopfner, *Plutarch ueber Isis und Osiris* (Prague: Or. Inst., 1940), pp. 23-25.
[84]Plut., *loc. cit.*, describes the seal, for which T. Hopfner, *Der Tierkult der alten Aegypter* (Vienna, 1913), pp. 72f, supplies illustration. Manetho reports that at Heliopolis human victims were examined and stamped exactly like the animals, G. Lefebure, *op. cit.* 36:281.
[85]*In sacra simulata pro veris accipi* is the universal rule, Servius, *ad Aen.* II, 116; Atheneaus, *Deipnos.* IV, 172D, etc. The use of wax images is the commonest aspect of Egyptian magical practices.
[86]E. Uphill, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, p. 379; G. Jequier, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 37, p. 122, says that this particular scene "is not funerary at all."
[87]J. Bennett, in *Journal of Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 53 (1967), p. 166.
[88]Clement, *Epist. to the Corinthians*, I, 25, and *Apostolic Constitutions*, V, 7 both use the death and resurrection of the Phoenix-bird "on the so-called altar of the Sun at Heliopolis" as the most potent proof of the resurrection of the flesh.
[89]Uphill, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-78.
[90]At Abydos in predynastic times the rites were held at such a complex, the prototype of the step pyramid, B. J. Kemp, in *Journal of Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 52 (1966), pp. 21f. There are also in prehistoric times "allusions to the Osiris cult celebrated in front of the necropolis mounds" at "the Field of the Ancestors," E. A. E. Reymond, in *Journal of Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 53 (1967). p. 106. The mound was a form of the Primeval Hill, "from which creation proceeded . . . obviously a depository of creative energy . . . ," Frankfort, *Kingship*, pp. 152-53.
[91]H. Junker, *Das Goetterdekret ueber das Abaton* (Vienna, 1913), pp. 21-24, 31, 86. The concept intrigues the Classical writers, e.g. Lucan, *Phars.*, X, 323; Virgil, *Aeniad*, VI, 329; Diodor., *Lib.*, I, 22,3; Seneca.
[92]A. Piankoff, *The Shrines of Tut-ankh-amon* (Harper Torchbooks, 1962), p. 33.
[93]P. Derchain, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 15 (1963), p. 19.
[94]Derchain, *Rites Egyptiens*, Vol. I, pp. 23, 25, following Junker.
[95]F. Guilmant, "Tombeau de Ram. IX," in *Memoires de la Mission Archeol. Francaise*, Vol. 15, Pl. lvi; the upright figure being a mummy may not belong to the series.
[96]A. Moret, *Mysteres Egyptiens*, p. 57, fig. 19, after Naville, *Todtenbuch*, Ch. 158a.
[97]Moret, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 21-23.
[98]Firmicus Maternus, *de error. profan. rel.* 2:1-7, in Hopfner, *Fontes Hist. Relig. Aegyptiacae*, pp. 518f: In *adytis idolum Osiridis sepultum, cum annuis luctibus plangunt.* Cf. below, note 105.
[99]Piankoff, *op. cit.*, p. 125, No. 2. For the prehistoric rites, see E. Raymond, in *Journal of Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 53, p. 106; A. Scharff, *Das Grab als Wohnhaus* (Munich, 1947).
[100]A. Moortgat, *Tammuz* (Berlin, W. de Gruyter, 1949), pp. 53-80; discussed by E. D. Van Buren, *Or.* 18, 1949, p. 499.
[101]Graves, *The Greek Myths*, I, 153. Cf. W. Helck, *Orientalia*, 1950, p. 430.
[102]I. E. S. Edwards, *Pyramids*, p. 72.
[103]*Pyramid Text* No. 335: 572.
[104]*Coffin Texts* (De Buck), I, 60f, Spell 79.
[105]Minucius Felix, *Octav.*, 22:1-2; Firmicus Maternus, in Hopfner, *Fontes Hist. Relig. Aegyptiacae*, pp. 519f; *Carmen in Paganos* (Hopfner, p. 719); *Mythographus Vaticanus*, Proem. 91 (Hopfner, p. 728), etc.
[106]Barnabas, *Epist.*, 7.

The Sea Gull

By Stella McGuire

It circled with a plaintive cry, the gull beside the sea,
Wings spread against a misty sky, white breasts all silvery.
The breakers beat against the shore—the winds blew raw and chill;
And yet he circled more and more, above the rocky hill.
There were no children on the beach; there were no boats at sea;
The only things within eye's reach were the shores, the gull, and me.
Oh gull, with eyes that search the sands, why circle high and low?
Can it be food that lures demands, or do you really know?

I sit here, too, without a friend, and watch your soaring flight;
I'm wondering if you feel the wind ushering in the night.
Where will you go when cold gray fog blots everything from view?
Have you some nest behind a log, or are you homeless, too?
You seem so lonely as you glide—a creature set apart;
Above the roar, each time you've cried, your voice has pierced my heart.
One thought, as evening turns to night, brings warmth despite the spray:
God watches o'er the sparrows' flight; are we not more than they?

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

Part 7 (Continued)



The Unknown Abraham

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

Because of widespread interest in the relationship of the Book of Abraham and the recently discovered Joseph Smith Egyptian papyri (see Era, *January and February 1968), and in an effort to keep readers up-to-date with Dr. Nibley's penetrating and incisive analysis of this relationship, this series' monthly space will be enlarged and the series will be treated as a special supplement for* Era *readers. Through enlarged sections of Dr. Nibley's research, readers will also be better able to see the flow of discussion and understand the author's findings. Beginning with this issue, "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price" will be found at the end of the magazine, until the series' anticipated completion sometime in 1970.*

● First of all, there lies the king on the lion-couch in the *adyton.* He is defeated and beaten, hiding out from his opponent.[107] "It is a moment of extreme distress . . . the god has fallen beneath the blows of the evil one,"[108] exhausted; he is "the Weary One who sleeps,"[109] "the Lord of sleep upon his bed"—the lion-couch.[110] Not only must Osiris face serious charges brought against him by relentless and well-equipped enemies,[111] but they also do their best to do him physical harm: W. Cermak has commented on the really terrifying nature of the ordeal that an Osiris-initiate had to pass through.[112] Here are some pictures of the young king in the formal attitude showing him to be "the prey of a holy terror" as he sits on a throne representing both the horizon and an altar "on the eve of reigning or the threshold of Hades"—which shall it be? It is the moment of decision: "a guide of redoubtable name and terrifying aspect," wearing a "lion mask and bearing a huge sacrificial knife," with a majestic gesture beckons the prince to follow him across "the threshold of the other world . . . through the door which conceals the agonizing mystery of the beyond."[113] It is enough to scare anybody—and notice the lion-motif. So everybody is feeling bad—our side has lost; with fear and despair comes the bitterness of hell;[114] it is a time of mourning: the two ladies, Isis and Nephyths, are weeping at the head and foot of the lion-couch; Anubis appears with oil and bandages to embalm the dead and announces his horror and grief at the great crime that has taken place.[115] It is all over—the earth has opened its mouth to receive Osiris.[116]

But hold on! There is still a tiny spark of hope: the Great Sleeper may be exhausted and inert, but still, as G. Thausing puts it, "he is not dead but sleepeth."[117] Like the moon "the Lord of sleep upon his bed . . . never sleeps, he never comes to rest,"[118] but fades only to appear again, "young on the day of the new moon, repeating the illuminations of the left eye. . . ."[119] Equally reassuring is the example of the sun, who "only dies to be reborn" at the New Year,[120] and of the grain which springs up anew from the fallow earth, as you see in these so-called Osiris-beds—real beds with real grain growing on them in the form of a man, life-sized: these have been found perfectly preserved in some tombs.[121] The same texts that announce the death of the king are quick to give encouragement—he is "justified . . . qualified to become a divine youthful Osiris," eligible for renewal;[122] if he has run and hidden from his relentless enemy, he will soon return younger and stronger than ever, to certain victory.[123] Even as they weep for the king in the tomb, the mourners diligently search for him—they haven't given up hope after all;[124] everyone has a premonition that the show is not over;[125] ". . . he perishes only that he may live . . . and so he *wants* to die in order to be born!"[126] Here is a stele from Buto that pretty well sums up the whole drama. It is addressed to the pilgrims who come from far and near to celebrate the rites "in the Field of God when the plants are green," gathered "to worship during the festival of Horus [in this text he is designated as Min], and to bring succor to Min when he goes forth to his bed. . . ."

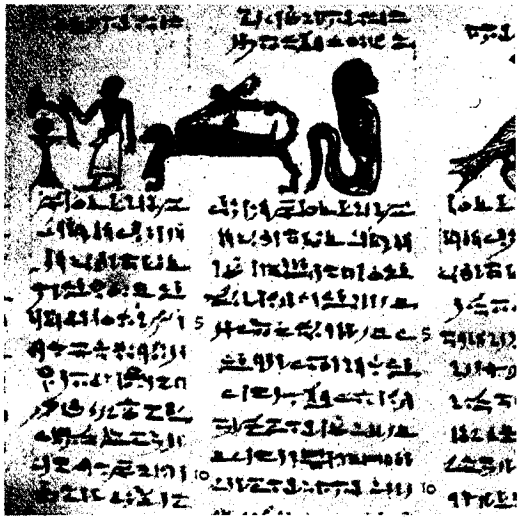
Jane: What's succor?

Mr. Jones: To rescue. You see, all these people have come to a special field or plain—the inscriptions always say this particular rite takes place "in the Field"—to save some divine person from some danger connected with a bed. Let us read on: ". . . at the time when all those who stand before the sleeping place [or lying-down place] are trembling because they see the danger he is in. But he escapes unharmed; he who was discouraged and paralyzed raises himself, seizes the spear and attacks his enemies. . . ."[127]

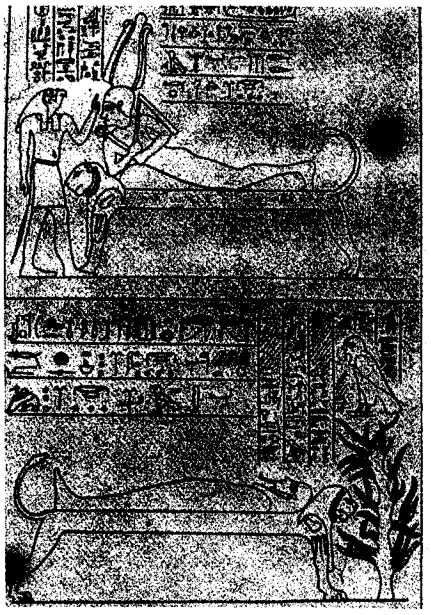
Dick: How does he manage that?

Mr. Jones: Canon Drioton explains that his supporters suffer *for* him—the substitute motif again. But always there comes a wonderful and exciting moment when all the actors' roles are suddenly reversed. After the awful ritual hush comes the cry of joy. What

(Text continues on p. 100)



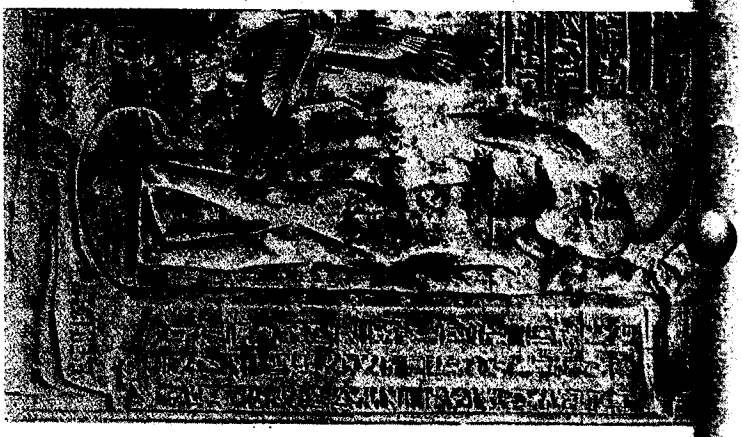
In reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 1, "The Angel of the Lord": In the many representations of a bird flying over a figure on a lion-couch, the bird almost always has a *bird's* head instead of a human head. This seems to disturb Egyptologists, who prefer a human-headed Ba-bird to something else. Professor T. G. Allen refers to this figure as one having "an unerased hawk's head." This particular vignette accompanies Chapter 85 of the Book of the Dead, in which the deceased prays to be delivered from a sacrificial death.



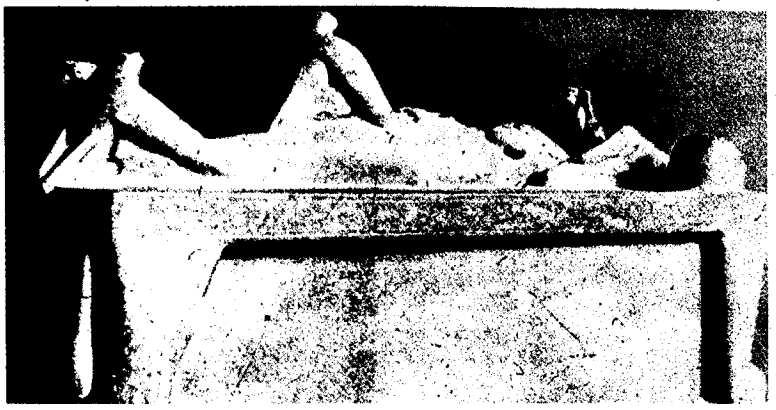
In reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 1: The lion-couch scenes most closely matching that in Joseph Smith Papyrus No. 1 (Fac. 1) all represent episodes of a larger drama involving the lion-couch in a number of different situations. Here is a typical sequence in which the dead is first seen lying inert but next appears bestirring himself and beginning to rise up from the couch. In such scenes it is always a *hawk* who liberates the dead man by his potent magical gestures or with his spear or club that beats down the adversary (see illustration in *Era*, May 1969, p. 87). In this scene the hawk is described as the one who avenges, vindicates, or rescues his father. The point is that the delivering "angel" is a hawk.



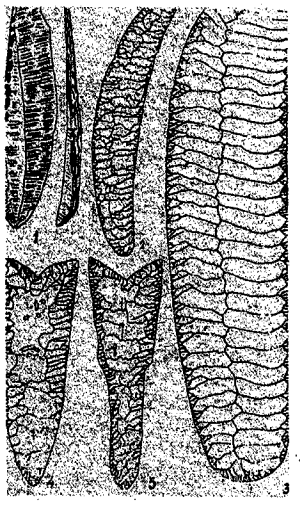
In Reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 2, "Abraham fastened upon an altar": This reproduction of an archaic funeral rite shows the lion-couch figuring in a variety of situations or episodes. The elaborate ritual here illustrated has never been explained to everybody's satisfaction, and shows that we are dealing here with a very obscure and complicated business.



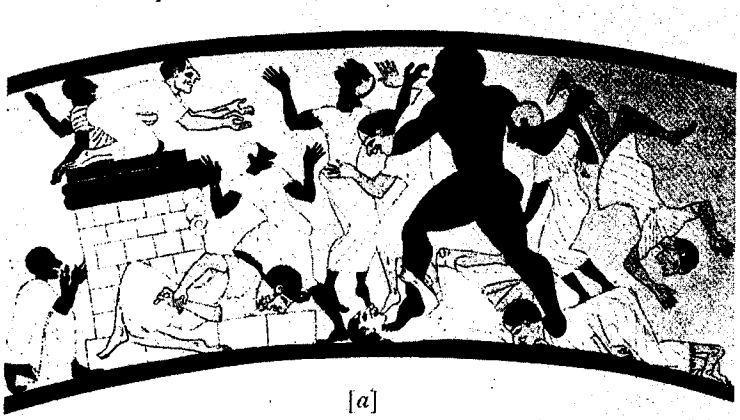
In reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 2: The central panel from the shrine of Opet closely resembles the composition of Papyrus No. 1. The most recent studies of this figure (by Varille, Uphill, and others) agree that the man on the couch is *not* being embalmed but is plainly in the act of arising from the couch. The bird represents his father, his mother, his son, and himself! This should be a warning against the dogmatic simplicity with which scholars have sought to explain Figure 2 of Facsimile 1 in the Book of Abraham.



In reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 2: This has been called both "The Tomb of Osiris" and "The Bed of Osiris." The presence of no less than five hawks is another warning against oversimplification. Death, sleep, birth, procreation, transformation, and resurrection are all represented in this imposing and controversial monument.



In reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 3. "The idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice": Egyptians used flint knives of prehistoric design both in sacrificing and in embalming rites, which were symbolically identical (see our discussion). The long thin crescent-shaped knife, No. 2, shown here is the type resembling the knife held by the priest in the Facsimile.

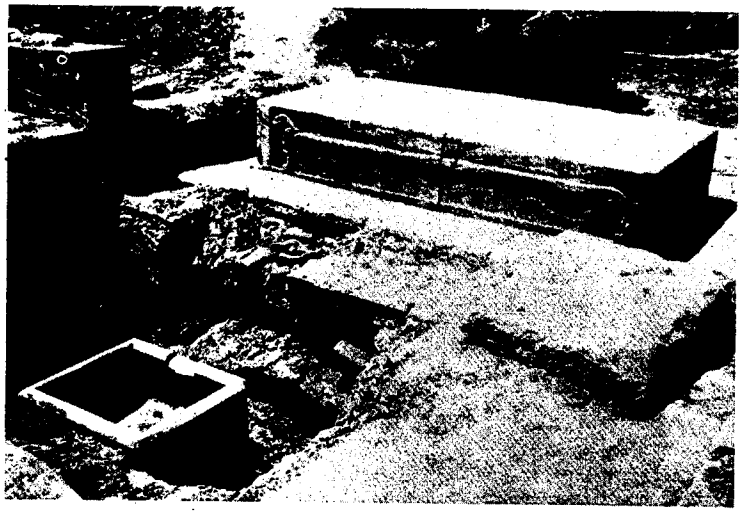


[a]

In reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 3: The famous Busiris Hydria. On a stone platform before the altar, Pharaoh, identified by his headdress and his beard, is seen bound and helpless (as in Fac. No. 1, no ropes are necessary to show this); on top of the altar the priest is pleading for his life, while the mighty Herakles, who at the last moment burst his bonds and rose from the altar, is wreaking havoc among Pharaoh's retainers. This was the favorite Egyptian story of the Greeks, who here make typically Greek fun of the whole business.



In reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 4. "The altar for sacrifice by the idolatrous priests," with the four canopic jars (discussed later): Here is a very ancient Egyptian altar, dating from the III Dynasty. As anyone can see, it is shaped like a lion-couch.



In reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 4: Here is a very late Egyptian altar (discovered in 1948), which still faithfully preserves the likeness of the lion-couch.



In reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 4: Another altar, the head missing but the lion clearly accounted for. It is quite apparent by now that the proper form for an altar of sacrifice among the Egyptians was the lion-couch, as represented and explained in the Joseph Smith Papyrus No. I and Abraham 1:13.



In reference to Fac. No. 1, Fig. 4: This is the head of King Tutankhamon's lion-couch, the third of three ritual couches. This particular couch, though having the form of an ordinary bed (see Abr. 1:13) represents, according to A. Piankoff, the final stage in a couch-drama that culminates with the king's resurrection. Thus, whether we view the lion-couch as an altar, a bed, or an embalming table, it always stands "in *this* case, in relation to *this* subject" (see Fig. 12 caption), liberation from a death that was ritually and symbolically sacrificial and violent.

"Let us consider one of the truly important clues to the meaning of Facsimile No. 1—the lion-couch"

could be more stirring than this Coffin Text: "Be silent, be silent, O ye people. Give heed, give close attention—what is here? Here is great news, O ye people, Horus has an announcement to make: The King is *not* dead! He is going to live, he will never die again!"[128] All are stunned with amazement when Osiris begins to shake the dust from his face;[129] the thing is so unexpected that it is quite frightening: "The Watchers tremble when Osiris rises from the dead like a bird; they are taken by surprise."[130] The dark night of despair is rent by the glad cry which marks the climax of the mysteries: "We have found him! Let us rejoice together!"[131] With the first ray of hope, everyone's mood changes abruptly: "N. [the king] is intact: the Eye of Horus at Heliopolis is intact. N. lives, N. lives! The Eye of Heliopolis lives!" There is still a spark of life, and that makes all the difference.[132] The two ladies who come to mourn are now galvanized into new action: "Come, they say, let us gather his members; let us restore him completely!"[133] and so they start making life-giving passes, reciting formulas, and speaking words of encouragement and instruction to the late object of their tears.[134] Anubis, who arrived as a crepe-hanging undertaker, suddenly hears Isis cheering outside, and he gets the point: "Arise and live," he tells the man on the couch, ". . . that you may *reverse* the damage inflicted on you!" "You live!" he cries. "Arise and live! You are *not* dead!"[135] The dread embalmer, without changing his jackal mask, instantly assumes the role of the healing physician; it is his hands that now impart the fluid of life to the erstwhile cadaver.[136] Naturally, the king's own role is reversed: "The Weary One awakes and arises. The god stands up and resumes his body."[137] "Today Osiris N. comes out of Heliopolis, his heart is in his body, returned to him. . . ."[138] "O Osiris, thou didst depart but thou hast returned; thou didst sleep but thou hast awakened; thou didst die, but art revived!"[139]

Dick: A neat trick, if you can do it. Who makes all this happen?

Mr. Jones: Everybody—that is an important point. Though the whole thing is miraculous, everybody must work like mad to bring it about! The devotees search diligently even while they mourn, and the joyful finding is in part a reward of their efforts. Even the morbid magical exercises that make up such a large part of the late Egyptian documents are nearly all positive efforts toward achieving one great goal—restoration of life.[140] Along with strange ordinances, gestures, and passes by the officiants, "mourning, dancing, and eating assist in the resurrection," and in these all must participate.[141] As the two ladies work feverishly to restore the dead Osiris, they talk to him constantly, chiding him into action; with renewed hope comes a spirit of jollity and banter as they tell the man on the couch that he is quite able to move himself if he will only make an effort. "You have been placed on your back," they tell him. "Now arise on your side! I am Isis, I am Nephthys! They commanded the Great Weary One to arise and defend himself."[142] He must put up a fight, make every effort to turn himself over and push himself up by his own power.[143] "Awake Osiris, awake O thou who hast become weary! Arise, stand up and have power over thy members!"[144] At every hour of the day and night in the local cults the challenge rings out: "Arise, awake, Osiris; thou art triumphant, thine enemies are overthrown!"[145] It is Anubis, the erstwhile mortician, who now cries out, "You live! Arise and live! You are not dead. . . . You live, receiving endowment in the temple!"[146] It is a painful operation: ". . . thy corpse lies on the ground. Then Geb opens thine eyes, stretches thy stiffened limbs, returns thy heart to thy body."[147] But with divine assistance, especially of Anubis, "The Weary One awakes and arises. The god stands up and resumes his body. Horus stands there [assisting], he has clothed N. [the king] in a fabric of himself."[148]

Dick: So they're right back where they started from.

Mr. Jones: Not quite. This is not just a return to the old order. Something has been gained by all this suffering and toil. The living king has been permitted to "suffer serious physical damage," as Naville put it, "for the sake of the experience that it will give him"; having wilfully consorted with evil, he has paid a terrible price, but in the end is the wiser for what he has been through.[149] His narrow escape is quickly followed by a magnificent coronation scene, "a great one falls on his side, but rises like a god and takes the crown when the Two Ladies order him to arise and mount the throne."[150] By passing the tests he has shown himself "justified"—qualified to take the throne.[151] "Our play proclaims that at the coronation . . . whatever harm he may have suffered is undone," writes Frankfort; ". . . with his Eye, Horus has regained his full strength."[152] As Miss Thausing puts it, "the period of transition ends up on a new plane of existence," with body and spirit on a higher level than before.[153]

Jane: I'm getting tired. Why do we have to go through all this?

Mr. Jones: I'll tell you why. Because we have to proceed from the known to the unknown.

Dick: What does that mean?

Mr. Jones: That it is foolish to rest a hypothesis—let alone a conclusion—on a premise which itself rests on dubious evidence. If we want to test a claim of Joseph Smith, we must first of all make sure that we know just what that claim is. Now, is there anything we can be sure of? There is: namely, that Joseph Smith published and widely circulated "the above cut" known as Facsimile 1 on the same page as his own explanation of that cut. He definitely claims that the interpretation goes with the picture—that is something we can test. But when you show me the sign for the single syllable, *Khons* (if it *is* a single syllable), and say that Joseph Smith "translated" that one monosyllable by a paragraph of 173 words, you raise an issue that fairly bristles with unanswered questions. The first proposition can be called a "known," the second certainly cannot. So why not begin with the first proposition, about which all see eye to eye, and ask concerning it: Was Joseph Smith's explanation of Facsimile 1 correct? Before we can answer that question, we must know what Facsimile 1 *really* represents. Until now, anyone who could recognize an Egyptian symbol or two has promptly come up with an answer, but that won't do any more. One of these days this question is going to be answered by a computer, and before that answer can mean anything, the computer has got to be fed with a hundred times more information than any Egyptologist has brought to the problem so far. Meanwhile, after lunch, let us consider one of the truly important clues to the meaning of Facsimile 1—the lion-couch. What does Joseph Smith's official explanation say the lion-couch was?

FOOTNOTES

[107]The hiding motif is vividly depicted in *Coffin Text* No. 312 (De Buck, IV, 69-70), and *B.D.*, Chap. 78 (Naville, *Todtenbuch*, p. 164), and in Ps. Callisthenes, *Vit. Alex.*, I, 3 (in Hopfner, pp. 399f).

[108]M. de Rochenmonteix, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 3, p. 79.

[109]*Coffin Texts*, No. 74 (De Buck, I, 306).

[110]*Horus and Seth*, 23 (Papyr. Louvre 3129. in S. Schott, *Urkunden Mythologischen Inhalts*, p. 119).

[111]So *Coffin Texts*, I, 2, 25-27, 51ff.

[112]W. Cermak, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 76 (1940), p. 23.

[113]B. Bruyere, in *Chron. d'Egypte*, Vol. 28 (1952), pp. 31ff, 36; also in the tomb of Queen Thiti (in *Memoires de la Miss. Fr. Arch.*, V, 1894, Pl. V), where a prince (wearing the uraeus) faces a door to which a lion-headed man, holding a knife, is pointing; on the other side of the door a lion crouches on a tomb. The king had to undergo other physical risks, such as swimming in dangerous waters, Lucan, *Phars.* IX, 153-161 (Hopfner, p. 186). In the stories of Khamuas the Pharaoh passes though physical danger and humiliation during the rites, F. Lloyd Griffith, *Stories of the HPs of Memphis*, pp. 52ff, 62ff.

[114]*Coffin Texts*, I, 82-89. Cf. Book of Moses 1:20, in Pearl of Great Price.

[115]*Coffin Texts*, I, 217, 220.

[116]*Ibid.*, I, 11.

[117]Thausing, *Auferstehungsgedanke* (Leipzig, 1943), p. 42; A. Piankoff, *Shrines of Tut.*, p. 22, n. 48.

[118]S. Schott, above n. 107, p. 119.

[119]P. Derchain, in *Rev. Egyptol.*, Vol. 15, p. 22. The left eye is the moon.

[120]A. Moret, *La Mise a Mort du dieu en Egypt* (Paris, 1927), p. 15. "Open thy door to Re . . . and he shall bring light into the hidden dwelling," M. M. Lefebure, in *Bibliotheque Egyptol.*, Vol. 34, p. 83, an inscription from the Tomb of Seti I.

[121]T. M. Davis, *Tomb of Iouiya*, 1907, p. 45; a photo is in Moret, *Kings and Gods*, Pl. XI, opp. p. 96.

[122]*Coffin Texts*, I, 11.

[123]Ps. Callisthenes, as of note 104 above. The close resemblance of this text to the Coffin Text in the preceding note vindicates its authenic Egyptian background.

[124]Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, 13, and others in note 105 above.

[125]*"Stirb und werde!"* is the theme, W. Cermak, in *Archiv fuer aegypt. Archaeol.*, I (1938), pp. 212f.

[126]*. . . nam perit, ut vivat, se tamen ipsa creat; ut possit nasci, appetit ante mori, Lactantius, de Phoen.*, 77.

[127]E. Drioton, in *Bull. de l'Inst. d'Egypte*, XXV (Cairo, 1943), pp. 11f. The text should be studied in detail.

[128]*Coffin Texts*, I, 81.

[129]*Ibid.*, I, 82ff, 85, 89.

[130]*Ibid.*, I, 91.

[131]Above, note 105.

[132]*Pyramid Texts*, No. 683; *Coffin Texts*, I, 292.

[133]*Coffin Texts*, 74, I, 306-310.

[134]*Coffin Texts*, I, 215f. See the lively depiction from the temple at Philae, G. Benedite, *Le Temple de Philae* (Paris, 1893), Pl. xl, and from the Temple of Seti I at Abydos, photo in Moret, *Kings and Gods*, p. 80, Pl. X.

[135]*Coffin Texts*, I, 221, 233-37, cf. *B.D.*, Ch. 26.

[136]W. Federn, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19 (1960), p. 251; *Coffin Texts*, No. 341, IV, 344f.; G. Thausing, *Auferstehungsgedanke*, p. 88.

[137]*Pyramid Texts*, 690: 2092ff.

[138]C. E. Sander-Hansen, *Die Relig. Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre* (Copenhagen, 1937), pp. 14-16.

[139]*Pyramid Texts*, 690: 2092ff, also 1688 and 1975, cited by A. Piankoff, *Shrines of Tutankhamon*, p. 22.

[140]The texts in G. Daressy, *Textes et Dessins Magiques* (Catal. Gen. du Caire, Nos. 9401-9449, Cairo, 1903), almost all deal with this theme. In Porphyr, *De abstin.*, II, 47 (Hopfner, *Fontes Hist. Relig. Aegyptiacae*, pp. 465f), and Heliod., *Aethiopica*, VI, 14f, it is almost frightening.

[141]G. Thausing, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-36, 35f; *Pyramid Texts*, No. 683-86. "It was necessary to have recourse to summary and potent rites, in order to bring about an instantaneous resurrection of the dismembered god," A. Moret, *Kings and Gods* (New York: Putnams, 1912), p. 85. "Arise! Stand up, rejoice, being washed with the four pure pitchers with which Horus was washed, and clothed in the garment that protects you against all things. The vows are completed (or fully made) in the House. . . ." *Coffin Texts*, I, 287f.

[142]*Coffin Texts*, I, 306-313, 215f.

[143]A. Piankoff, in *Rev. Egyptol.*, Vol. 1 (1933), p. 173. "Lift thyself on thy right side . . . Osiris, stand up and come out." Piankoff, *Shrines*, p. 59.

[144]Sander-Hansen, *loc. cit.*,

[145]A. Moret, *Mysteres Egyptiens*, p. 23.

[146]*Coffin Texts*, I, 233-37.

[147]*Coffin Texts*, I, 56.

[148]*Pyramid Texts*, 690: 2092ff. After much toil and effort, "under the hand of Anubis, the Ba finally returns to the body," Thausing, *Auferstehungsgedanke*, p. 88.

[149]E. Naville, in *Revue de l'Egypte Ancienne*, Vol. 1 (1927), pp. 245-49.

[150]*Coffin Texts*, I, 223ff, 292; *Pyramid Texts*, 676f: 2007ff, 611: 1734.

[151]*Coffin Texts*, I, 9-11, 99-102, 109f, ending with the usual acclamation, 112ff.

[152]H. Frankfort, *Kingship*, p. 126.

[153]G. Thausing, *Auferstehungsgedanke*, p. 19, citing *Pyramid Text* 632 (366).

Facsimile No. 1, By the Figures (Part 8)

Facsimile No. 1, Figure 4: "The altar for sacrifice by the idolatrous priests, standing before the gods of Elkenah," etc. To Abraham's readers, for whom he must translate Egyptian terms and explain Egyptian gods, this altar needed a bit of explaining: ". . . and that you may have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation at the commencement of this record." (Abr. 1:12.) It was the established practice of Egyptian nobles, when telling in their tomb inscriptions of such technical accomplishments as feats of transportation or building, to accompany their reports with illustrations, "mechanical drawings," as they have been called, which make some tombs mines of valuable technical information. In this spirit of technical enlightenment we have "Abraham's" helpful sketch of a particular altar, with the fuller explanation that "it was made after the form of a bedstead, such as was had among the Chaldeans, and it stood before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash," etc. (Abr. 1:13.) The thing Abraham is emphatic about is that it looked like a bedstead, that is, an ordinary bed.

Jane: A *Chaldean* bed.

Mr. Jones: Another way of telling *his* readers that it was an ordinary bed, since Chaldean beds were the kind they knew about. But here the priest of Pharaoh is using it to perform a sacrifice "after the manner of the Egyptians." One Egyptian royal bed has survived, from a dynasty strongly under Chaldean or Asiatic influence, and it is a lion-couch.[1] If the lion-couch was not the normal everyday Egyptian bed, it was the usual bed of those who could afford it.[2] But a lion-couch in a tomb is something special; when you see one there, as Professor Piankoff warns us, you can be sure that some process is under way that is going to lead to resurrection.[3] You see, all the great crises of life, those crucial events officially noted by what the folklore people call *rites de passage*, mark a passage from one phase of existence to another, and if you will think about it, nearly all these great crises take place in bed. Thus Professor Piankoff assures us that while "associated with resurrection," the lion-couch "appears in *all* representations of royal birth."[4] That is, kings, like other people, are born in a bed, and as we see in the famous reliefs of Hatshepsut from Deir el-Bahri, the king's birthday bed was a ceremonial lion-couch.[4]

People also die in beds. The famous "Bed of Osiris" in Abydos is also called the "Tomb of Osiris"; the bed is a big stone sarcophagus, but its sides and ends are carefully cut to represent a lion-couch, and Osiris is lying on top of it, which is proper, since he is going to be resurrected on it, even as he was conceived on such a bed. Almost identical scenes from the Temple of Seti I and the Temple of Opet show birth, death, conception, and resurrection, the smitten helplessness and the healing of the king, all clearly depicted in a single scene, and the common element and central object of them all is the lion-couch.[5] We have seen a number of cases in which a *series* of lion-couch scenes was shown. Here in the tomb of Tutankhamen we have three real life-sized couches, which represent, according to our guidebook, "three stages of the process of rebirth," the final stage being that of the lion-couch.[6] Profes-

"We now know that Egyptian altars were in the form of a bedstead'— but nobody knew it in Joseph Smith's day

sor Moret noted that in the mysteries "a dead person is reborn when he lays himself down, clothed in a skin or a shroud, on a bed."[7] The bed is important, but which bed—a bed of (re)birth, conception, suffering, healing, death, or resurrection?

Dick: That all depends.

Mr. Jones: Yes, the same bed changes roles, just as the people do, from one episode to the next. And there are some we haven't considered yet. The bed in which the dead Egyptian lay in state awaiting his funeral preserved the same form right down into Roman times, and what form do you think it was?

Dick and Jane: A lion-couch!

Mr. Jones: How did you guess?[8] Then there is another form of lion-couch with short legs, once thought to be an embalmer's table. Do you see the sense of that? Look at this so-called "later dynastic embalmer's table." It went unrecognized for many years, it says here, because "at first glance the slab will be recognized as taking the form of a funerary couch, with lions' heads and legs and elongated lions' bodies merged into the cavetto cornice which make the frame. . . . I suggest that the object is an embalmer's table."[9] That is, the embalmer's table could not be distinguished from a normal bed. But later it turned out that the embalmer's table was really an altar.

Dick: How come?

Mr. Jones: Not only was a real "embalmer's table of the XXVI Dynasty" found, having the form of "a wooden lion-couch,"[10] but another stone bed turned up of the very same type as the first one, only this time found *in situ* within a ceremonial complex, which left not the slightest doubt that it was an altar of sacrifice.[11] All the Egyptian altars are solid stone with lions' legs, heads, and tails put in by the sculptor to make it clear that the altar is still a lion-couch. And here, at last, we have the explanation for the awkward legs of the priest and Abraham in Facsimile 1. You will notice that the priest in ordinary embalming scenes stands on the other side of the couch so that his legs can be clearly seen by looking under the bed. That would have been the habitual and easy way of drawing the scene, and it is apparent that the artist of Joseph Smith Papyrus No. 1 started out in the usual manner. But then, at the risk of making nonsense of his composition, he put *everything* on *this* side of the bed; why, if it is just a bed? He could not omit the legs of the priest—convention demands them—but neither could he let us see under the bed, because it is a solid stone altar. We *now* know beyond a doubt that Egyptian altars looked just like that, faithfully cut to imitate "the form of a bedstead"—but nobody knew it in Joseph Smith's day or for a long time after, and on the face of it it looks just too silly for words.

Dick: But why should an altar be a bed?

Mr. Jones: We saw that the "bed of Osiris" is also the tomb of Osiris, and Diodorus tells us (I, 45, 88) that "the kings of Egypt used to sacrifice men of the color of Typhon *on the tomb* of Osiris," which made it also an altar. But there is more to it than that. In the oldest pictures of altars, they seem to be nothing but mere chopping blocks,[12] and it has been long debated whether sacrifice originated from the practical butchering of animals for meat (as Jequier believed), or as a way of punishment for rebels and enemies, or as something with a deeper meaning. Some have maintained that the original idea of an altar was to represent the seat of a divinity, "often designed like a chair or seat. In early Babylonia the altar actually is a comfortable seat for the god"; that is why the sides are raised.[13] The seat-type of altar is also found in Egypt—small altars shaped like cushions on the top, with protruding bulges on either side, which are thought to represent the horizon—"symbols of the desert rim of the western horizon."[14] The person who sits on this altar was thus "on the threshold of a new life," about to cross "the desert threshold of the western horizon" to the next world.[15]

Dick: The hot seat, eh?

Mr. Jones: Quite possibly. Remember yesterday when we told of the terror of the prince who has to sit on that seat, and also how he was being conducted over the threshold *by* a lion-headed man with a big knife and *to* a lion behind the door? As we enter the shrine of Opet to view the most instructive of all lion-couch scenes, we pass by one of these altars, a square seat with raised sides, and right in front of it stands the big and forbidding statue of a lion-headed lady with a big knife. Professor Varille is not sure about the origin of the altar, but he *is* sure that the traces of fire and the runnels for blood indicate some sort of sacrifice.[16] In the Babylonian altars, instead of lions we have semi-lion or griffin altars, which amount to the same thing.[17] But we haven't yet said anything about the meaning of this bed-altar equation that Abraham found so important.

As you well know by now, Horus, the living king, died of the deadly blows inflicted on him by his rival Seth.

Jane: Only he didn't die.

Mr. Jones: He was "officially dead." The Egyptians believed that one could die by degrees, each of six steps being a genuine death; this is something that is hard for us to understand.[18] The point is, however, that the death of Osiris was a sacrificial death, preparing the way for his resurrection. And just as Osiris had to die in order to be resurrected, so the initiate in his mysteries "had to experience the fate of his god in his own person."[19] Accordingly, various drugs, lighting effects, hypnosis, etc., were used to make the mock death as real as possible. The initiate was rendered unconscious and laid in a coffin, or else he was shrouded, crowned, and led into a deep crypt, representing the world of the dead.[20]

Jane: Just like the king.

Mr. Jones: So it would seem. He could become an Osiris only when he was dead and only if he had suffered the same violent sacrificial death as Osiris: *"If* thou slayest me," says an incantation, "I am Osiris!"[21] The dead person "is a kind of Osiris," wrote Sethe, by virtue of "repeating the case of Osiris."[22] In the opening of the mouth rite the symbolic "smiting of the body of the god [Osiris]" was "also the smiting of the mummy of the deceased, whereby each was made a *divine victim.*"[23] For "the dead to become Osiris," according to Jequier, means nothing less than "to pass through *all* the vicissitudes of the god," which is what the king is doing on the lion-couch of Seti I.[24] But how could one fulfill the most conspicuous aspect of the Osiris experience, the *violent* sacrificial death, if one had died quite normally?

Dick: That's no problem. You'd imitate it, of course.

Jane: Like Christians "taking up their cross."

Mr. Jones: I think that is the answer. Here Diodorus (I, 91) is very helpful:

First, he says, a priest marks on the lower left side of the body the place where an incision is to be made. Then one called the "ripper" takes an Ethiopian stone knife, makes the ritual cut prescribed by law, and runs like mad.

Jane: Why?

Mr. Jones: Because everybody is chasing him and throwing stones at him and cursing him. Plainly he is a murderer, and the primitive flint knife he used (the same type, as we shall see, that was used in sacrificing living victims) is the murder-weapon of Seth. The dead, having undergone sacrificial violence, is a true Osiris. The dead person on the embalming-table is Osiris on the altar, and the embalming operation is a mimicking of the sacrificial death of Osiris. And just as the members of Osiris were scattered all over the world and had to be brought together again before his resurrection could be accomplished, so those four canopic jars before the couch, containing the viscera of the defunct, represent "the earth in its four quarters" exactly as Joseph Smith says they do (Facsimile 2, Figure 8), as well as the four elements taken from those four quarters to make up the body of man. They represent both the dissolution and scattering of the elements of the body and then the gathering in of those parts and elements for the resurrection. (See below.) But what makes the sacrificial nature of the couch and the scene plainest of all is the lion-motif.

All About Lions

Dick: Why should that be, if lions go with ordinary beds?

Mr. Jones: There is no conflict there, because *lions* have always had two main functions as far as Pharaohs are concerned, the one protective, the other aggressive.

Dick: Like protecting people in bed.

Mr. Jones: Or anywhere else. In the earliest representations the couch or settee of the sacrificial victim has bulls' feet;[25] but already in the Old Kingdom we find funeral couches with bulls' feet *and* lions' heads,[26] or lions' feet *and* bulls' heads.[27] In the great shrine on the Capital at Rome the Lady of Heaven sat between two lions, while her husband Jupiter sat between two bulls;[28] but away back in the Pyramid Texts the two animals meet in the royal throne "whose faces are those of Mahs-lion, whose feet are those of the great bull."[29] Can you tell me what lions and bulls have in common?

Jane: They are both fierce . . . and dangerous.

Mr. Jones: Yes, both lion and bull fights seem to have been royal sport around the Mediterranean for a long time.[30] Here on the Palette of Narmer, one of the oldest documents in the world, we see "a 'powerful bull' is goring a 'Libyan'; the bull is the king," Professor Gardiner explained, "since precisely that epithet is constantly applied to the reigning monarch."[31] But from almost every picture of a royal throne it appears that the king also fancied himself as a lion. From the early domination of the bull the lion gradually takes over.

Dick: Why was that, I wonder?

Mr. Jones: Because power has two uses, as I said—aggressive and defensive. Bulls, like generals, are very good at aggression, but they are poor defenders.

Dick: Are lions much better?

Mr. Jones: The Egyptians certainly thought so. Plutarch says that Horus considered the lion to be the most efficient of all creatures not in attack but in defense.[32] And Horapollo sees the point when he says that the lion under the throne of Horus is always on guard, its eyes never shutting.[33] It was the lion that guarded Egypt as the god Nefertem, and the main fortress facing Canaan was called "the Dwelling of the Lion."[34] The best-known guarding lions are those in front of public buildings. Plutarch says that the Egyptians "honor the lion and adorn the entrances to temples with open lions' mouths."[35] It was more than mere ornamentation, however; if we want to see the lions really on guard, the best place is right here at the entrance of the Temple of Opet, housing our prize lion-couch exhibit. The bolts of the great doors of the temple were crouching lions to whose mouths chains (for pulling out the bolts) were attached with human hearts as weights on the end of them—"It is surprising how perfect the symbolism is," Professor Varille remarked.[36] The guardian lions drink the blood and eat the livers of unauthorized persons attempting to enter the shrine.[37] Aelian says that real lions were kept and fed at the gates of the great shrine at Heliopolis, as guardians and champions of the sun, and that they took vengeance on all who broke the oaths taken at the mysteries.[38] In the courtyard of the Opet Temple, right at the entrance stood this frightful black granite statue of Sekhmet as guardian, the lion-headed lady-goddess with the knife, painted all red.[39]

The lion-couch is matched by the lion-throne: "The adornment of the king's throne with lions' heads and legs was the custom in Egypt from the earliest times."[40] And here the symbolism is quite clear: not only is the throne mounted on lions' legs, as if a lion were carrying the king forward on his conquests (a common idea in the ancient world), but beneath the armrest we usually see the king himself represented as a human-headed lion treading on his Asiatic foes: "In Egypt the human-headed lion is the embodiment of conscious supremacy."[41] The king sits in state on his lion-throne,[42] with the enemies of Egypt bound under the seat, while beneath the armrest the king himself is shown as a lion slaying the Asiatics.[43] Lions are first-class defenders, because anybody approaching them fears an attack. The Pharaohs kept pet lions, which would accompany them on the hunts or crouch like dogs beside the throne. Here is a contemporary picture of a pet lion crouching before the throne of Rameses II while the king himself personally dispatches the Libyan king with a ceremonial sword.[44] This is a reminder of the ritual function of the lion in slaughtering the king's enemies. Pharaoh himself is the "glaring lion with raging claws," who "licks up the might and blood (?) of him who attacks him."[45] As the king cuts the throats of his victims (represented by an oryx) in formal sacrifice, the Lady Hathor tells him: "I have given you the heart of a lion to repel your enemies."[46] Rebels and oath-breakers, i.e. any who defied the king, were fed, as in Rome, ritually "to the lions":[47] It is the lioness who puts all rebels to death by fire and knife. At the entrance to temples the guardian lion is seen crouching with such a super-knife as that held by the grim black-red lion lady at the entrance of the Temple of Opet; "the terrible lioness" means just one thing—sacrifice.[48] Here the lion's personality is intimately bound with the lion-couch. When the tail of the lion-couch is "long and curiously curved," one can be sure that the figure on the couch is showing signs of life, while the tail is straight and drooping when the person on the couch has and is given up.[49] Here in this series of scenes the completely embalmed mummy is lying supine and inert on a lion-couch, while in the next scene he has turned over on his face and is vigorously doing push-ups—and the lion's head of the couch has changed to a *jackal's* head.[50] Doesn't that suggest to you that the lion's head on the couch has a definite significance—that it is the harbinger of death? Remember how when the dead shows signs of life Anubis suddenly becomes the great healer? Here we see the same transition from lion to jackal. In the Coffin Texts the person who is told to arise from the lion-couch is "escaping the lion," while one about to be sacrificed is told "Akr seizes thee, Horus!"[51]

Jane: Who is Akr?

"I find it odd that the crocodile... always and only turns up when there is a sacrificing going on"

Mr. Jones: He is the double-headed lion, also called Ruti, who controls all goings and comings to and from the castle of Osiris—the other world.[52] But mostly the lion has to do with the bed: Here is one who says as he arises from the lion-couch: "I have removed the lions from me . . . I have vivified the vivified. I have thrown off all my evil. My horror is blood. . . ." Plainly he has reversed the lion-power.[52a] Apollonius of Tyana, a famous wandering wise man from the time of Christ, had a pet lion whom he claimed to be the reincarnation of Pharaoh Amasis; it was regarded as a miraculous beast because it refused to eat the blood of sacrifices, that being apparently the proper function of pet lions.[53] In some cases the lion-couch itself is shown as a rampant beast trampling its victims,[54] and a newly found fragment from Der el-Bahri shows the lion-couch as a sphinx,[55] a reminder that the king as a sphinx on the sides of the throne treads on his enemies, and also that sphinxes liked to sacrifice their guests.[55]

Jane: What are all these lion-couches doing on sleds?

Mr. Jones: You will notice that quite often the lion-couch is taking the mummy for a ride. Here in the tomb of Montuhikhopshuf, in a sequence in which Maspero definitely detected human sacrifice, the dead person is brought to the tomb on his lion-couch, which is mounted on a sled; in the next two scenes it has been removed from the sled and put aside.[56] The same sequence is shown here in the tomb of Aba, where the lion-couch also rides on a ship;[57] in this Old Kingdom tomb the funeral ship itself has the lion head![58] And here in the third of three lion-couch scenes, as soon as the man on the couch stirs to life and starts walking, the lion-couch itself starts walking too![59] Thus the lion is a conveyor; thrones are often shown as borne on the backs of lions;[60] here at Edfu both Horus and the King are seen riding on platforms mounted on the backs of lions.[61] The lion is the supernatural conveyor to the other-world; in the mysteries he is the psychopomp.

Dick: What's a psychopomp?

Mr. Jones: Somebody who conducts spirits from one place to another. The lion-headed lady Sekhmet, or the priest with the lion mask, usually holds a big sacrificial knife in one hand while pointing the way imperiously with the other. In "Chaldaea," the lion started out as the dangerous and evil enemy of the gods—an understandable role when lions were still a real danger—but in time "a symbol of submission to higher powers or their ally,"[62] which is what it means in Egypt, where it represents the irresistible order that the victim cannot evade. The lion-headed Lady Sekhmet, the big black granite figure all painted red that stands at the door of the Opet Shrine, is, according to Varille, "a principle of fire *which destroys in order to regenerate*"—she destroys but with a purpose; it is necessary destruction.[63] That may sound paradoxical, but it is the whole idea behind the lion-couch, best represented by the dangerous but beneficent lion.

Dick: But why do there have to be so *many lions* on these beds?

Jane: And on the altars?

Mr. Jones: I am glad you noticed that. Here, for example, is a small altar that our guidebook says is "Mios quadrifrons with lion faces in granite,"[64] and here is a "lion throne" facing in the four directions.[65] This low limestone table with the lions' heads protruding in the four directions "is a representation of some kind of seat or throne."[66] And here we see King Seti I presenting a four-headed lion-couch seat in the temple.[67] And notice these stone altars with lions' heads facing in all four directions.[68]

Jane: Why is that, do you think?

Mr. Jones: Well, there must have been an important reason, because it meant a lot of extra work and was a clumsy thing to handle. It goes back to the fourfold obsession of the Sed-festival. Professor Kees believed that the great moment of the Sed-festival, the climax of the whole business, was when the king "shot the victorious arrows in the four directions of heaven, to destroy all his enemies symbolically,"[69] and H. Bonnet thinks the great moment was when Horus and Seth handed the king the sceptre, bow, and arrows that showed him conqueror and ruler of the world.[69] On the same occasion the king not only shot the four arrows but was enthroned four times, each time facing a different direction, "upon a curious throne base, ornamented with 12 *lion*-heads."[70]

Remember, we said that at first the lion- and bull-thrones were interchangeable, and the king sitting on 12 lions certainly suggests the 12 oxen of Solomon. Now here is the most spectacular altar ever found in Egypt, or rather the base of it: the gigantic fourfold altar of Abusir; you will notice that everything about it is fourfold, emphasizing the four-directional orientation.[71] Here is a recent comment about it: "Even cosmic symbolism is implied in the square altars (this is not the only one) accessible from four stairways rising from the four directions to four sides," and the symbolism includes that of the Primeval Hill.[72]

Jane: Should the lion couch always face four directions like that?

Mr. Jones: I think so. That is, when it is thought of as an *altar*, it should.

Dick: Then why doesn't it in the Joseph Smith papyrus?

Mr. Jones: Oh, but it does—most vividly! It is not *drawn* fourfold, because that would be extremely difficult and clumsy, but they had a way of getting around that. Sir Alan Gardiner noted that the coronation and royal funeral rites were all "quadrilateral"—repeated four times, a basic requirement but exceedingly difficult to depict in art. Therefore, according to Professor Gardiner, the Egyptian artist restored to his typical and ingenious tricks. How, for example, would you show Pharaoh being baptized by four officiants each dousing water on him from a different side and all at once? Any way you arranged it, your picture would be a mess. So the Egyptian artist simply had two priests baptizing the king, one standing on either side, but they dressed up one of these figures as Thoth, who can and in this case does signify the gods of all of the four directions in this single person.[73] In lion-couch scenes the Egyptian artists had a special trick to show the four heads without hopelessly scrambling their drawings: in the birth and nursing scenes it was usual to show *two* lion couches, one standing directly on top of the other, and to adorn each bed with *two* lion-heads, one on each end. It was, as you can see, a perfectly fantastic arrangement, which can have had only one purpose—to show all four lion heads distinctly in a tidy design.[73a] That trick is never used in funerary lion-couch scenes, where the four canopic jars are used instead: along with the many other things they could represent, those four, as we shall soon see, always stood in the eyes of the Egyptians before everything else as

representative of "this earth in its four quarters," exactly as Joseph Smith says.

Dick: But aren't they jars for holding the insides of the dead person?

Mr. Jones: Certainly, and those insides were thought of as composed of the four elements, brought together to form the body of man from the four quarters of the earth.

Jane: But they also represent idols.

Mr. Jones: Yes, idols of gods of the four quarters. We'll talk about them later. But first, since we are talking about lions, we might as well get rid of the *crocodile*, the savage companion of the lion, whose appearance in the Joseph Smith papyrus is quite significant, I think. It is designated as *Facsimile I, Figure 9. "The idolatrous god of Pharaoh":* First of all, I find it odd that the crocodile never turns up in any of the nearly 200 other lion-couch scenes I have looked at, though he often turns up in an adjacent scene —but always and only when there is sacrificing going on. The prominence of the animal in the Joseph Smith Papyrus No. 1 therefore calls for some serious study. What do you think of first when you see a lion?

Jane: Get out of the way!

Mr. Jones: Yes. The first reaction to the sight of old Leo is that this is a dangerous and powerful beast. But that is not all you think of—as you get to know the animal and his habits better, he comes to mean all sorts of things to you, as we have just seen. Well, what is the first thing you think of when you see a monster crocodile?

Jane: Even more get out of the way!

Mr. Jones: That's true. A crocodile is even more alarming than a lion, and harder to get to know.

The Egyptians assigned the same primary functions to lions and crocodiles as you just did: their business is to chase people. If the lion-fortress guarded the northeast frontier of Egypt, the crocodiles that swarmed in the lakes and marshes there actually did keep unwelcome Arab and Libyan invaders from crossing over without authorization, or fugitives from Egypt from escaping.[74] In the Egyptian romances the hero's crossing to the other world is barred at the desert by lions and at the waters by crocodiles.[75] In the Temple of Seti I two crocodiles kneel under two lions holding huge *sacrificial* knives, with the sacred head of Osiris on a pole before them, and here is a funeral scene in which Nefertem the lion sacrifices the enemy of Egypt in rites at which Sobek the crocodile presides.[76] A terrible duo, but just as the Egyptians through long familiarity began to value certain traits of the lion, so they saw that the crocodile was not without its virtues.

Dick: What virtues, I would like to know.

Mr. Jones: Ferocity, fecundity, and above all rapacity were the conspicuous qualities of the beast,[77] and if those qualities in the crocodile, the lion, and the wolf in that order inspire a sort of awe,[78] they are not without their usefulness—the world needs scavengers, especially in exuberantly fertile subtropical regions such as Egypt. But still, Dick is right. The good done by marauding and predatory beasts is not very obvious. Philo, who lived all his life in Egypt, scratched his head in wonder and protested that it was reasonable enough to venerate useful and gentle animals if you must venerate animals at all, "But why crocodiles and lions? What could be more ridiculous?"[79] And Origen, a native Egyptian, says that he has never been able to find an explanation for such foolishness.[80] Because the Egyptians did worship the crocodile, you know, even though they hated it.

Jane: They hated it and still they worshiped it?

Mr. Jones: Yes, and visitors to Egypt just couldn't understand it. It was a prize paradox even for Egypt. From the earliest times the crocodile was worshiped in some parts of Egypt, and at all times his cult was one of the most important in the land.[81] Priests would feed and groom the beasts lovingly at their shrines, where sometimes they became quite tame.[82]

The Egyptians were quite aware of the more unlovely attributes of the crocodile: in some parts of the country it was considered the vilest of creatures and hunted down, and yet "others," wrote Strabo, "though aware of its dangerous and hateful nature, still worship it—and keep their distance!"[83] Those who hunted and even ate the crocodiles justified their action by saying that the beast was everything evil, creature of Typhon, the mortal enemy of *Horus*.[84] In some parts of Egypt people would swim along with the crocs, but not far away others would not even approach a shore where crocodiles might be found.[85] While at Crocodilopolis the animals were sacrosanct, a few miles away at Apolloonpolis the populace waged systematic war against them.[86]

Dick: The usual Egyptian confusion.

Mr. Jones: Plutarch says the explanation must be sought not in logical thinking but in some mantic power attributed to the animal, and that one Pharaoh died for scorning that particular power.[87] "Terrifying is the crocodile which the gods fear," says a Coffin Text,[88] and Drioton notes that the only reason the dead might want to change into a crocodile is to inspire fear.[89] It stands for all the worst human attributes; Hopfner has collected Egyptian terror stories of the bloody crocodiles—which could be scarier than any ghost-stories, for the real crocodiles were not far away![90] Naturally there were lots of charms against crocodiles, especially to render them harmless while one passed by the places where they lurked.[91]

But still the Egyptians reverenced the beast. It wasn't just that some Egyptians worshiped crocodiles and some hated them, but that the same people felt mixed emotions. Petrie insisted that the Egyptians all hated the crocs, but were so terribly afraid of them that they *had* to worship them to propitiate them. "The crocodile," he wrote, "was always feared and only worshipped in depreciation."[92] This is borne out by this text from the famous Papyrus of Ani where "bowings and prostrations are made" to the "terrible crocodile, ravening and dangerous. . . ."[93] As Strabo put it, "They worship the most hateful of all animals, the crocodile . . . and avoid it!"[94] The equivocal position of the poor Egyptians was like that of the people of India toward their expensive sacred cows: "The country simply swarms with crocodiles," Diodorus reported, because the people would not catch them, considering them to be sacred, and yet they very much appreciated the work of the little ichneumon in destroying and feeding on crocodile eggs.[95] When the son of the first governor of Alexandria was eaten by a crocodile, the priests paid an enormous fine to the governor to keep the animals from being hunted, "for they reverenced the crocodile and did not want it killed."[96] Mixed emotions, you see, though some made an issue and took sides for and against the crocs, as Herodotus and Anthanasius report.[97] Pliny and Ammainus say the same crocs would be well-behaved during certain ceremonial occasions but dangerous the rest of the time.[98]

Dick: Like snakes at the Hopi snake dance, I suppose.

Mr. Jones: Sir Alan Gardiner wrote: "We find ourselves plunged into a world of imagery barely credible to the modern mind," when we consider the Egyptian attitude to the crocodile, and regard this as an instructive lesson in just how perverse ancient thought can be.[99] But it makes good sense if we consider a number of things. First of all, the crocodile was exactly what Joseph Smith calls him in Facsimile 1, Figure 9: "the idolatrous god of Pharaoh." What most surprises Professor Gardiner, in fact, is that for all its "less attractive aspects" it was this "voracious creature whom an accident

The crocodile "is uniquely and exactly what Joseph Smith called him, 'the idolatrous god of Pharaoh''

of history had raised to the position of the chief divinity of Egypt."[100] He was not only the chief divinity—and that already in the Middle Kingdom—but peculiarly the special god of Pharaoh. It was not only the *most* unloved of creatures, it was also the *most* highly venerated!

Dick: More than any other animal?

Mr. Jones: Much more—in one special connection. It was exclusively and particularly the king's own totem. Or rather, since there has never been any agreement about totemism in Egypt—

Jane: —or anywhere else, for that matter.

Mr. Jones: Right—but don't interrupt. Let's see just how the crocodile was related to the Pharaoh; that won't be hard to find out, since our guidebook has a good deal to say about it. The crocodile exhibits in this hall are chronologically arranged; let us begin at the beginning. Crocodilopolis was always one of the top cult-places in Egypt,[101] and the crocodile cult was always important throughout the entire land.[102] The story was told at Crocodilopolis that Menes, the first king of a united Egypt, was once pursued by his own dogs while hunting and was rescued and carried to safety across the waters by a crocodile.[102] Here is a Pyramid Text that actually says that the king *is* Sobek the croc,[103] even though we read in another Pyramid Text that this same Sobek is a vile and licentious beast.[103] Still other Pyramid Texts show that in those early times "the deified King appears in vital power in the water as a crocodile," which H. Kees calls a concept of prehistoric antiquity.[104]

Jane: I thought the king was supposed to be a bull in those early times.

Mr. Jones: Here in the Pyramid of Unas, the last king of the Fifth Dynasty, he appears as a wild bull, "but along with that the King is also Sobek," which J. Spiegel thinks is a Lower Egyptian idea; at any rate, it was accepted everywhere.[105] Here in this Middle Kingdom mural from Medinet-Habu "the King is the bull of the Desert, but he wears the costume of Sobek, (the crocodile)."[106] By the V Dynasty the anthropomorphic or crocodile-headed Sobek appears wearing various royal crowns, and by the XII Dynasty he is attached to and even identified with the Sun-god Re.[106] Here is a Middle Kingdom hymn to Sobek: "Sobek the Shedite appears gloriously, he has taken rulership of heaven and filled the Two Lands with his power"; it goes on to say that he wears the Wrrt-crown and is worshiped by "the sun-folk in Heliopolis," that he "seized the sceptre and the crown . . . ruler among the gods . . . who steals the Wrrt-crown."[107]

Jane: But how could a dirty old crocodile ever be the sun?

Mr. Jones: In the hymns it calls him the "Duplicate of Re, great luminary that came forth from the flood . . . son of Neith in Abydos."[107a] I think that explains it: Sobek is understandably the god of the shallow waters from which life emerged in the beginning; he appears out of the water even as the sun appears rising from the primordial waters on the first day "in splendor."[108] He is the only animal I know of that spends half his time basking in the tropical sun and the other half basking in the tropical water.

Jane: "How doeth the little crocodile. . . ."

Mr. Jones: To be sure. Here is a Coffin Text that describes a monster crocodile, "the Lord of B'khw," holding out with the huge serpents of primordial times in sacred and dangerous haunts above the river—it is the sort of thing that could go way back.[109] In this text the first of all thrones, the throne of "the king of everything," is established "at the place of the four crocodiles," the king explaining to the crocs who occupy the four regions that he is going to create the Realm of Re anew on earth, and asking for their approval.[110] It is as if the crocodiles as the original inhabitants of the land must grant permission to the king himself to settle and take over.[110] At any rate, by the Middle Kingdom the Sobek element in the royal names "shows that the crocodile-god was still thought of as something connected with the monarchy," according to Gardiner.[111] This was a survival of older times, but it carried right over until the end—in fact, in the later dynasties the kings of Egypt were especially devoted to the crocodile. Professor Bonnet has given us a useful summary of the whole story. In the XII Dynasty, it says, Sobek "became a god of the Residence, and as such came to be very close to the royal house," and "the kings also of the 13th to 17th Dynasties [where most scholars put Abraham, incidentally] prefer names containing homage to the crocodile." Note that: "homage to the crocodile. . . ."[112]

Jane: What's homage?

Mr. Jones: Submission. Here on a crocodile statue it says that Sobek is "the Horus who resides at Crocodilopolis" and that "the King is a unique friend of Sobek,"[113] and here it says "May the King make offerings to Sobek of Crocodilopolis," who is described as a depository of all the attributes of power and authority.[114] Gardiner is right—the croc has something very special to do with royal power; here is a papyrus from the Fayyum that describes the crocodile not as Pharaoh but as the god *of* Pharaoh.[115] According to Bonnet, the submission of Pharaoh to the crocodile down to the latest times is attested "by the association of the crocodile with the royal image on monuments and in annals. Hence even the Ptolemies reverenced the crocodile *as their ancestor.*"[116] And so Professor Bonnet sums it up: "Sobek absorbs the god of the King into himself" ("*Sobek nimmt also den Königsgott in sich auf*"), so that "hymns of praise to the king and his crowns can be addressed directly to Sobek"; that is, the croc *is* the god of Pharaoh. Bonnet believes that it all goes back to the early "identity with the rising sun-god," which explains why the Egyptians "were fond of designating Sobek as nothing less than 'the living image' or even more popularly, the Ka (the power and essence) of Re, so that he finally ends up like Pharaoh as nothing less than the Universal God."[116]

Dick: Pretty good for an old croc. Don't any of the other animals rate the same sort of promotion?

Mr. Jones: No. Though other beasts are honored in different ways, only the crocodile gets to wear all the royal *crowns.* He is uniquely and exactly what Joseph Smith calls him, "the idolatrous gods of Pharaoh."

Dick: In that case, what's he doing snooping around the altar?

Mr. Jones: Well, for one thing he shows that it *is* an altar. You will never find a croc like that in an embalming scene—what good would he do there? But in sacrificial settings he is right at home.

Dick: Why?

Mr. Jones: In an embalming opera-

tion the whole idea is to *preserve* everything possible of the remains; but sacrifice aims at transmitting the life and substance of the victim to somebody else, and that requires transforming it. Your little old crocodile was just the party to take care of that operation. We talked about the idea of a transfusion in the lion-couch complex: who received the life-giving transfusion of the victim's blood?

Dick and Jane: The king did.

Mr. Jones: But how? It is easy enough to shed blood all over the place—the human race excels at that—but how can a king or anybody else absorb it?

Dick: By eating it. He used to be a cannibal—everybody knows that!

Mr. Jones: Back in 1912 the one professor who ventured a guess about the crocodile in Facsimile 1 said, "I see a crocodile, waiting to seize and devour the dead if he be not protected by ritual embalming against such a fate."[117] That's a pretty good guess, wouldn't you say? The croc is there to devour something, because that is the one thing he is good at. It is not surprising that crocodiles infested places where sacrifices were going on, is it? They are scavengers. They share that activity with lions: Here the Nefertem lion *kills* an enemy *prisoner* at a rite at which *Sobek* presides;[118] here two crocs kneel before two lions, all holding huge sacrificial knives, and all facing the severed and enshrined head of Osiris on a pole.[119] We have seen that a royal sacrificial victim was necessarily an enemy, and Junker showed "that when a sacrificial victim represents an evil power it must be *eaten* by the God."[120] How could the king do that once he had given up cannibalism in the days of Osiris?

Dick: By substitution, of course, just as he avoided being sacrificed himself.

Mr. Jones: And who would his substitute be? Before you answer that impulsively, let me give you some hints. Plutarch says that long before his day the head of the Typhonian victim was thrown into the river;[121] and long before him Herodotus reported that the Egyptians believed that the royal sacrifice had to be consumed by a beast.[122] Here is a text from the Louvre addressing the sacrificed Seth: "Thy heart is given to Khentesktai, who hands it over to the crocodile," while intestines are fed to the cat Bast.[123] In the archaic rites of Kom Ombos, a hawk (Horus) was crucified and mourned as the victim of the crocodile.[124] At Heliopolis in the resurrection rites "the snatcher" was a sacred crocodile with a feather on his head.[125] The old croc is right in there at the great local cult centers, because he has an indispensable function to perform in the sacrifices. In prehistoric times he was especially important as Suchos, the lord of the famous shrine of Osiris as Busiris—and you know what that means.

Jane: What does it mean?

Mr. Jones: Human sacrifice. Busiris was at all times the legendary and historical headquarters of human sacrifice in Egypt, and who presides there? "Busiris is given to Suchos," says this Coffin Text; Suchos is "lord of Busiris," says another; and another calls him "the fatherly sovran."[126] And so we get more crocodile *paradoxes:* Here in the tomb of King Tutankhamon he sits enthroned as a king—but with two powerful wedges driven into his head so that he can't harm anybody![126a] In the IX Dynasty the wicked king Achthoes, "more cruel than all his predecessors . . . was smitten with madness and killed by a crocodile."[127] Here the crocodile turns the tables on a wicked king who practiced human sacrifice and so performs a worthy service, but in other cases it is the other way around, when a righteous Pharaoh overcomes the evil principle, embodied as a crocodile.[128] We have a dual personality here: a hymn of Kom Ombos that hails, "Sobek, Re, Lord of Ombos, who loveth to show *mercy* after his *anger*."[129] The most striking example of the double role of the crocodile is its function *as Horus*; Professor Kees wrote an article about it.[130] While one tradition makes the crocodile the Typhonian beast Seth that rent and scattered the members of Osiris all over the landscape, another makes it Horus, the gatherer and preserver of those very same scattered members.[131] The crocodile, says Junker, "is both Horus who finds and assembled the members of Osiris, *and* the destroyer who, Isis fears, has eaten Osiris."[132]

Dick: How could it be both?

Mr. Jones: Professor Kees considered this a prize example of Egyptian paradox. The crocodile "Sobek is the Sun, but *also* a divinity of darkness"; he is the Adversary Seth of Osiris, yet it is he who bears the body of Osiris reverently to Philae.[133] In the great festival of Khoiak, Horus "comes bringing on the water the members of Osiris in his form of crocodile. A *transformation* takes place in the Temple of Osiris in his name of Crocodile, Lord of Amu," and all this takes place as part of a lion-couch rite.[134] Here is an inscription from the Abaton of Philae: "Horus came and brought the limbs of Osiris out of the water in his (Horus's) form of a crocodile, to join them together in the House of Osiris." There you have it: the crocodile kills and scatters the members, which he then gathers together again as a special favor. Professor E. Otto finds that very strange.[135]

Dick: So do I.

Mr. Jones: But it is quite logical if we understand the very useful function that the terrible crocodile must perform in sacrificial rites. How was Menes, the first king of Egypt, saved by a crocodile?

Jane: By being carried across the water.

Mr. Jones: Yes. The Greek version says he was being saved from his dogs—an idea familiar from Greek mythology—but the much older Egyptian version says Menes was actually killed by a hippopotamus (the kings used to indulge in dangerous ritual hippo hunts), but that a crocodile saved him from death.[136] Now this business of a dead person being carried over the waters is very familiar in Egyptian literature. Just as the crocodile bore the body of Osiris to Philae, a sacred island forbidden to mortals and cut off from the earth by surrounding waters, so it was taught, the crocodile would "bear the body . . . of every person through the heavenly waters" after death.[137] In the story of the Two Brothers, the elder brother weeps for the younger, who after his sacrificial death cannot be reached because of the crocodiles in the waters that separate them.[138] You see what this means: What is the service performed by the crocodile in these cases?

Dick: He carries people across to the other world.

Mr. Jones: Yes, he transports them; he provides the means of making the transition. As in the rites of Khoiak, he makes a "transformation" of the body of Osiris possible. Herodotus II, 90 says that when any Egyptian was carried away either by a crocodile or by the Nile, he was deemed so sacred that no one but a priest could touch him, and his city had to bury him with sacred rites. The Ombites considered it a great honor to be eaten by a crocodile, "and believed that people thus sacrificed were the darlings of the god."[139] Josephus says that the Egyptians of his day considered anyone carried away by crocs to be "most blessed and worthy of the god."[140] Aelian reported that the Egyptians rejoiced to have their children carried off by crocodiles, and that the mother of such a child was highly honored in her community;[141] and Maximus of Tyre tells about an Egyptian woman who rejoiced when her son was eaten by a pet crocodile that she herself had raised up, deeming him "a fitting gift to the local god."[142]

In all these cases the victims were considered as sacrifices and as happily transported across the waters to a better

"Joseph Smith was on very solid ground in identifying the hawk as the 'Angel of the Lord'"

world; the crocodile, as Frankfort puts it, is really "a set of functions," one of which is transportation and transformation, exemplified in the efficient way in which it removes its clients out of this world.[143] Down till late times the Ombites would throw the heads of all sacrificial victims to the sacred crocodiles, which would make short work of the remains; at the same time, according to our informant, the people of a neighboring city said that the crocodiles were the embodiment of Typhon, the destroyer.[144] Well, why not? Seth or Typhon dispatched Osiris and sent him out of the world—that was a necessary function if there was to be a resurrection, a valued and necessary service that needed to be done, and as such the Egyptians appreciated it and the crocodile. That is why "the crocodile appears to the Egyptians as a mighty symbol of the resurrected divine king. The Osiris myth was able to exploit the idea: Osiris became 'Suchos, the Lord of the marsh.' "[145]

Dick: So now the crocodile is not only Seth who killed Osiris, and Horus who saved him, but he is also Osiris himself. Isn't that a bit steep?

Mr. Jones: He doesn't have to be everything *at once.* In the feast of Osiris the *fekhti* priest says, "I am Horus, I have come to thee, mighty goddess, bringing the body of my father. . . . A model is then placed on a lion-couch in a special chamber." It is explained that "Horus in the form of a crocodile brings his father's members, for on *this* day he is to be *transformed.*" The model is then placed on its back.

Dick: The good old lion-couch drama.

Mr. Jones: Yes, and a crocodile as Horus, the living king, is one of the actors. The Osiris figure is then removed from the bed and set upright on a golden stand, to be exposed to the sun and painted green—obviously Osiris coming to life again.[146] Here are a lot of later amulets showing Horus treading on the crocodiles while holding dangerous lions by the tail—it is a charm to protect people and houses against these beasts, and "represent the renewal of youth," the overcoming of the most dangerous threats to life by the reborn Horus.[147] As Seth seeks to destroy the newly born Horus, his mother is told to flee across the waters until she reaches "the house of the Crocodile" in the Delta, where she and her son will be safe.[148] If you want a shockingly literal concept of resurrection, Pliny says that though the crocodiles of Egypt are a terror to the wicked, they can even be ridden by the righteous, and can by the proper treatment be induced to regurgitate their victims for burial.[149]

Jane: How nasty!

Mr. Jones: The Egyptians thought it was a salutary performance. Dick, would you say the crocodile's power was, on the whole, good or bad?

Dick: That depends on how it is used.

Mr. Jones: Exactly. Dr. Kees says that it was precisely because the crocodile was so dangerous that its power was coveted—to do what? For one thing, according to Kees, to do just what the lion did and play the part of "a dangerous guardian." It specialized in guarding the severed head of Osiris, as in this impressive scene from the tomb of Seti I.[150] Since the heads and hearts of sacrificial victims were in early times thrown to the crocodiles, we can pretty well guess where this idea came from.

Dick: The croc would "take care" of those items, all right!

Mr. Jones: Yes, by properly disposing of them. There is a Middle Kingdom offering-tablet of which Kees makes a good deal, which declares that anyone who damages the offerings must come under the dread knife of the Horus-crocodile himself.[150a] So it is clear that the dire talents of the crocodile were in special demand in sacrificial situations. In the Joseph Smith papyrus it makes little difference whether we think of the crocodile as Horus or Seth: in either case he provides an unmistakable clue to the *kind* of death the person on the couch must face. As "the idolatrous god of Pharaoh," he is the form in which Pharaoh is able to consume the flesh and blood of his victims (an idea often expressed in the sacrificial liturgy), and be refreshed and renewed by them. Remember those early sacrificial texts we read in which the king was told that the enemy's blood was being shed so that *he* could be revived and rejuvenated by it? It was not enough merely to shed blood—it had to be consumed in some way, and by whom more effectively than by the efficient scavengers to whom the hearts and heads of of sacrificial victims were thrown, the terrifying embodiment of primordial kingship that swarmed in sacred immunity around the oldest sacrificial altars of the land? So it is anything but fantastic to designate the crocodile in Facsimile 1 as "the idolatrous God of Pharaoh" in his capacity of participating in a sacrificial scene.

But let us get back to the main stream of our story. The man on the altar being in mortal peril prays for deliverance, and God sends an angel and rescues him. Now before we get into the extensive literary treatments of that theme, there is a little item that it would be well to get out of the way, and that is what we should have started with, namely:

Facsimile No. 1, Figure 1: "The Angel of the Lord": What we want to ask is, since when is a hawk an angel? Some have recently maintained not only that Figure 1 in the papyrus *should* have a human head, but that it actually *does* have one.

Dick: Wouldn't that make a better angel than one with a hawk's head?

Mr. Jones: By the conventions of Christian art it would. But there are serious objections to accepting a human head on the Egyptian bird.

Dick: Why? I've seen lots of Egyptian soul-birds with human heads.

Mr. Jones: Yes, but none as hard to recognize as this one, I'll wager. And if you go and dig up all those human-headed birds, you will find that every one of them has conspicuous legs and claws in which he is holding *ankh*-signs or *shw* feathers, and in many cases have arms been added to the legs—arms upraised in prayer. But this bird has no legs at all, let alone arms—he is another kind of bird. Joseph Smith was on very solid ground in identifying the hawk in Facsimile 1 (no matter who drew it!) as "the Angel of the Lord," because according to Egyptian thinking the very best way to show an angel was by a hawk. The trouble with interpreting Egyptian birds is that there are so many of them and birds seem to be just naturally symbolical—mantic, if you will. If you look over a hundred or so lion-couch scenes, you will find that the birds perform in a great variety of roles—sometimes there are five, sometimes only one, but they are all there for a purpose, though not for the same purpose. That is what makes it so confusing. The experts back in 1912 disagreed about the bird in

Facsimile 1 more than anything else—one scholar said it was one thing and another said it was another, and this is one time when comparison with *other* lion-couch scenes only confuses the issue.

Dick: Why?

Mr. Jones: Because you will find among the others not one consistent bird pattern, but all kinds of birds doing all kinds of things. Just look at this lion-couch scene in the shrine of Opet: There is only one bird there, flying above the man on the couch—but what a bird! Professor Varille recognized it as a *ba*-bird.

Jane: What's a *ba*-bird?

Mr. Jones: That is the part of a person that enters his body when he is born and leaves it when he dies.

Dick: It must be his spirit, then.

Mr. Jones: That is what the *ba* is—a representation of the human spirit. Not because human spirits look like birds, but because the idea of a bird best represents the spirit's lightness and its ability to move freely and spurn the heavy gravity of the earth. As Professor Drioton wrote, "Nothing was ever farther from the Egyptian mentality than metempsychosis."

Jane: What's metempsychosis?

Mr. Jones: That is when human beings actually take over other forms than human: this depicting of gods and men in animal form is never to be taken literally, according to Drioton.[151]

Jane: But if they always drew spirits like birds, wouldn't people come to think they were birds?

Mr. Jones: Professor Frankfort suggests that it was to avoid that very mistake that "in tomb designs the dead are depicted as birds with human heads—possibly a graphic device to distinguish them from real birds."[152] Some people have insisted that the bird in Facsimile 1 should have a human head, or even that it does have one. But is that necessary? Look at all these other lion-couch scenes: how many birds do you see?

Dick: About a hundred, I guess.

Mr. Jones: And how many of them have human heads?

Dick: I can see only four.

Mr. Jones: You see, statistics are all in favor of giving our bird a hawk's head. But statistics aren't everything. Look—in our prize exhibit, the Opet scene, the bird does have a human head. It has been recognized, of course, as a *ba-bird,* but that is only the beginning of the story; notice that the bird has the body of the vulture *Mwt,* showing that it is Osiris's *mother,* but it has the claws of the inundation-bird *b'h,* showing that it is the beginning of life; at the same time it wears the beard and feather-crown of Amon, and the inscription tells us that it is "Amon-Re, the sublime soul of Osiris, which alights on his corpse in his place of birth." That means, according to Professor Varille, that "the figure on the lion couch is the counter-part of the bird above. . . ."[153] *Now* tell me how many people that one bird is!

Jane: First of all, if it is a *ba* it must be the soul of Osiris. Oh yes, it even says so: "The sublime *Ba* of Osiris. . . ."

Dick: It's only his counterpart.

Mr. Jones: It says here, "The august spirit (*Ba*) of Osiris is coming to unite itself with his body." For a bringing together of spirit and body, both father and mother are necessary. And who is the king when he is reborn?

Jane: Oh, I know. It's Horus. Is the bird Horus, too?

Dick: But Horus is always a hawk, don't you know? Say! Maybe that's why they don't draw a hawk's head on the bird—because if they did everybody would think it was only Horus and nothing else.

Jane: But then what do they do when they want to show that the bird *is* Horus too, along with all those other things?

Dick: Draw another bird, I suppose—a real hawk.

Jane: But that's too complicated.

Mr. Jones: Is it any more complicated than what we have here? That seems to be exactly the kind of complication we get in these lion-couch scenes. If you will just look in the south sanctuary at Opet, you will see a scene showing how "little Horus" takes hawk form during a gestation period in the marshes, "his temporal father being Osiris who revives in his son, but whose spiritual father is the life-giving Amon."[154] The hawk can be Osiris as well as his father, his mother, and his son! The whole amazing operation takes place on the lion couch, and to put over the whole message a variety of birds is necessary. It is as silly to think that a bird can have only one significance as to think the same of a lion-couch. Our guidebook says that the original soul-bird of Osiris was the *benu*-bird, nothing less than the Phoenix of Heliopolis, but that ordinary spirits were usually represented by the crested Ibis, the *akh*-bird, and that from the Middle Kingdom on soul-birds were shown without human heads as herons, storks, swallows, lapwings, geese, and falcons, that is, always by *migrating* birds.[155]

Dick: Because spirits migrate, I suppose.

Mr. Jones: But here is a study that say that the spirits of the dead are represented by falcons only *after* the Middle Kingdom.[156] Before that the hawk and falcon were reserved for the royal Horus alone:[157] there is certainly no shortage of evidence for that! Only in the latest period is "the falcon sometimes confused with the soul-bird."[157] Here Miss Klebs tells how the soul-bird can signify either that the soul is flying away—or can serve as a protector, or a guide, or brood upon the body as an egg, looking forward to future resurrection, or fan it with its wings to preserve or restore the breath of life, etc.[158] While the hawk on the ceiling of Tut's tomb may be the king's soul flying away *to* heaven,[159] he can just as well be flying "*from* heaven as a hawk . . . ,"[160] if he can go one way he can go the other; that perhaps is why the hawk is the *only* symbol to appear in all the known predynastic Palettes and maces—because he alone represents the certain tie between heaven and earth.[161]

Dick: How come?

Mr. Jones: Because of his special qualifications. For the ancients, the hawk, which could soar out of sight in the sky, was the only bird that could fly between heaven and earth, that could go to the sun and return.[162] If the king was going to heaven, it would have to be as a hawk, chosen to represent both the soul of the king and the sun to which he returned, "because it excelled all other birds known to the Egyptian in its ability to fly at a very great height."[163] That is why we find on the seals of the very earliest kings the majestic image of "the hawk . . . the great dweller in the heavens" sitting above the archaic *srkh,* the palace gate, as the one who communicates between the earthly and the heavenly dwelling of royalty.[164] From the beginning, "every king placed great importance on his identification with the Horus hawk," emphasizing that he had come from afar, from heaven itself.[165] The name Horus comes from *hry,* " 'to be far off,' sometimes, 'to betake oneself to a distance,' " and the first king of a united Egypt designated himself as "he who is in the distant heaven" to emphasize the heavenly and supernatural nature of his power as that of "Great God, Lord of the Heavens," which of course got him identified with the Sun-god Re in short order.[166] The idea behind the early seals seems to be expressed in this Coffin Text, 148: "See Horus, you gods! I am Horus, the Falcon who is on the battlements of the Mansion of Him whose name is hidden. My flight aloft has reached the horizon, I have overpassed the gods of the sky. . . . I go up in my flight, and there is no god who can do what I have done. . . . I am Horus, more distant of place than men or gods. . . ."[167] Here is a still earlier one: "The King is no longer on earth but in heaven. He

sails to heaven like the flamingo and kisses the sky like a hawk."[168] Here is a brand-new study by the renowned Prof. S. Schott in which he tells us that the hawk offers the student a particularly useful insight into the relationship between speculation and image in Egyptian thinking.[168a] He cites inscriptions telling how the hawk "flies up even to heaven," "opens [his] wings to the limits of the universe," and "speeds through the cosmos to the place of light."[168a] In this capacity he bears the names of "Announcer" (*Ausspruch*, Hw) and "Knower" (*Erkenntnis*, Sja), showing him to be the messenger of messengers.[168b] Now as the one being that can pass freely between the remotest reaches of the universe and the earth, the hawk is preeminently qualified—in fact, he is the only fully qualified candidate—for the job of heavenly messenger.

Jane: You mean like angels in the Bible?

Mr. Jones: If you will look up all the references to wings in the Bible, you will find that wings are never found on angels, but are often referred to in a purely symbolic sense. Just so the Egyptians, as Canon Drioton noted, did not for a moment believe that an angel would really take the form of a hawk, but thought that a hawk was a very expressive symbol of the way in which angels get around.[169] Professor Gardiner, who says that "the concept of 'messengers' who performed the behest of the gods is known from the Book of the Dead and elsewhere, e.g. P.T. 1252b,"[170] is also good enough to point out that the Greeks called such a messenger an "angelos," from which our own word angel is derived.[170] The sign of such a messenger is and always was the hawk or falcon. "The hawk is the divine messenger who brought the book of Wisdom to Thebes," according to Diodorus; "though they understand this *symbolically*," he explains, "it is said at Thebes that a Hawk brought the divine Book from heaven to the priests"; for that reason "the priestly scribes [*hierogrammateis*] wear a red *ramma* and a hawk's feather on their heads."[171] Either the god or his representative could be the messenger—indeed the messenger as an ambassador was necessarily an embodiment of him who sent him: "He comes for life as a messenger of Horus," says a Pyramid Text, in which messengers are sent "on the wing of Thoth."[172] Aelian reports that "the Egyptians say that the living hawk is a blessed bird and that after death it can prophesy and send prophetic dreams, being pure spirit stripped of the flesh it can bring healing prescriptions to believers."[173] Diodorus I, 87 also reports that the Egyptian hawk is the great mantic and prophetic bird. Its most famous embodiment is the great magician Pharaoh Nectanabos, who, to apprise Philip of Macedon of the divine conception of Alexander, "flew and appeared to him as a hawk speaking to him in dreams," from Egypt; at the same time he visited the queen in the form of a hawk and so begot the divine Alexander—which, of course, is another Egyptian idea, conspicuous among our lion-couch episodes.[174] When Philip asked a seer about his dream, he was told, "Thy wife shall conceive for thee a son, who shall rule over the entire world."[174] Here the messenger hawk was the divine-king himself, but sometimes he could be just an extension of the king, or of the powers of heaven.

Dick: What does that mean?

Mr. Jones: Well, here is a hawk-picture from the *First* Dynasty, the famous ivory comb of King Djet: the spread-out wings represent, it is agreed, the protecting powers of heaven extended to those dwelling on earth.[175] This idea of the hawk as an earnest of heavenly protection carries right on into the tombs and coffins of later times when the outspread wings of the bird of heaven protect the dead from corruption or other harm or even extending healing influence.[176] Throughout the ancient world we meet with the bird who flies ahead of the king and reports to his lord and master all that is going on in it.

Jane: A watchbird, eh?

Mr. Jones: A very familiar concept. In the Ramesseum Papyrus, Horus says to Thoth: "Take possession of thy two Falcon-standards that go before thy face," these being "the two eyes," the king's spies.[177] Well, it should be apparent by now that according to Egyptian thinking the proper embodiment of a divine messenger or angel should be by all means a hawk. But we still don't know enough about the hawk in the Joseph Smith papyrus. I think it would be a good idea at this point to quit the museum for awhile and go over to the library. Museum people have a way of neglecting libraries, and vice versa, which is quite understandable. But we have some wonderful texts that can really help us out with our facsimiles. I will meet you again in the museum after I have dug around a bit in the papyri. ○

(*To be continued*)

Footnotes

[1]A. Piankoff, *The Shrines of Tut-ankh-amon* (Harper Torchbooks, 1962), Pl. 16. The ivory headrest that goes with the bed is supported by a figure of "Shu, the void, the god of air," who is flanked by two crouching lions, Pl. 59. This lion couch belongs to a series of three beds, including a bull-bed (Pl. 14), and a hippopotamus-bed (Pl. 15).

[2]L. Keimer, in *Bull. Inst. Fr. Caire*, Vol. 37 (1954/5), p. 263; P. Montet, *Everyday Life in Egypt* (London, 1958), p. 29.

[3]Piankoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 36f: "These couches represent three stages of rebirth," culminating with "finally, the lion couch associated with resurrection," cf. *ibid.*, p. 51, Fig. 11, and G. Jequier, *Considerations sur les Religions Egyptiennes* (Neuchatel, 1946), pp. 217f.

[4]Piankoff and Jequier, *loc. cit.* In the symbolic royal conception, birth, and nursing scenes from Luxor, Denderah, Deir el-Bahri, and Philae, the lion-couch dominates the scene; F. Weindler, *Geburts- und Wochenbettsdarstellungen auf altaegyptischen Tempelreliefs* (Munich: Beck, 1915), Abb. 3, 7, 14, 18, 21, 27, 28.

[5]The close resemblance between the "Bed of Osiris" and the lion-couch scene in the temple of Seti I was noted by E. Amelineau, in *Revue Egyptologique*, Vol. 13 (1910), p. 181, with photo. The lion-couch scene in the temple of Opet is discussed by A. Varille, in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 53 (1955/6), pp. 79ff, with photo, Pl. XIX.

[6]Above, note 3. The most impressive *series* of lion-couch scenes is to be found in H. Frankfort, *The Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos* (Egyptian Exploration Society, 1933), II, Pl. 74 to 78.

[7]A. Moret, *Mysteres Egyptians*, p. 61.

[8]W. Needler (1963), discussed in *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, Vol. 60 (1965), p. 246.

[9]H. E. Winlock, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 30 (1930), pp. 102ff, with photo.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 103.

[11]U. Schweitzer, in *Aegyptologische Forschungen*, Heft 5, 1948, Pl. viii; M. el Amir, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 34 (1948), Pls. XV, XVI.

[12]G. Jequier, in *Sphinx*, Vol. 14 (1910/11), p. 179.

[13]D. Opitz, in *Archiv fuer Orientforschung*, Vol. 7 (1931-33), p. 88.

[14]W. Spiegelberg, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 65 (1930), p. 58; quote is from B. Bruyere, in *Chronique d'Egypte*, Vol. 28 (1952), p. 38.

[15]Bruyere, *op. cit.*, pp. 37f.

[16]A. Varille, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 53, pp. 107-9.

[17]Opitz, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

[18]Piankoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 42, n. 3 and 22, n. 48.

[19]T. Hopfner, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realenzyklop. d. Altertumswiss.*, Suppl. 16: 1331.

[20]*Ibid.*, Col. 1332.

[21]A. Shorter, in *Jnl. Egypt. Archaeol.*, Vol. 22 (1936), p. 163.

[22]K. Sethe, *Uebers, u. Kommentar zu den altaeg. Pyramidentexten*, I, 78f, 80.

[23]E. A. W. Budge, *The Book of Opening the Mouth* (London, 1909), I, 39.

[24]G. Jequier, in *Receuil de Travaux*, Vol. 37, p. 122.

[25]*Mission Archaeologique Francaise, Memoires*, Vol. 1 (1889), Pl. XXXI, Figs. 32 and 33.

[26]W. F. Petrie, *Denderah* (Eg. Expl. Soc., 1898), Pl. iii.

[27]G. Maspero, *Gen. Catal., Cairo*, Vol. 102 (1939), Pl. XXV, 29318; cf. Pyr. Text No. 509 (1125).

[28]B. Vandenhoff, in *Oriens Christianus*, Vol. 5 (1915), pp. 244f.

[29]Pyr. Text No. 509 (1120).

[30]Aelian, *Hist. animal.* XII, 7.

[31]A. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 396.

[32]Plutarch, *de Osir. et Iside*, 19.

[33]Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica*, I, 19, in T. Hopfner, *Fontes hist. relig. aegypt.*, p. 593.

[34]A. Gardiner, in *Jnl. Egypt. Archaeol.*, Vol. 6 (1920), p. 106.

[35]Plut., *de Iside*, 38.

[36]A. Varille, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 53, pp. 87-89, discussing the symbolism at length.

[37]*Ibid.*, p. 96.

[38]Aelian, *Hist. animal.*, XII, 7.

[39]Varille, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

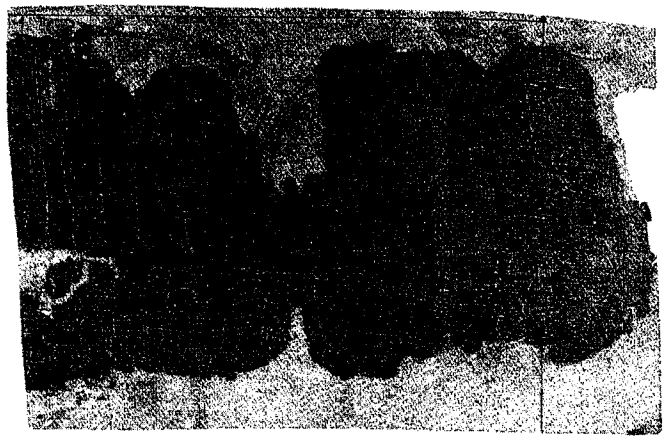
[40]M. Pogracz, in *Mitt. des dt. Inst. Kairo*, Vol. 15 (1957), p. 213.

[41]C. Crowfoot and N. de G. Davies, in *Jnl. Egypt. Archaeol.*, Vol. 27 (1941), p. 128.

[42]L. Borchardt, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 61 (1926), pp. 30-51.
[43]W. Weszinski, *Atlas*, I, i, 88f; Pt. ii, Taf. 203.
[44]*Ibid.*, II, ii, Taf. 164. For other royal pet lions, L. Keimer, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 30 (1930), pp. 45-52, Pl. iii.
[45]A. Gardiner, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 82 (1956), p. 38.
[46]P. Derchain, *Rites Egyptiens* (Brussels, 1962), I, 54.
[47]Aelian, *Hist. animal.* XII, 7. See the many illustrations in U. Schweitzer, "Loewe u. Sphinx im alten Aegypten," in *Aegyptol. Forschungen*, Heft 15, 1948. Abb. 5. Taf. ix, 1, 2, 4; xii, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6; XV, 5, 6.
[48]M. de Rochemonteix, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 3 (1894), p. 254; and the Tomb of Seti I, in *Miss. Arch. Fr., Mem.* 2, Pl. xliii. In *The Book of Victory over Seth* (ed. S. Schott, pp. 52f), VIII, 5ff, Nut describes the wholesomely destructive office of Sechmet with her flame and sword. See below at f.n. 63.
[49]This is only a general impression, but the theme is discussed ingeniously by A. Varille, *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 53, pp. 93f, 110.
[50]E. E. Edgar, *Greco-Egyptian Coffins, Catal. Gen. Cairo*, Vol. 26 (1905), Pl. xxxi, xxxii.
[51]*Coffin Texts* (De Buck), I, 280, Spell 66.
[52]H. Brunner, in *Ztschr. der dt. Morgenl. Ges.*, Vol. 111 (1961), p. 442; this is treated below.
[52a]*Coffin Texts* (De Buck), I, 385-392.
[53]Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, 5:42.
[54]e.g. H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 76 (1940), Taf. IV, opp. p. 44.
[55]In *Jnl. Egypt. Archaeol.*, Vol. 51 (1965), Pl. XII, 5, opp. p. 25. For a Sphinx-throne, G. Roeder, *Bronzefiguren in Berlin* (1956), Taf. 87.
[56]G. Mapero, in *Miss. Arch. Fr., Mem.*, Vol. 3, p. 446, Fig. 5. The sacrificial scenes are described on pp. 452-54, Fig. 7.
[57]*Ibid.*, p. 3, Pl. 7, and Pl. 9.
[58]E. Drioton, in *Chron. d'Egypte*, Vol. 10 (1934), pp. 202f.
[59]J. Capart, in *Chron. d'Egypte*, Vol. 19 (1943), Figs. 28-30.
[60]P. Perdrizer, *Monuments et Memoires*, Vol. 25 (1921f), p. 262, Fig. 3.
[61]*Miss. Arch. Fr., Mem.*, Vol. 31, Pl. clvi.
[62]Crowfoot and Davies, *Jnl. Egypt. Archaeol.*, Vol. 27, p. 128.
[63]A. Varille, *Ann Serv.*, Vol. 53, pp. 107-8. Italics added.
[64]P. Perdrizer, *op. cit.*, p. 377, Fig. 11.
[65]L. Borchardt, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 61 (1926), pp. 30ff.
[66]C. M. Firth, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 26 (1926), p. 100, Fig. 2.
[67]M. Calverly, *Temple of Sethos I*, Vol. 3, Pl. 12.
[68]Fr. W. v. Bissing, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 69 (1933), p. 99, Abb. 3, 4.
[69]H. Kees, *Goetterglaube*, pp. 103, 197; Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, p. 159.
[70]H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 44.
[71]H. Schaefer, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 37 (1899), p. 5, Abb. 2; M. Moret, *Mysteres Egyptiens*, pp. 308f, 313, Fig. 57.
[72]A. Badawy, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 87 (1961), p. 95.
[73]A. Gardiner, in *Jnl. Egypt. Archaeol.*, Vol. 36 (1950), pp. 11f.
[73a]F. Weindler, *Geburts- und Wochenbettsdarstellungen* . . . (1915), Abb. 27, 28, show this distinctly.
[74]Diodorus, *Hist.*, I, 89; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, VIII, 25, 92-93.
[75]The Story of the Brothers, 6:6f.
[76]Calverly, *Temple of Sethos I*, Vol. 3, Pl. 12; R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario*, Tav. xv, xvii.
[77]Horapollo, *Hierogl.*, I, 67, in Hopfner, *Fontes*, p. 589.
[78]Alexander of Lycopolis, *On the Manichaeans*, 14, in Hopfner, pp. 461f.
[79]Philo, *De posteritate Caini*, Vol. 48 (1965), in Hopfner, *Fontes*, p. 167.
[80]Origen, *Against Celsus*, V, 39.
[81]H. Brugsch, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 31 (1893), pp. 24ff, 27f; C. Kuentz, *Bull. Inst. Franc. Arch. Or.*, Vol. 28 (1929), p. 196; L. Kakosy, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 90 (1963), p. 66. For mummified crocodiles, X. de Gorostarzu, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 2 (1901), pp. 182-84.
[82]Plutarch, *De sollic. anim.*, 23, in Hopfner, *Fontes*, p. 265. Strabo, *Geog.* XVII, 1, 809, describes a visit to one of the sacred preserves where tourists would feed the crocodiles.
[83]Strabo, *Geog.*, XVII, 1, 814.
[84]Plutarch, *De Iside*, 50.
[85]Aelian, *Hist. animal.* X, 24.
[86]Strabo, *Geog.*, XVIII, i, 817.
[87]Plutarch, *De sollic. anim.*, 23 (982C).
[88]*Coffin Texts* (De Buck), II, 254.
[89]E. Drioton, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Vol. 10 (1953), p. 167, citing numerous Coffin Texts.
[90]T. Hopfner, *Thierkult der alten Aegypter* (Vienna, 1913), p. 107.
[91]A. Moret, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 35 (1913), pp. 55-59; E. A. W. Budge, *Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, (1910), pp. 23f, col. iii-iv. On late charms against the crocodiles, F. Chabas, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 12 (1905), p. 12. There is a frightening picture of a lady drinking from a stream in the sacred preserve of Amon with a big crocodile watching her on the other side; the inscription reads, "If I go to the great pool of Amon to drink, may nothing resist me," C. Kuentz, *Bull. Inst. Fr. Arch.*, Vol. 28, p. 163; A. Piankoff, *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 49, Pl. V. A picture from the 5th Dynasty shows a terrifying crocodile watching a boat go by, W. Wreszinski, *Atlas*, I, 3, 401.
[92]W. F. Petire, *Religious Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 85.
[93]E. A. W. Budge, *Papyrus of Ani*, Pl. 27, Ch. 88.
[94]Strabo, *Geog.*, XVII, 1 (184).
[95]Diodorus, *Hist.*, I, 35 (41).
[96]Aristotle, *Economics*, II, 33.
[97]Herodotus, *Hist.*, II, 69; Athanasius, *Contra gentil.*, 23, says this was an excuse for feuding between the towns, though most Egyptians detested crocodiles.
[98]Ammianus, *Res gestae*, XII, 15 (17), in Hopfner, *Fontes*, p. 552; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, XIII, 46, 186.
[99]A. Gardiner, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 11 (1957), pp. 55f.
[100]*Ibid.*, p. 55.
[101]P. Bucher, in *Kemi*, Vol. 1 (1928), p. 41; Hopfner, *Tierkult*, p. 125.
[102]Stephanus Byzant., s.v. *Krokodeilon polis*, in Hopfner, *Fontes*, p. 675.
[103]Pyramid Text No. 317. Derogatory are Nos. 507-510. P. T. 489c and 510a call Sobek the Son of Neith, and she is sometimes shown nursing two crocodiles, S. Schott, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 19 (1967), p. 107; H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 88 (1962), p. 30, making them fellow-infants with Pharaoh. In a poem called "the Works of Shu" Pharaoh himself in an exciting adventure becomes a crocodile, in *Kemi*, Vol. 6 (1936), p. 35.
[104]Kees, *loc. cit.*
[105]J. Spiegel, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 53 (1953), p. 434, this being part of the "resurrection-ritual of the Pyramid of Unas."
[106]B. Barguet, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 9 (1952), p. 7.
[106a]C. Kuentz, in *Bull. Inst. Fr. Arch. Or.*, Vol. 28 (1929), pp. 117, 119.
[107]A. Gardiner, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 11 (1957), pp. 52-54.
[107a]*Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.
[108]G. Botti, *La Glorificazione di Sobk* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1959), pp. 5-6.
[109]*Coffin Texts* (De Buck), II, 375ff.
[110]G. Goyon, in *Kemi*, Vol. 6 (1936), p. 37.
[111]A. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 151.
[112]H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, p. 756.
[113]R. P. Charles, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 12 (1960), p. 17.
[114]*Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
[115]P. E. Newberry, *The Amherst Papyri* (London, 1899), Fayum Pap. I-II.
[116]Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, p. 756. Italics added.
[117]Dr. Peters in F. Spalding, *Joseph Smith as Translator*, p. 28.
[118]R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario*, Tav. xv-xviii.
[119]Calverly, *Temple of Sethos I*, Vol. 3, Pl. 12.
[120]P. Derchain, *Rites Egyptiens*, I, 25.
[121]Plutarch, *de Iside*, 31.
[122]Herodotus, *Hist.* III, 16, the beast being equivalent to fire in that capacity. In early Jewish and Christian apocrypha "the ravening lion" is the inexorable process by which all material things suffer oxidation and destruction.
[123]*Victory of Horus over Seth* (ed. S. Schott, p. 83), 8:49ff.
[124]Aelian, *Hist. animal.*, X, 24 noting that at Coptus "they reverence the hawk as the enemy of the crocodile."
[125]Horapollo, *Hierogl.*, I, 67, in Hopfner, *Fontes*, p. 589.
[126]All in H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 88 (1962), pp. 31f.
[126a]A. Piankoff, *Shrines of Tut-ankh-amon*, Fig. 32 (Shrine No. 3).
[127]A. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 107.
[128]P. Derchain, *Rites Egyptiens*, I, 8.
[129]H. Junker, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 67 (1931), pp. 51-55. The crocodile is besought to "be merciful to King Ammenemes, through whom thy face is happy on this day. . . ." A. Gardiner, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 11, p. 48.
[130]H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.* Vol. 64 (1929), pp. 107-12, noting that nothing could be more repugnant "to *our* feelings" than to identify Horus with a crocodile (p. 107).
[131]E. Otto, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 7 (1938), p. 75.
[132]H. Junker, *Das Goetterdekret ueber das Abaton* (Vienna, 1913), p. 43.
[133]F. Zimmermann, *Aegyptische Religion* (Paderborn, 1912), p. 107f.
[134]V. Loret, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 4 (1883), p. 31; Vol. 5 (1884), pp. 90f.
[135]E. Otto, *loc. cit.*, quoted by H. Junker, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
[136]Steph. Byz., above, note 102; E. Drioton & J. Vandier, *L'Egypte* (Paris, 1962), p. 136.
[137]Zimmermann, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
[138]*The Two Brothers*, 8:1.
[139]Zimmermann, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
[140]Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, II, 7, 86.
[141]Aelian, *Hist. animal.* X, 21.
[142]Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophy*, II, 5f/i, in Hopfner, *Fontes*, p. 351.
[143]H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 25.
[144]Aelian, *loc. cit.*
[145]H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 88 (1962), p. 30. Italics added.
[146]V. Loret, *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 5, p. 90f.
[147]F. Chabas, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 12 (1905), pp. 12f.
[148]*Metternich Stele*, Sp. VI, in C. E. Sander-Hansen, pp. 40-41.
[149]Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, VIII, 25, 92f.
[150]H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 64 (1929), p. 110. In the Tomb of Seti I a huge crocodile lies on a grave-mound facing a sacrificial head, directly under which is a *lion couch*, *Miss. Arch. Fr., Mem.* II, Pl. xlvi.
[150a]Kees, *op. cit.*, p. 108, identifying the god on p. 109. The text is in K. Sethe's *Aegyptische Lesestuecke* (Leipzig, 1924), p. 87.
[151]E. Drioton, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Vol. 10 (1953), p. 167.
[152]H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 97.
[153]A. Varille, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 53, p. 111.
[154]*Ibid.*, p. 111f.
[155]L. Klebs, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 61 (1926), pp. 105-7.
[156]W. Spiegelberg, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 62 (1927), p. 27.
[157]*Ibid.*, p. 29. Klebs, *op. cit.*, pp. 104f, found that human-headed soul-birds never appear in the Book of the Dead until the 18th Dynasty, when, though some of them are water-birds, most are falcon types.
[158]Klebs, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
[159]So A. Piankoff, *Shrines of Tut.*, p. 44.
[160]So S. Morenz, *Aegyptische Religion* (Stuttgart, 1960), p. 159.
[161]W. Kaiser, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 84 (1959), pp. 122-24.
[162]Aelian, *Hist. Animal.* X, 14; T. Hopfner, *Tierkult*, p. 111.
[163]J. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids*, p. 23.
[164]P. Kaplony, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 34 (1965), pp. 145f, 150.
[165]*Ibid.*, p. 153.
[166]H. Junker, *Giza* (Vienna, 1929), Vol. 2, pp. 51-52.
[167]Coffin Text, Sp. 148, cit. R. O. Faulkner, in *Jnl. Egypt. Archaeol.*, Vol. 54 (1966), p. 41.
[168]Pyramid Text No. 476 (890).
[168a]S. Schott, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 95 (1968), p. 55; the quotes are from pp. 54, 62, and 61 resp.
[168b]*Ibid.*, pp. 54, 56.
[169]The winged creatures in Daniel and Revelations and Ezekiel 1 and 10 do not function as messengers. Elsewhere "wings" is used in a frankly figurative sense.
[170]A. Gardiner, *The Chester Beatty Papyrus I* (British Museum, 1931), p. 25, n. 3.
[171]Diodorus, *Hist.*, I, 87.
[172]Pyr. Text No. 531: here the messenger is both Horus and Thoth.
[173]Aelian, *Hist. Animal.*, XI, 39.
[174]Pseudo-Callisthenes, *Vita Alexandri*, I, 708.
[175]H. Junker, *Giza*, Vol. 2, p. 48; R. Anthes, in *Mitt. der dt. Orientgesellschaft*, Vol. 96 (1965), p. 12.
[176]L. Klebs, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 61 (1926), p. 105. *Metternich-Stele*, Sp. XIV (Sander-Hansen, p. 73): "Horus, Horus! Thy nature gives thee protections . . . the poison is counteracted, the fever is destroyed."
[177]K. Sethe, *Ramesseumpapyr.*, pp. 192, 182, 194.

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

Part 8 (Continued)



Facsimile No. 1, by the Figures

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

● *A Hawk With a Message*

If we really want to know what Facsimile No. 1 is depicting, the hawk in the picture is our best clue yet. For recently the hawk has turned out to be the hero of a significant little drama that ties many things together. From here on the reader might as well know that this writer intends to show that the Book of the Dead fragments, the Breathing Papyrus, and the three facsimiles, that is, all the available Egyptian materials that were once in the possession of Joseph Smith, contain the elements of a single story, which happens to be the story of Abraham as told in the Book of Abraham and the early Jewish legends. Such a statement sounds wild enough at this point, but let us follow the bird as he leads us into a twilight zone of myth and ritual.

One of the longest and most important chapters of the Book of the Dead is No. 78, an "interesting and elusive spell," as Professor De Buck called it, having the title "Spell for assuming the form of a divine falcon."[1] E.A.W. Budge appended to his own edition and translation of the Ani manuscript "the text of the LXXVIIIth Chapter given by Naville . . . reproduced in full," because that document was in his opinion "so very important for the right understanding of this very interesting Chapter."[2] Dr. Budge's confidence in his right understanding of the document was, to say the least, premature if we take the later studies of the same chapter by De Buck (1949), Drioton (1953), and Brunner (1961) as a standard, for unless that trio are hopelessly at sea, Budge had no understanding of the text whatever.

It was in 1949 that Professor De Buck, in the process of editing the Coffin Texts, called attention to his discovery that what he called "the earliest version of the Book of the Dead 78" was to be found in a much earlier Coffin Text, Spell 312.[3] As everyone knows, the Book of the Dead is a relatively late production in Egypt, and the Joseph Smith Papyrus belongs to a late period. But Professor De Buck's find showed that what we have in these documents is not a late composition but only a late *copy*. The Coffin Text version of Chapter 78 can be traced clear back to the XII and even the IX Dynasties,[4] and it is remarkably close to the much later Book of the Dead copy.[5] Politely and cautiously, Professor De Buck pointed out that in view of the new understanding of Chapter 78 of the Book of the Dead as provided by the older Coffin Text version, "it is difficult to suppress the feeling of skepticism as to the intelligibility of the Book of the Dead version, not so much of its separate sentences, which as a rule are not difficult to translate, but above all things of the plot and story of the spell as a whole."[6]

Budge had had no trouble translating the separate sentences, but the sentences put together made no sense, or rather made the kind of sense habitually attributed to the Egyptians. Contrary to what one might suppose, to possess a real clue to what De Buck calls "the plot and story of the spell as a whole" is far more important than having a well-preserved text. Every student knows that if he is aware of what is going on in a text, it is not too difficult to piece together the scattered fragments of it even when they are very small and few—Professor J. H. Wilson demonstrated this in his skillful reconstruction of the Book of the Dead fragments of the Joseph Smith collection.[7] But if one is not aware of what is going on, even a complete text only befuddles and confuses—and this is clearly illustrated in the case of Dr. Budge, who had in his possession fully 90 percent of the story as it is told in Coffin Text 312, and yet was totally unaware of the plot and story, characters, dialogue, setting, and significance of the drama. He didn't even suspect that what lay before him in Book of the Dead Chapter 78 were the remains of a well-constructed drama; for him such a thing simply did not exist, but instead he saw only a disconnected jumble of primitive charms reflecting an infantile and half-savage mentality. Lacking the key that was later discovered, Professor Budge, a giant of scholarship if there ever was one, goes on solemnly and diligently adding sentence to sentence and note to note as he builds up his imposing edifice of laborious nonsense, nonsense that the world has been taught to think of as quintessentially Egyptian.

There is a fable for critics in this, but also a lesson for those who would criticize the critics. For Budge was, in fact, following his Egyptian scribes where they led him, and *they* had long since lost the trail—they too were quite unaware of the nature of the document they were perpetuating.[8] Even Professor De Buck, when he went back to

what he called "the original version of the Book of the Dead 78," was quite aware that though the more ancient texts were "more correct" than any Book of the Dead version, they were still far from being the true original of the story. Granted "that the contents of the spells were already enigmatic and obscure to the writers and readers of the Book of the Dead,"[9] the errors that led them astray and the attempts to correct those errors (attempts that only made things worse) were already of great age: "Already in the manuscripts of the Coffin Texts this process is in full swing."[10]

Professor Drioton, following up and reviewing De Buck's work, saw in Coffin Text 312 instead of an original composition the work of a compiler, whose object was to supply a bundle of magical-sounding writings (regardless of sense or meaning) for the funerary market, and who to do so busily rummaged among heaps of old religious books, the accumulated debris of the ages, and came up at random with this particular dramatic text.[11] In butchering the text to suit his purpose, the writer of Coffin Text 312, with characteristic sloppiness, spared "by inadvertence a few designations of persons and scenic indications," which are enough to supply modern scholars with the key to the story, but were of course overlooked by the later copyists of the Book of the Dead.[12] Professor Brunner in the latest study notes that "the literary character of the text has suffered frightfully in being taken over into the corpus of funerary literature," whether of the Coffin Texts or the Book of the Dead, its dramatic form having been effectively obscured.[13] "Actually," he observes, "our Coffin Text was originally no funerary text at all," being "clumsily" adapted as such.[14]

But now to our story. The leading character is the messenger-bird, who is dressed as a hawk in imitation of Horus. Professor Drioton prefaces his discussion of the play with a very informative lecture on what the Egyptians did and did not mean by a "transformation," the upshot of which is that the Egyptian never at any time conceived of the transformations into animal, bird, or other forms as being *literal*, "for nothing was ever farther from their mentality than ideas of metempsychosis."[15] So in what follows we are to show the Egyptians the courtesy of never imagining our messenger-bird as a *real* hawk. Drioton would entitle the play "The Misadventures of a Messenger of Horus," which makes it a comedy.[16] Dr. De Buck designated the leading character as "the Messenger or mediator," while Brunner prefers to call him "Der Lichtgeist" or Spirit of Light, as the messenger calls himself.

The play opens with "Osiris, stunned by the blows of Seth, hiding out in Busiris." And so the scene is set in Busiris, the place of Osiris's sacrificial death and the center of human sacrifice in Egypt from the earliest to the latest times. There we find the god laid out for burial in his underground crypt (*"enseveli sous terre"*), lying helpless, dazed, beaten, exhausted, but not quite dead, for as the play opens he is praying desperately for deliverance: "O Horus, come I beseech thee to Busiris and rescue me!"[17] He begs the god to behold him in his dire distress and to restore his power and dominion, "that the gates of hell might not prevail against me. . ." (69f). This last is as good a rendering as any of what is translated, "that the gates may beware of me" (De Buck), "defend me from the gates of Dat [the Underworld]" (Brunner), or "that the gates be vigilant in my behalf" (Drioton); all having the common idea that the gates of the underworld shall operate for and not against the hero. He then prays that his relentless enemy be not allowed to pursue him further or discover how helpless he really is in his hiding place (69g-70a-b). In one of the Coffin Text inscriptions (T1C) the ideogram for the helplessness of the god shows him on the lion-couch; that this is more than a meaningless convention is indicated in T. G. Allen's edition of the Book of the Dead, where Chapter 85 is headed by a vignette of a figure of a lion-couch under the *ba*-bird "with an unerased falcon head" (!) and is entitled "Spell for assuming the form of a Soul and not entering the place of execution." "Dying is my abomination," says the figure on the lion-couch; "I enter not into the execution place of the Nether World."[18] Here the lion-couch vignette matches the lion-couch scenes of the temples of Opet, Sethi I, Philae, etc., as well as the situation in the play: it is not an embalming but an attempted execution that concerns us.

To the prayer of the one on the couch, a chorus of gods (or in manuscript D1C of common people) adds a fervid "Amen!" (70c, *ir myy*, "let it be done accordingly"), and then a sort of Choregos appears and cries, "Be silent, O ye people [or gods] while a god speaks to a god!" (70e-71a). The dialogue that follows is as astonishingly like a piece of Greek drama as what has gone before, for Horus appears dressed as a hawk and begins with an aside expressing his hope that the suffering Osiris will heed the Truth. He advises Osiris to consider his condition most carefully and specially to make an effort to free himself (71c-72f), even joking about his helplessness and shaming him into action (72g-73b). This reminds one very much of the "pep-talk" the two ladies give to Osiris as they help him revive on the lion-couch, and Drioton and Brunner both detect a distinct note of challenge and banter in the speech. But then comes the surprise. Having done the best he can to boost his father's morale, Horus announces that he is going back to heaven to "beg and request of the Lord of All" (73d) that he be endowed with the necessary authority to carry out the mission his father desires of him.

All our editors are surprised and puzzled by this: Horus comes as a hawk in answer to his father's prayer and apparently refuses to help him! Brunner, who gave the closest thought to the problem, concluded that Horus could not help his father until he had obtained a certain crown, representing plenary power in heaven and on earth, which he could only get by going to heaven and petitioning "the Lord of All"; this, Brunner avers, is the crux of the whole drama.[19] Actually, Horus does not refuse his father's request, since in the end he faithfully carries it out, but first he explains that he must "go hence to the limits of the heavens to speak a word with Geb [the second of the godhead] and to request and beseech the Lord of All to grant me *hwi*" (73c-e), where *hwi* means, according to Brunner, *"Befehlsgewalt"*—the authority to give orders.[20]

In Brunner's analysis the real drama is enacted between Horus and Osiris, the true leading characters, who appear only twice, first at the beginning, when their dramatic dialogue provides a clear exposition of the play, and again at the end, when Horus returns to the scene and repeats word for word the prayer with which Osiris opened the drama—the prayer that he is now at last qualified to fulfill. "The text begins," he writes, "with the plaintive supplication of Osiris that Horus come to his aid. . . . It ends with a coronation hymn to Horus as heir to the throne."[21] Such is the gist of the story: Osiris in his crypt cries out for deliverance, and a heavenly messenger, describing himself as a hawk, appears, whereupon the hero is rescued and triumphantly enthroned. It is our well-known Sed-festival and lion-couch theme.

But in between the prayer and its fulfillment there is a hitch, a real problem of such stuff as plays are made of. It is no small thing to raise the dead, and the question of Horus's power to do so as a junior member of the firm gives an opportunity for an interesting development of the theme.

It is a third party, "the Messenger of Horus," as Drioton calls him, who takes over and provides the real entertainment and fully two-thirds of the spoken lines of the play.[22] This character is also dressed as a hawk and wants very badly to be taken for Horus. Who is he? Bearing in mind that in *all* known versions of the play and in all the translations there is a great shuffling and conflicting of personal pronouns, with no two copyists or translators agreeing as to exactly who is speaking or doing what or to whom most of the time, I believe that the second hawk can still be identified clearly by his words and actions.

As soon as the true Horus has left the crypt of the helpless Osiris to charge himself with new power in the courts on high, another hawk appears. He is called "the Messenger of Horus," "the Mediator," "the Spirit of Light," by our translators, but never is he designated, as he would like to be, as just plain Horus. He begins by announcing that he is "one who dwells in radiance" (74g), boasts that he has priority in age and honor over the real Horus (76b-c), vaunts his great magical powers (76d-e), claims to be no less than the "elect and appointed" one, *first* among "the beings who dwell in the Radiance" (76f), enjoying the highest glory in the preexistence among those begotten in the spiritual creation (76f-g), having received even at that time the full authority of Horus (76i-77a). "He is really too much of a braggart, this messenger of Horus," writes Professor Drioton; "that is no doubt the comic element in the play."[23]

The Messenger swaggers up to the gate and demands access to Osiris, but is firmly checked and put in his place by Rwty, the doorkeeper. Rwty is the double-headed lion who guards the entrance (one head) and the exit (the other) to the other world—we have already noted the Egyptian conceit that holy and inapproachable places are guarded by lions. Rwty points out to the Messenger that though he may *look* exactly like Horus, he can't get by because he lacks the *nemes*-crown, "the insignia of gods and men." (Drioton.) The *nemes*-crown, which Drioton characterizes as a "cache-perruque" and T. G. Allen calls a turban, seems to have been a sort of white cloth cap.[24] Brunner, as we have seen, considers it the main property of the play, since it represents the authority without which the mission of the Horus-messenger cannot be carried out—lacking this badge of authority the true Horus is helpless and the false one is a fraud.

Instead of producing the cap, however, or going to fetch it as the first Horus did, "the messenger backs down" (Drioton), covering up his embarrassment with bluster, insisting that he is the authentic representative of Horus and is entrusted with awesome knowledge, having been made privy to the great secrets imparted by Osiris to his son "through the partition."[25] His foolish indiscretion is at once challenged by Rwty: " 'Repeat to me then what Horus said as his father's word through the partition . . . and I will give you the *nemes*-crown,' so said Rwty" (78d-f). His bluff is called again; the Messenger is speechless, saved from his painful or comical predicament only when the real "Horus appears, he who is behind the injured eye" (79c-d), which Brunner interprets as *"hinter seiner geraubten Herrschaft,"* indicating that someone, plainly the other hawk, has stolen his authority. By command of a voice from above, the true Horus is passed by the doorkeeper and goes on his way singing a lyric ode right out of Aristophane's *Birds* on the exhilaration of travel through space—another indication that he is the true Horus-hawk.

It is odd that the scholars studying the text did not recognize the wild-blue-yonder motif: the joyful, untrammeled motion through the void (80a), mounting to the heights as a hawk (80b), endowed by Rwty with wings (80d), sitting on a dizzy perch amidst the four mighty winds (80e), undismayed by fear of falling in empty space (80f), confident in one's power and beauty (80g), never losing one's way through the trackless skies (81a), buoyed and sustained by the very winds that terrify mortals (81b), undeterred and undaunted by the raging tempest (81c). It has all the makings of a lovely Euripidean ode.

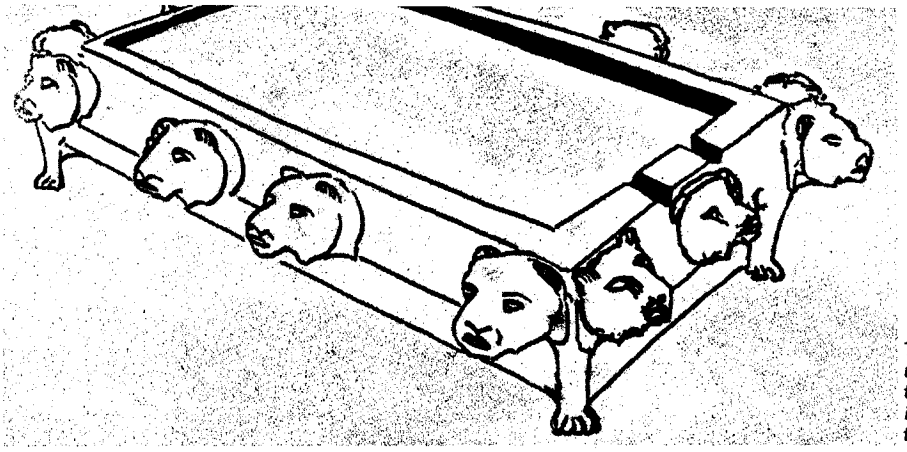
When the true Horus has departed, the rascal restores his self-confidence by remarking, probably to himself, that of course he could not tell the secret words, because if he did "the pillars of heaven would pursue me, after punishing my presumption" (82a). And so, as impudent as ever, he resumes his boasting: "I am the hawk who dwells in glory (82b), enjoying my own authority and my own princely crown!" (82c). "But," as Professor Drioton puts it, "this gets him nowhere"; he is checked again, this time by Akr, another gate-keeping lion (82e), but again the real Horus shows up and again is cleared by the imperious voice of "the Supreme Lord" speaking from heaven and demanding clearance for his ambassador: "Let no one oppose this spirit [my?] alter-ego, representative, member of the staff, the top-ranking Horus!" (82f). The voice continues to vouch for the true Horus in no uncertain terms (82g-k),

Here are the Egyptians, telling us of "Lucifer, the Son of the Morning..."

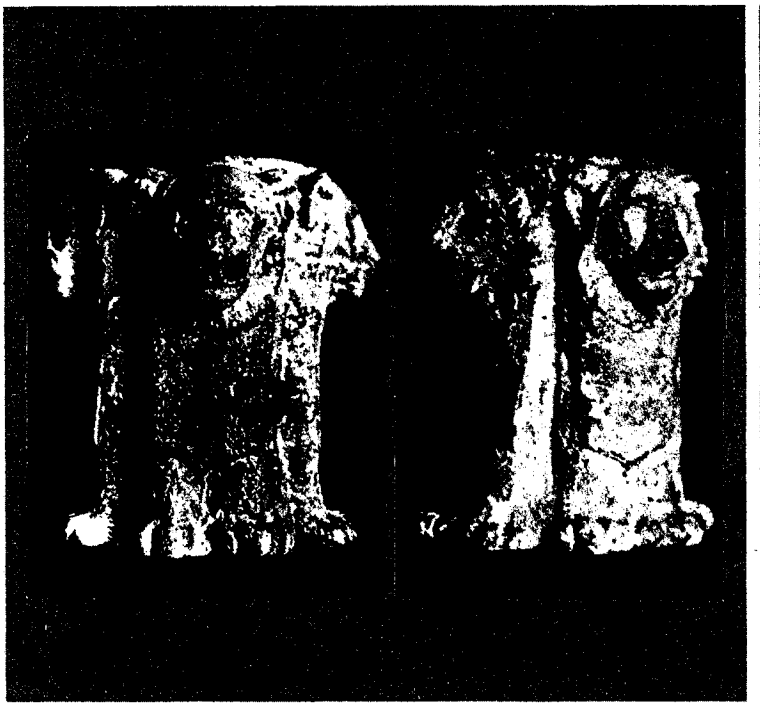
stating that he is under orders to see Osiris in Busiris and is under no circumstances to be detained, since he comes on assignment from "the Great Palace" itself (82l-p), and is to be denied no aid and assistance wherever he comes on pain of severe displeasure in heavenly places (83a-d).

The false messenger, in the manner of the clever slave in the New Comedy, gleefully arrogates all this authority to himself—after all, isn't he the very image of Horus?—and, more obnoxious than ever, begins to lord it over everybody in sight. That at least is one way of interpreting the speech that follows, beginning "Down on your faces!" and ending with a resounding "Horus has spoken!" (83i-l).[26] In the following speech he describes himself as a follower of Horus, the Lord of All (84l), a companion of Horus rather than Horus himself. Of course it is the real Horus who finally penetrates into the crypt, passing the guardians of the underworld castle of Osiris (84m-85f) and carrying out all instructions (85h). The rival, however, still seems to be at it, claiming that he too has the power to go below: "Horus has invested me with his *ba*, I have his authority!" (85i-j), and demanding that the mysteries and secret places of the lower worlds be opened to him, since he has a message from Horus to his father (85l-p). The keepers of the underworld announce the arrival of a visitor to Osiris (86c-g), whose reply is not preserved. From here we go directly to the final acclamation and coronation scene, as the proper wind-up to any ancient comedy or mumming.

Who is the comic character who tries to crash the gates of Rwty, Aker, Isis, and Osiris in that order?[27] His "clumsy personal behavior," the "burlesque intermezzi" in which he struts *"in pathetische-karrikierender Weise,"* makes good theater, according to Brunner, and his presence introduces the dramatic elements of intrigue, dilemma, and pungency into the play, according to Drioton. But he is a clown and an incompetent; by what right does he usurp the honors of Horus in a re-



The four canopic jars, at left, are used, among other things, to show that the lion-altar should be facing in four directions, as this libation-table, altar, or embalming table shows.



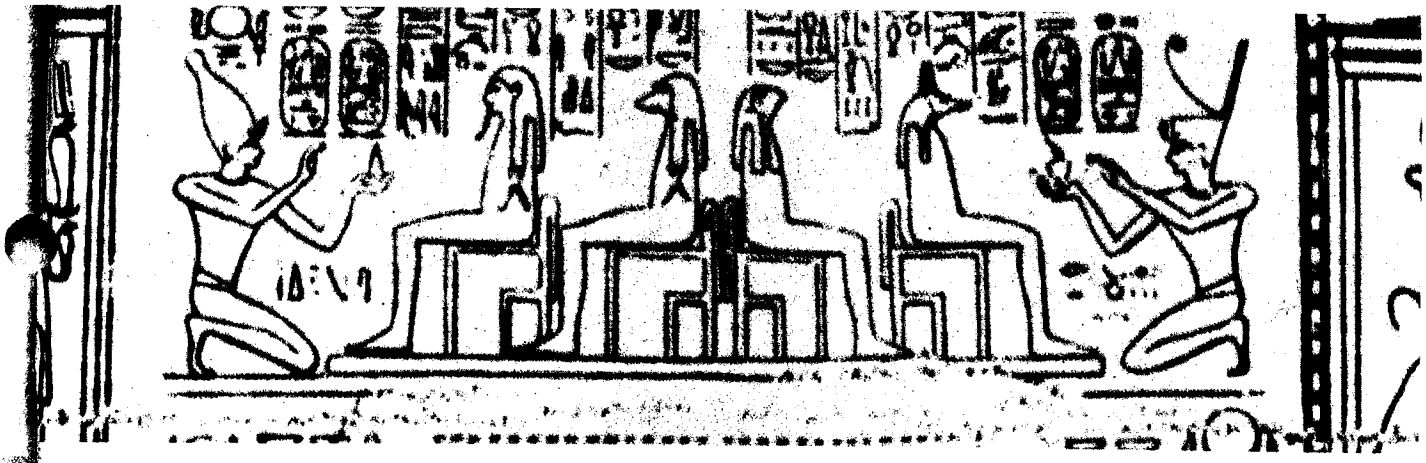
Another type of lion-altar, above, facing the four directions.



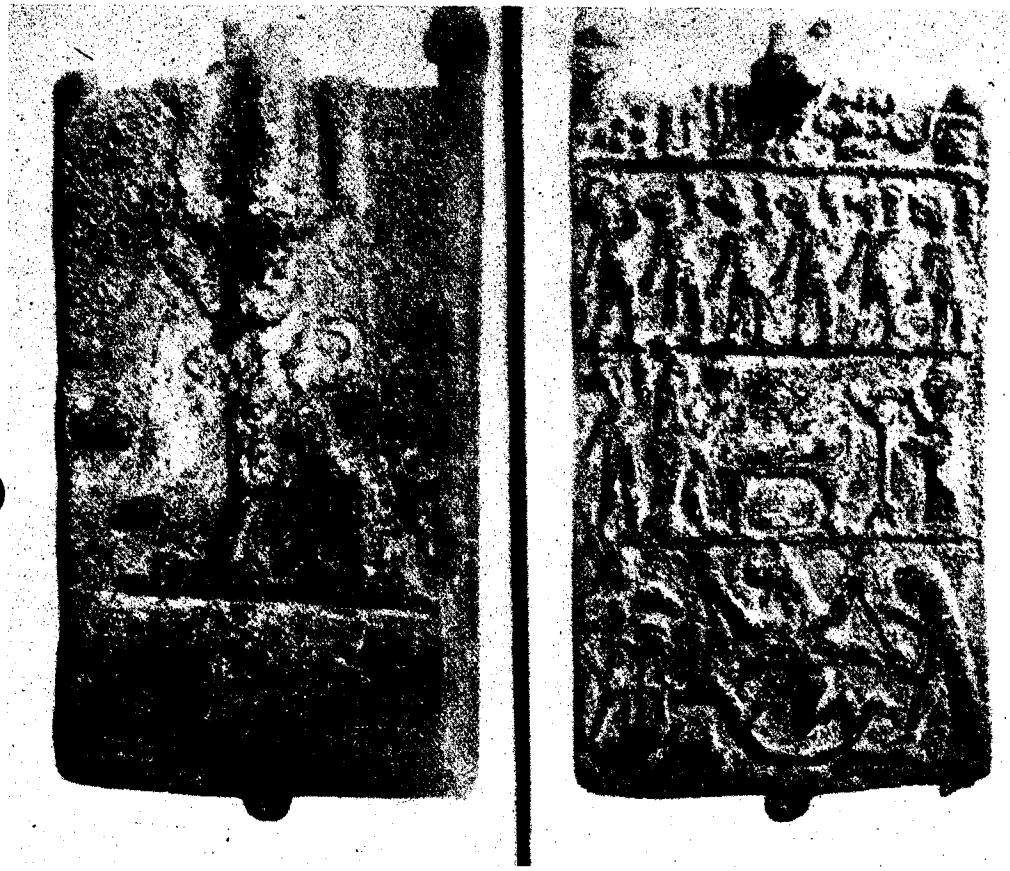
At right, the Joseph Smith papyri contain this representation of the four canopic figures standing upon a symbolic lotus, signifying all the regions of the earth over which Pharaoh holds sway. In the Explanation to Facsimile No. 1, we are told that the canopic figures represent regional deities; in Facsimile No. 2 (Fig. 6) we also learn that the quartet "represents this earth in its four quarters."

ligious drama? His epithets at first sight suggest his identity: Who is the Spirit of Light but Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, boasting of his pre-existent glory, first in the councils of heaven, claiming priority of age and honor over Horus himself, boasting of his knowledge and power, his kingdom and great glory, who would fain claim the crown but does not have it; who claims to know the answers but cannot deliver when they are required of him at a certain time and place? Who but the Adversary, the Deceiver, "Satan . . . transformed into an angel of light"? (2 Cor. 11:14.) As if to leave us in no doubt, he describes himself as one of a serpent host who was on hand "before Isis came into being . . ." (76c). Strange that he should mention himself as a serpent stealing the march on Isis, the Egyptian Eve. He covets the honors of the son: "To be sure, you have the *form* of Horus," says Rwty to him (De Buck's translation), "but you do not possess the *nemes*-crown" (77d-e); he never gets it.

But how can the Messenger of Light be an impostor if, as we are expressly told (73f-74f), he was commissioned by the real Horus to take his place, assume his form, and exercise his authority? The men who copied down our texts, being as far removed from the original version as we are, had to explain the close resemblance between the two hawks as best they could, and the readiest explanation was, of course, that hawk No. 2 had been duly authorized to double for hawk No. 1: indeed, how could the other hawk get away with his masquerade save by express permission of the real Horus? Actually, that is by no means the only possible explanation or even the best, since the messenger's masquerade was after all *not* successful, but constantly got him into awkward and comical predica-



Facsimile No. 1, Figures 5 through 8: "The idolatrous gods" of "Elkenah, Mahmackrah, Korash. . . ."



Above, Pharaoh worshiping the four canopic figures as deities—"idolatrous gods." This plainly shows that the four figures are more than mere funerary furniture, as Joseph Smith's critics have maintained.

An old Assyrian version of the lion-couch scene, at left, shows that the theme is to be found in the Chaldaean as well as the Egyptian spheres of influence.

ments. It was plainly his idea, not that of the real Horus, to pass himself off as the true son and heir: the clever, vicious imposture is a basic part of the ritual drama, in which Seth rivals Horus at every point. In this version of the story he struts and clowns as a Lord of Misrule while the king lies in the tomb, but he constantly stubs his toe, to the delight of the crowd, and is put in his place when the real heir appears and takes the throne.

All this is pertinent to the lion-couch story. In all the Jewish legends telling of the rescue of Abraham, the hero's prayer from the altar is answered by the appearance of an angel, usually Gabriel, sometimes Michael, who asks whether he should save him from his fate. Invariably the Patriarch replies by declining the offer of assistance with the explanation that he expects God and God alone to save him. In some cases (to be treated below) he even tells the angel that he refuses to deal with one having inadequate authority. This, of course, is the final test for Abraham, who at this point has demonstrated that he trusts God all the way, and so at this moment he hears the voice of God speaking to him and at the same time is delivered from a sacrificial death. In the Book of Abraham we meet with the same peculiar and therefore significant complication: "And as they lifted up their hands upon me, that they might offer me up and take away my life, behold, I lifted up my voice unto the Lord my God, and the Lord hearkened and heard . . . and the angel of *his* presence stood by me, and immediately unloosed my bands; And *his* voice was unto me: Abraham, Abraham, behold, my name is Jehovah, and *I* have heard thee, and have come down to deliver thee. . . ." (Abr. 1:15-16. Italics added.) Just what is the angel's role in this? Whenever the real hawk

Joseph Smith Papyrus No. 1 is a sacrificial scene, says the author

appears in the version of Coffin Text 312, the voice of Atum is heard from the heavens and the bird passes on without speaking.

But that is not the only complication. The legends all agree in telling of how at the last moment before the sacrifice, just before the angel appeared to Abraham, another party stood by the altar, Satan, no less, magnificently attired in black silk, and offered to deliver the Patriarch and bestow great power and dominion upon him if he would only recognize his authority and do obeissance to Nimrod, his protégé. He was, of course, denounced and dismissed by Abraham without argument, but could we not have here an echo of the two delivering angels, one true and one false? The plain designation of the false Messenger in Coffin Text 312 as "The Spirit of Light" and his failure to pass any of the tests of the true Messenger from God provide an impressively close parallel.

The drama of Coffin Text 312 closes with the usual acclamation and coronation: "O Osiris, thou are exalted upon thy throne; thy heart liveth! Thy members are rejuvenated, thy heart rejoiceth! (86h-j). Thou hast overcome Seth; Geb hath placed thee on the throne of succession (85k-l). Let there be a roll call of all the followers of the god and all their offerings (85m-n), while the Great President sits at the head of the Council of the Gods, having turned over all this authority [*hwi*, power to command] to Horus, the Son of Osiris (85r-s), who accordingly has taken over the government of Egypt; all are subject to him (85u). And now he feasts with the multitude—he gives life to millions, he alone through the Eye of the Mistress of the Universe." (86v-w.) All of this reads exactly like the liturgy of an early Roman year-rite,[28] and fits nicely into the Sed festival; and not the least important aspect of the winding-up scene is the application of the whole thing to the ruler of Egypt: it is for his benefit that the whole thing is staged.

The fragments that make up Coffin Text 312 are from, I believe, the third part of a trilogy in which the first play or act was the famous Prologue in Heaven, the second the conflict with Seth from its beginning to its direful end, from which the hero emerges in his parlous plight at the beginning of the third act. The two earlier episodes are clearly alluded to in the text, in the vivid little flashbacks to the Messenger's role in the preexistence and in the passing reference to Seth as the enemy (the only time he is mentioned) in 85k. The first two acts or plays are well represented in Egyptian literature, e.g. in the Shabako text and the stories of Horus versus Seth, but the third one has been hidden behind the veil of the Osiris mysteries. A great deal of work remains to be done here. But now it is time to consider the next figure of the Joseph Smith Papyrus.*

Facsimile No. 1, Fig. 3. "The idolatrous priest of Elkenah, attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice." The first thing to notice is that "the priest of Elkenah was also the priest of Pharaoh" (Abr. 1:7), since "at this time it was the custom [a peculiar custom, apparently, and one of limited duration] of the priest of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to offer up upon the altar which was built in the land of Chaldea . . ." (Abr. 1:8). A priest was taking the place of Pharaoh in this operation.

Question: Because Pharaoh was away in Egypt?

Answer: Not necessarily. Rather, because it was the custom for a priest to do so. The office was properly the king's but of course he needed assistance. A recent study explains that "pharaoh also acted as High Priest. Being a son of a god he could mediate between heaven and earth. Theoretically each offering was done by the pharaoh. . . ."[34]

Q: The priest was only his helper?

A: Yes. As Drioton and Vandier put it, "only the king could offer sacrifices. . . . Actually the clergy carried on for him . . . but only as a substitute for the royal person."[35] We have seen that the picture of Pharaoh personally sacrificing the enemy chief "is found again and again in every period" of the Egyptian record, and the sacrificial liturgy makes it perfectly clear that the priest is merely taking the king's place.[36] Hence the showdown between Abraham and the man with the knife is really the encounter between the prophet and the monarch, no matter who holds the weapon. Likewise the priest could either wear a jackal mask[37] or simply be bald, as shown in the facsimile: the Salt Papyrus, in fact, specifies that the sacrificing priest be bald (*fkty*).[38] No matter how you view him, he is a hostile figure.

Q: Why do you say that?

A: I am thinking of that striking passage from Diodorus (I, 91) which tells how the embalming priest who made the first incision in the body with a prehistoric flint sword was cursed, stoned, and driven out as a murderer. Whether the priest in the picture is an undertaker or not, he is still wielding the sacrificial knife. In Egypt all sacrifices were ritual murder.

Q: Even of grains or vegetables?

A: Even over grains and vegetables the priest would wave the king's ancient battle-mace as a reminder that whatever was being sacrificed was the Pharaoh's enemy and victim.[39]

Q: Where is the knife in the Joseph Smith Papyrus?

A: That part of the document has been destroyed, but there is ample reason for believing that it was there when the facsimile was engraved.[40] If every embalming was a sacrifice, every sacrifice was also an execution, as we have just seen. The priest who sacrifices the oryx says to the king: "I make thine arm victorious over the rebels, I place thine enemy under thy knife."[41] In the mysteries of Osiris the emphasis is on violence as the figure on the couch is surrounded by demons with drawn knives—a peaceful embalming operation is not the idea.[42]

Q: I can see that a knife might be the most likely thing for the priest to be holding, but doesn't he hold other things instead in the other Anubis scenes?

A: Anubis standing by the bier usually holds a jar of ointment or a bandage in his upraised hand, but I think this figure was different.

Q: How different?

A: In all the scenes I have ever seen in which the Anubis priest holds those objects in his left hand, his right hand is equally conspicuous, stretched out lower than the other arm over the body, palm down, in a stock ritual gesture strictly prescribed by the canons of funerary art. But what have we in our papyrus? No right arm at all! It is hard, in view of the rigidly established standard forms, to avoid the impression that the artist is consciously avoiding that other arm. The priest is *not* an embalmer.

Q: But why does he hold the knife in his *left* hand?

A: He really doesn't. It is just shown that way. A number of studies have demonstrated that the Egyptian artist always drew people in the right profile whenever he could, "while the left profile is shown as a mirror-image."[43] So our priest is properly shown in right

*Footnotes 29-33 have been omitted.

profile. But at the same time "in a two-dimensional drawing the Egyptian artist was afraid of criss-crossing," so he simply put the knife in the other hand. Comparison of Egyptian drawings and statues reveals that when a figure is shown as left-handed in a drawing, the same figure in the same attitude is seen to be right-handed in his statue, which proved to Professor Mueller that the left-handedness of the drawn figures is merely a convention to avoid the crossing of arms.[44] In Papyrus No. I the left-handedness of the priest, like the awkward position of his legs, is an unavoidable consequence of telling a particular story: it comes from the necessity of having the two main figures oppose each other. The preference of Egyptian artists for the right profile is one of the canons of their art and belongs to the same order that requires hieroglyphic figures to face toward the beginning of a text, so that the procession seems to move backwards.

Q: Why is that?

A: Supposedly because the procession must start from a holy shrine or person, and since no one may turn his back on divinity gods and mortals must always *face* each other, i.e. they must face in opposite directions. Hence the rule that while mortals are drawn in right profile, gods must be shown in the left.[45] It has been increasingly clear in recent years that the direction in which figures face is something to be taken seriously in understanding Egyptian art, and it may furnish an important clue to the meaning of the Joseph Smith Papyrus.

Q: What do you mean, important clue?

A: Notice that the priest, the lion, and the crocodile all face in the same direction, showing their right profiles. What do they all have in common? They take life, they are sinister figures—literally *sinister*, "on the left"! In Egyptian common speech, "to see the face of the crocodile" was to die,[45a] and priest, lion, knife, and crocodile all show the man on the couch to be in grave jeopardy. All the other figures, on the other hand, face in the opposite direction, the direction in which the immortals face, all of them being invested with divine power to save life: The hawk comes to rescue the hero; the four canopic figures have always the function of protecting the body from harm and assisting in its resurrection; the lotus (as we shall see) revives the dead and protects the living; finally the figure on the couch is brought face to face with his rival and would-be destroyer. The whole composition proclaims the conflict of two forces. This is emphasized deliberately by the introduction of figures *not* found in other lion-couch scenes—the lotus and the crocodile, which to the Egyptian mind represent the ultimate extremes respectively of destruction and preservation. Having taken such special pains to give a particular interpretation to the scene, the artist cannot be denied the privilege of putting such an object as a knife in the priest's hand. Notice in the facsimile how that knife dominates the picture—it is exactly in the center of vision and exactly half-way between the eye of Abraham and the eye of the priest; it is the focal point of the whole scene, as it should be.

Q: You spoke of a sacrificial knife as a primitive flint sword. Is this that kind of knife?

A: The knife depicted in the first Hedlock engraving has very much the shape and size of some of the prehistoric ceremonial knives used by the Egyptians. In Chapter 71 of the Book of the Dead the sacrificial knife is described as representing the crescent moon, the officiant being Thoth, the moon-god.[45b]

Q: You have said that the lion and the crocodile have a necessary and sacred function to perform in the lion-couch situation. Does that apply also to the knife?

A: Yes, and to the priest too, as we shall see. According to Kees, the deadly wounds inflicted by the knife are really the "victim's" introduction to great things—to hidden knowledge and to immortality—so that the knife is really an instrument of transfiguration.[46] This is shown, I think, in the late Egyptian story of the contest between Truth and Falsehood, who, of course, are brothers. Falsehood accuses Truth of stealing from him a knife that has miraculous powers, hails him into court, and has him blinded and banished for his supposed crime; but later on the knife itself turns the tables and inflicts the blows of death—this time real and final—on Falsehood, thereby vindicating Truth. So you see it is both a good knife and a bad knife.[46a]

Q: What about the wicked priest—is he good too?

A: Good or bad, we couldn't do without him. Who, in the end, turns out to be the real victim of this ritual violence? It is not Abraham but the priest. And that is very significant, for according to the Egyptian stories collected by Wainwright it was the priests who were always urging Pharaoh to sacrifice himself or a substitute, and in the stories in which the intended victim escapes it is always the priest himself who ends up getting sacrificed. This is clearly expressed in the Book of Abraham: when "the Lord broke down the altar" he also "smote the priest that he died" (Abr. 1:20), for he said, "I have come down . . . to destroy *him* who hath lifted up his hand against *thee*. . . ." (Abr. 1:17. Italics added.) In the Jewish legends too it is always the priest who gets killed. Instead of going into sources here (that will come later), let us only consider the famous Busiris vase, a sixth-century hydria depicting with typical Greek irreverence and love of fun the climax of the favorite Greek Egyptian story—the story of King Busiris.[47]

Q: Wasn't Busiris a place?

A: From prehistoric times down to the Middle Ages Busiris was the traditional center of human sacrificial rites in Egypt, and it is from that that the mythical King Busiris gets his name. For it was his custom to sacrifice strangers on his "cruel altars," especially Greeks. This practice began during a terrible drought when the people were starving and the king was, of course, held responsible. A wise man and priest coming from Cyprus told the king that if he would sacrifice a man every year, the land would prosper. That got the king off the hook, and his first victim was appropriately enough the very priest—blond, noble, and a stranger—who suggested the operation to him.[48]

Q: And it served him right, too.

A: That was the very idea—the priests are asking for it. Well, Hercules heard about this and he didn't like it at all, so he went to Egypt, and being both foreign, blond, and of royal—even divine—lineage, he easily became a candidate for the sacrifice, allowing himself to be bound and put on the altar. But being a demigod with super strength, he burst his bonds at the last moment and turned the tables, and that is what we see in this clever parody on the Busiris Hydria: Hercules is making havoc among the panic-stricken priests while the terrified high priest, kneeling on the altar, is praying for his life. And lying bound and helpless on the step at the foot of the altar is none other than Pharaoh himself, identified readily by his uraeus headdress and his beard. Here, then, in an early Greek vase quite unknown to the world of Joseph Smith is another telling of the story of the noble captive miraculously escaping death on the altar of Pharaoh at the last moment, turning the tables and killing the priest. Most Greek versions of the story say that Hercules killed Pharaoh Busiris too, but some deny it.[49] It is the priest in the end who pays the price: Busiris got himself out of a jam by sacrificing the very priest who recommended such a welcome

substitute. There are cases in which the king deliberately "avenged the insult to himself" resulting from the escape of an intended victim "by having the priests put to death as sacrifices" instead.[50] Wainwright has explained how the Pharaoh who thus saves himself by sacrificing his priest (who is his proxy anyway!) fulfills the sacrificial requirements so that neither he nor any intended victim need suffer—with the death of the priest, the full price has been paid.[51] This device is also essential to the Abraham story.

Q: How essential?

A: As soon as "the Lord . . . smote the priest that he died" (Abr. 1:20), the tension between Abraham and Pharaoh was released. As we have often pointed out, Abraham was taking Pharaoh's place on the altar as his enemy, his rival, and his "tanist." But suddenly another substitute for the king, his own high priest, "the priest of Pharaoh," and as such "nothing but a substitute for the royal person" (above, note 35), had died at the altar instead: Abraham's services were no longer needed, the King's honor had been satisfied, and no obstacle remained to his paying Abraham the respect that he now realized (and had long suspected) was due him. There is thus no contradiction in having Facsimile No. 1 followed by Facsimile No. 3. The whole Abraham story, strange as it is, is quite in keeping with ancient practice and tradition.

The Four Idolatrous Gods:

We return to our imaginary dialogue between a curator and two students:

Mr. Jones: These four figures, the canopic jars before the altar, tie everything together. First of all, what does the Book of Abraham say these four figures are?

Jane: "Idolatrous gods." They have funny names.

Mr. Jones: Are those the names of the gods? Look again.

Dick: It says here (Facsimile No. 1, Figure 5), "The idolatrous god *of* Elkenah." (Italics added.)

Mr. Jones: And what does it say in the preceding sentence?

Dick: ". . . the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah. . . ."

Mr. Jones: Yes, these are the gods *of* such and such places or persons. Which do you think it was—places or persons? I'll give you a hint: in Facsimile 2, Figure 6, we get the same four critters. What are they there?

Jane: "Represents this earth in its four quarters."

Mr. Jones: So those fancy names probably belong to geographical regions, wouldn't you say?

Dick: Unless the geographical regions are also people.

Mr. Jones: Thanks for that. As far as the Egyptians were concerned, the four quarters of the earth *were* people. If the Book of Abraham wants to think of the four canopic jars as representing idolatrous gods *and* the four regions at the same time, that is entirely in keeping with the way the Egyptians thought about it. Now right here in the Temple of Opet where we are so much at home "the genies of the four winds" enjoy a conspicuous display, and why are they there? The four winds, according to our handbook, head the list of more than fifty ritual appearances of the sacred four—it all began with the four winds and the four directions, represented as early as the Pyramid Texts by the four canopic vases.[52]

Jane: What are canopic vases?

Mr. Jones: The four idols before the lion-couch in Facsimile 1 are the four canopic vases. As we have seen, they contained the insides of the person on the couch, precisely *because* they represent the four directions. Let us recall the famous legend of the Jews that Adam was made of the four elements, gathered together as dust from each of the four quarters of the earth; that when one dies the elements are scattered to the four directions, and when one is resurrected they are brought together again.[53] Well, the Egyptians had the same idea: man was made in the beginning by four gods who represented or rather, according to Brugsch, *were* the four elements.[54] Now here at the Opet shrine in what is called the Chamber of Spirits, the hero at his rebirth is being approached by good spirits bringing him good wishes and protection on his birthday, and at the head of the parade come the Gods of the Four Elements, sometimes eight of them, sometimes 14.[55]

Jane: Just like the good fairies in the fairy stories.

Mr. Jones: Yes, the same tradition is behind both. Now the mixing up of the four canopic idols with the four regions of the universe is found in Egyptian funerary cult at all times, as Budge noted: "The four children of Horus played a very important part in the funerary work of the early dynasties; they originally represented the four supports of heaven, but very soon each was regarded as the god of one of the four quarters of the earth, and also of that quarter of the heavens which was above it."[56] Whether that is the right explanation or not, the thing to notice is that the four figures represent a number of concepts at once: they are personalities, "gods," points of the compass, and also kings and divine patrons of geographical regions: at the same time they represent the four main stars of the Dipper, and the four primal elements of which man and the universe are made.[57] It is interesting that this very temple of Opet was built of four kinds of stone representing the four basic elements of which the universe was made.[58] The canopics must participate at the king's resurrection: "Crossing the waters to the place of rebirth" is explained by an Egyptian gloss as meaning that "it is Anubis who is behind the vessel containing the organs of Osiris. . . ."[59] Our canopic jars are both for preservation and resurrection. "All four gods of the Cardinal points officiate at the baptism of Pharaoh," which, as we have seen, was quadrilateral: "what was poured out over the King's head," according to Gardiner, was "divine power . . . the specific power of each of the gods of the cardinal points."[60] We have seen that the Sed-festival is a coronation, and that according to some the climax of the festival was the moment when the king released four birds "toward the four cardinal points, to announce the coronation of the king to the four corners of the earth," which four corners, according to this authority, are none other than the four sons of Horus, represented by the four canopic jars.[61]

Jane: They were surely crazy about four.

Dick: Just like the Hopis. With them the four worlds are everything.

Mr. Jones: The number four seems to have been a sort of obsession with some ancient people.[62] If you look up the four figures represented in the canopic jars, the first thing you will learn is that they are supposed to be the *four sons of Horus,* and Moret says the four birds released at the coronation are also the four sons of Horus.[63] The four children of Horus began as stars in the northern sky;[64] their names *Imsty, Hpy, Dwamutf and Qbhsnwf* designated the four stars of the Dipper bowl and seem to go back to the earliest times,[65] when they are also identified with the major cosmic deities.[66]

Let's go back to our shrine at Opet, our "lion-couch" temple. Here in the central chamber between the lion-couch room and the coronation room, above each of the four doors, is a picture with an inscription telling us what it is: Above the north door is a *four*-headed ram, and the inscription tells us that he is the North Wind in its capacity of giving the breath of eternal life to Osiris. Above the south door we see another ram, this time with *four* wings, and he is called the South Wind; above the East door a scarab with *four* wings—the East Wind, of

course—and above that west door a hawk with the head of a ram.

Dick: What happened to the four that time?

Mr. Jones: The ram takes care of that, but he belongs to Facsimile No. 2. A study of the four winds shows them taking all sorts of forms: sometimes the North Wind has two cows' or bulls' heads plus two human heads; sometimes it is a ram-headed man with two wings accompanied by a ram-headed hawk or else by a four-headed ram; sometimes it is a ram with four human heads; or else the South Wind is a four-winged lion—that is when it is a hot wind. Though most of the exotic variations belong to the later period, the four-winds idea itself goes back to early times and is mentioned in the Pyramid Texts.[67]

Dick: You name it, we've got it! What's it all about?

Mr. Jones: It has been found that all these combinations have one thing in common—what Professor De Wit calls the "quaternary principle"; he suggests that the whole business originally goes back to the four winds and probably started at Heliopolis.

Dick: Naturally.

Mr. Jones: On good evidence. Even one of the Joseph Smith Papyri shows that.

Jane: Which one?

Mr. Jones: Fragment No. 8 in the *Era* listing [February 1968], corresponding to Chapter 57 of the Book of the Dead. Professor Allen has rendered it: "His nose is open in Busiris. He rests in Heliopolis. . . . If north winds come, he sits in the south; if south winds come, he sits in the north; if west winds come, he sits in the east; if east winds come, he sits in the west."[68] Heliopolis is certainly the center of the system, though the god is revived in Busiris, the place where he was put to death. Both motifs, execution and rescue, are conspicuous in the Joseph Smith Papyrus No. 1—the lion-couch scene.

Dick: Do the four winds resurrect people?

Mr. Jones: Yes. Each wind is described in some inscriptions as bearing life both to the vegetable world and to Osiris—especially it brings rebirth.[69] And to achieve this rebirth, the four must unite into a single entity, bringing the four elements into one body.[70] Now with reference to our papyrus it is interesting that when the four thus come together, each one is designated as "the god of Such-and-such a district," just as our four canopic jars are designated by the Prophet as "the idolatrous god of So-and-so. . . ."

Dick: Is So-and-so a person or a country or what?

Mr. Jones: Well, we know that as far as the Egyptians are concerned the canopic jars do stand for "the earth in its four quarters," just as Joseph Smith said they did. We also know that for the Egyptians the cardinal points and the canopic figures as well definitely stood for four regions of the earth and the four races that inhabited them.

Dick: But here they are Egyptian gods. Were all the four races Egyptians?

Mr. Jones: Yes, when they knew their place—countless inscriptions explain that point of view. But we must understand how the Egyptians thought of it. In early times the basic division of Egypt was not as you might suppose.

Dick: I know, into north and south, lower and upper Egypt, the red and the white—

Mr. Jones: Yes. It was not divided that way but into the four regions, NSEW. The Egyptian ideogram for "city" is also a circle divided into four—each city having a "quarter" and so following the same plan as the universe itself.[71] For that "quadrilateral" division of space does not, of course, stop with Egypt. The outer world was also divided up into four main parts. The concept was equally familiar to the Babylonians, who thought of the city and the land as being four-fold, but also thought of the four cardinal points of the compass as being identified with particular nations, races, and colors.[72] Remember, we are dealing here with a Canaanite version, in which the "idolatrous god of Pharaoh" is only one of the party; the others do not have to be Egyptian.

Jane: But don't the animal heads make them Egyptian?

Mr. Jones: The animal heads seem to have been borrowed by the Egyptians in the first place. Originally the canopic vases didn't have the animal heads; they were just plain jars.[73] Scholars believe "that the theriomorphic vase in Egypt, as elsewhere, can be traced to an origin in northern Syria."[74] Yet the four heads are already canonically prescribed in the Pyramid Texts, so that it is suggested that their appearance in Egypt in the XIX Dynasty was actually a return to the old idea.[75] The idea behind the canopic figures was certainly familiar to Canaan, where, according to the rabbis, the princes of the various nations were typified by animals, just as were the princes of Israel.[76]

Dick: But only four of them?

Mr. Jones: That was just a concession to the system. Thus, though from time immemorial the Egyptians spoke of the other nations as the "Nine Bows," they believed that at the judgment the *four* races of Mankind would stand in their proper positions.[77] Recently Professor Posener has shown that the Egyptians named the peoples and countries of the world after their *directions*, and hence conceived of the *four* great races as the inhabitants of the four cardinal directions; to each of the cardinal directions they also gave cardinal colors—red, white, blue, and green.[78] They knew that there were many countries, of course, but they insisted on fitting everything into the system—a sort of cosmic plan that seems to have hypnotized many ancient people.[79]

"...as far as the Egyptians are concerned, the canopic jars do stand for the 'earth and its four quarters,' just as Joseph Smith said they did"

Dick: So nobody had to borrow from anybody.

Mr. Jones: So the various ideas could easily meet and fuse—in Canaan, especially, the newly found Brooklyn Papyrus shows the people familiar with the same ideas: "The invoking of four Babylonian deities is certainly evidence of the presence of a Babylonian cult in this area." The four gods in question happen to be Bel, Nabu, Shamash, and Nergal,[80] corresponding closely to the four great gods of the Egyptian four directions. Just as we find in the secret place of resurrection in Egyptian temples a special central room in which the four winds were depicted, so a newly discovered Assyrian text tells of a "high chamber" within a Ziggurat in which were found the images of the four winds, each being related to one of the four waters.[81] A Hyksos tomb at Gaza, supplying a link between Egypt and Asia in these things, contains four chambers in each of the four directions, with each containing a human sacrifice.[82] The Mandaeans supply another link, and they have the

"All we can do here is to show that the name El-kenah, far from being an absurdity, is a very promising candidate for research..."

same "quadrilateral" obsession as the Egyptians and Babylonians: their four rulers of the underworld, Krun, Shdum, 'Ur, and Gaf, represent the soft parts and effusions of the body, just as the canopic jars do.[83] Still another link is provided by a coffin from the Land of Goshen, depicting the four sons of Horus, entirely human, raising their arms in praise or support beneath a lion-couch on which the king lies prone, i.e. in the act of arising, while six royal crowns await him before the couch and behind the four figures are four times three arrows and the number 400. The location as well as the motifs are reminders of the four-and-twelve obsession of ancient Israel.[84] A literary link between Egypt and Canaan is Philo of Byblos, who says that the god Bethel-Baityl was the second of four brothers, begotten by heaven and earth: El, Baityl, Dagon, and Atlas.[84a] A recent study of these concludes that three of them were actually Phoenician-Palestinian divinities, i.e., idolatrous gods of the Canaanites, while the fourth, Atlas, represents an Egyptian deity who "descends as a lion into his tomb."[84b]

Jane: But didn't Atlas hold up the world?

Mr. Jones: Exactly. And Baetyl means pillar—they were pillars of heaven. The Mesopotamian and Egyptian ideas met in Canaan: "The pharaohs also served Syrian gods," writes S. Morenz, "who made their countries tributary to the Egyptian kings. Gods from Syria . . . were venerated in Egypt . . . also in settlements of immigrants."[85]

Dick: So it worked both ways.

Mr. Jones: Yes. The Egyptians, "very tolerant at all times toward strange gods . . . undertook to adopt those of Byblos," while the Syrians called their solar god Re, just like the Egyptians, giving him special epithets to keep from confusing him with the Egyptian Re.[86] A text from Ras Shamra baffled everybody for a while until it was realized that it was composed in the manner of an Egyptian coronation ode in honor of "the Egyptian overlord of Ugarit."[87] And while "Egyptian officials and soldiers in the cities of Palestine and Syria" addressed the local gods "with the same confidence as they displayed towards their own home gods," Asiatics living in Egypt worshiped their own Asiatic gods, especially the lady Astarte in the Hittite quarter of Memphis.[88] In fact, "it became the fashion among the Egyptians themselves to imitate Asiatic customs," and in the worship of foreign gods "the Pharaohs themselves took the lead. . . ."[89] A Memphite papyrus lists the names of the Memphite gods and right along with them the Canaanitish gods with their outlandish names.[90] So we should not be too surprised by the strange un-Egyptian but patently Semitic names of our four idolatrous gods; Egyptian idols often received such Asiatic names, though interestingly enough the reverse is not true: "While the Egyptians so readily accepted Semitic deities into their midst," wrote Cerny, "there is no sign that their subjects in Palestine and Syria showed the same attitude towards the Egyptian gods."[91] Consistent with this arrangement, "the idolatrous god of Pharaoh" appears among the other idolatrous gods as a sort of fifth wheel, tolerated because he must be—Pharaoh is calling the tune in Asia at the moment and must be shown due respect, but at best the Egyptians intrude on the local rites with "a god like unto the god of Pharaoh." Fortunately, this complicated theme is the subject of a recent book, by R. Stadelmann, who assures us that the Egyptians believed, like everybody else, that throughout the Near East "the native gods were the mightiest, and that without their help and support Pharaoh could not rule these lands."[92] This would explain the persistence of "the idolatrous god" of this or that region along *with* the sovereign position of "the idolatrous god of Pharaoh" as depicted in the Book of Abraham.

Dick: Even if the Egyptians had conquered them?

Mr. Jones: That is just the point; it was a fundamental belief, and one consistently overlooked by scholars, according to Stadelmann, that every god had an inalienable right to his own territory; hence, without the recognition and approval of the immemorial local divinity of a region "no power was legal": Pharaoh himself rules everywhere in Canaan only by permission and with the aid of the local *Landsgott,* who is never destroyed or even suppressed, though often he becomes quickly Egyptianized.[93] Please note that the four idolatrous gods of Facsimile No. 1, though having Canaanite names, appear in conventional Egyptian dress—that, to judge by other examples, was quite a correct procedure.[94] Look now at this picture of the camp of Rameses II in Canaan: here before a shrine in the midst of the camp, a shrine that looks very much as the Ark of the Covenant must have looked when the Israelites brought it out of Egypt, we see men of five different races praying, and over here the king himself is seen bringing his captives before another shrine in which four gods are sitting.[95] Do those four gods look familiar? Look at their heads!

Jane: One has a hawk's head, and one is human.

Mr. Jones: Notice that it happens to be the head of Rameses himself.

Dick: But the others are a lion and an ape—at least it *could* be an ape.

Mr. Jones: Well, we have seen that the heads could change, though the significance of the four figures remains the same. Here Pharaoh's enemies in Palestine are duly submitting to them —and him. The Egyptian and Asiatic meet and mingle in Palestine and Syria from early times: at Byblos, for example, we find our familiar Egyptian lions and lotuses adorning royal coffins and thrones, but with a very strong Asiatic intermixture.[96] The idols of Canaan tend to become stereotyped, though retaining a great variety of names.[97]

Dick: Do you mean that all they had to do to change the identity of an idol was to change its name?

Mr. Jones: The situation seems to have been remarkably fluid, to judge by Albrecht Alt's studies. According to him the strange gods were constantly coming and going, especially in the desert. A certain idol would pass for a time as "the god *of* So-and-so," So-and-so being the name of the man who introduced the cult of that god into an area.[98] The Egyptian expressions "god *of* Ramesses" and "such-and-such god *of* Ramesses" have long puzzled scholars; Montet has suggested that "god of Ramesses" has a geographical significance, and the expression definitely belongs to the overlapping areas of Egypt and Canaan.[98a]

Dick: Why couldn't they just call the god by his own name?

Mr. Jones: Perhaps because his name was secret: according to a very widespread belief in the East, to know the name of a god or a demon gave one a measure of control over him. But whatever the reason, it is an interesting fact that when an idol is called "the god *of* So-and-so" in an inscription, he is never designated by a proper name of his own.[99]

Dick: The idols in the camp of Rameses would certainly explain how the four canopic figures got to be known in Palestine.

Mr. Jones: It shows *that* they were known, but not necessarily *how*. After all, it has been suggested, as we have seen, that the four canopic figures were Syrian to begin with. The Jews had their own four figures, whether the evil spirits ruling the four winds and seasons—the four "Devil-Mothers,"[100] or the primodial Tohu, Bohu, Khoek, and Ruach, which correspond exactly to the Egyptian *Nw, Hehw, Kekw,* and *Shw,* indicating to Professor Jequier that the writer of Genesis had access to the very ancient Hermopolitan records.[101]

Jane: In seminary we learned about the four beasts in Daniel (7:2-8); they were winds too, and one was a winged lion.

Dick: And in Revelation 7:1 it says, "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth. . . ." Isn't this just the same as the Egyptian canopic idea?

Mr. Jones (impressed): A. Grenfell noted long ago that the imagery of the four angels in Revelation is the same as that of the Egyptian canopic jars, so you needn't be so smart.[102] And what about the strange heads?

Dick: Oh, they are there, too! ". . . and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes [looking] before and behind."

Jane: They were like a lion, a calf, an eagle, with one having the face of a man. (Rev. 4:6-7.)

Mr. Jones (bemused): And to think that in Israel today kids your age actually *do* talk like that. But only two of the heads are canopics, please note—the man's and the eagle's.

Dick: Don't you remember that in some temples the ape's and the jackal's heads were replaced by those of an ox and a ram?

Jane: Or a beetle's, for that matter.

Dick: Only the human head and the bird's head remain unchanged all the time. Also, John is describing a throne scene, in which lions are a "must."

Mr. Jones: Yes, and the Egyptians usually represented the South by a lion and the North by a head of a bull or a cow. So the four heads in John's vision are actually the standard Egyptian symbols of the four directions. So our four "idolatrous gods" which "represent the earth in its four quarters" aren't so far from the Bible after all!

Dick: But what about their fancy names? They aren't Egyptian and they aren't found in the Bible either.

Mr. Jones: Ah, but they *are* found elsewhere; that is the point. Let us take them in order. First, the hawk-headed canopic, "the idolatrous god of Elkenah." We learn in Abraham 1:7 that "the priest of Elkenah was also the priest of Pharaoh"—one priest serving two masters: since one of the masters was a king, the other may also have been. Bearing in mind that in the common expression "god *of* So-and-so" the So-and-so is the name of the king or chieftain who established the idol's worship in a district, I would say that Elkenah was a man—but a man with a theophoric name.

Jane: What's that?

Mr. Jones: It's the name of a person made by combining the name of a god with some other element—like Uriah or Jezebel. In Palestine and Syria it is common to find such names combining Egyptian and west Semitic elements. Well, one of the favorite words of the Egyptians in building such names was *qen-* or *qeni* (usually written with a "k" with a dot under it), which means "mighty," "powerful," or "brave." This element is "often used in the first names of various kings," according to the *Berlin Dictionary* (V, 42), and is especially appropriate for the conquerors of foreign lands. A typical example is the name Amon-qen(i) or Qen(i)-Amon (V, 41), meaning "Amon is mighty." According to the dictionary (V, 45), it is not possible to distinguish the forms *qnt, qni, qnw* as to meaning, and the Egyptians often leave the final vowel or consonant unwritten. The "q" here represents a very hard "k" sound, which is impossible to express in English, and I find it most interesting that Joseph Smith sometimes spelled Elkenah with a double *kk*—a very odd and unusual spelling by all accounts, which justifies us in equating *ken* with *qen.* If we go back to the great camp scene of Rameses II, we find that among the four canopic figures in the shrine the *hawk* is represented as saying to the king: "I give thee power (*qn.t*) against the Southland, victory against the North. . . . I give thee the lands of the earth."[103] As a conqueror Rameses was, we might say, *qen*-conscious, and since *qen-i, -u, -t* was commonly used "as an appendage of vague and general significance to names of gods, designations of kings, and the like" (V, 42), it is a natural for the name of an idol; and since it was common in Palestine and Syria to combine Egyptian and Canaanitish elements in the same names, nothing could be more in order than to call an idol El-kenah, meaning "the god El is mighty." Canaan in Abraham's day was full of what E. MacLaurin calls "synthesized titles," and he calls special attention to the name El-qanna.[103a] The commonest element in such names was some word for "strong" or "mighty" coupled with the name of the god: Thus El Elyon or Baal Aleyan means that the god is "victorious," a "powerful hero."[103b] Equally common is the Egyptian *kn* or *kny,* and the well-attested name *kny-ra* or *Ra-qni* is the exact equivalent of El-Kenah, the Egyptians being much interested in identifying their Ra with the Caananite El.[103c]

Dick: But what about the *ah* ending?

Mr. Jones: It is a characteristic of Canaanite proper names written in their Egyptian form. Thus the well-known name Horan is written in Egyptian *Hwrwnana,* a personal name, and as a place name it is *Hrwn-ah.*[104] The name Ba'al itself is often written in Egyptian with final *-r* instead of *-l,* and sometimes the *-r* is omitted to give Ba'ah.[105] This shift between final *-r* and *-ah* is interesting because Joseph Smith himself hesitates between El-kenah and Elkkener. We shall consider this *r-* trouble when we get to some other names. Meanwhile, here is a suggestive report by Bar Hebraeus that "in the days of Tarh"—that is, of Abraham's father, Terah—"the Egyptians learned Chaldaeism."

Dick: Rather a neat point for the Book of Abraham, I would say—having the Egyptians go Chaldaean in the days of Abraham, or rather of his father.

Mr. Jones: True, but that is only incidental to the main point, which is that in adopting Chaldaeism the Egyptians of Abraham's day "made an image of gold in honor of Kinos, the idol."[106] Bar Hebraeus has given the name its Greek form as found in his sources, but from this it would appear that in their "Chaldaean" sphere the Egyptians really did honor an idol named Kenah or something very like it. Whatever the name meant, it was there.

Dick: Could it designate a region—El-kenah, "the god of Kenah," or something like that?

Mr. Jones: That is a distinct possibility, in view of the latest study by Father R. de Vaux. According to him, the land of Canaan is designated in

the Amarna Letters as the land of Kinahni or Kinahhi.[107] The Amarna Letters, you may recall, were written in Babylonian cuneiform but discovered in the library of a famous Pharaoh.

Dick: What happened to the second "n" in Canaan?

Mr. Jones: Most of the time it is missing. At Ras Shamra, a Canaanitish library contemporary with the Amarna Letters, the name is written Kinahi, and a Canaanite is called a *kinahaiu*.[107] A letter of Ramses II calls Canaan Kinahhi, though the Egyptians prefer Kn'n. But in the Amarna Letters the *ain* turns into rough "h" and the final "n" is dropped. The form Kinahi, found both at Ras Shamra and on Cyprus, was once wrongly thought to be Hurrian.[107] The point is that all over the Egyptian-Syro-Palestinian area Kinah was a common designation for Canaan, and the name El-kenah could certainly mean "God of Kenah" or Canaan. But this suggests a third possibility. It so happens that each of the four canopic jars represented not only one of the four winds or four directions of the compass, but also that particular part of the inhabited world which lay in that particular direction. It also happens that the hawk-headed canopic figure always stood for the lands to the *east*.

Jane: East of what?

Mr. Jones: Of Heliopolis, in all probability, since some scholars hold that the canopic idea originated there, and the Egyptians themselves always regarded it as the exact center of the world, the place of the beginning, from which life went forth in all directions to fill the world.[108] The four birds went forth from there to announce the king's coronation to "the Nomads of Nubia" in the south, the Libyans of the west, and the bedouins of Asia, but the fourth nation is Egypt.[109] The king claims the earth "South to the wind, North to the sea, East to the Lands of the Gods, and West to the limits of the sun's journey."[110] There is some confusion here because since prehistoric times the Pharaohs claimed Sinai as part of Egypt, but beyond that everything to the east was Kenite country. The Kenites were those people "concerning whose territory a covenant was made with Abraham, and who have not yet been conquered," that is, of all the vast area described as Abraham's heritage in the Genesis Apocryphon.[111] The Rabbis identified Kenite country with the deserts stretching all the way from the southern tip of Arabia to Asia Minor.[112] In the prophecies of the last days the Kenites are identified with the Ishmaelites,[113] and Nelson Glueck equated them to the Rechabites, the ancient secretaries of the Arabian deserts.[114] Jethro was called "the Kenite," and his Midianite countrymen called themselves the Kenim.[115] Some have seen in these latter the beni Kain, or sons of Cain, traveling smiths and metal casters, with their wandering habits and their blackened faces.[116] According to H. Seebass, the Kenites provide the link "between the Patriarchal period and the desert period" of Israel, their original home being the Negev.[117] Whatever else they are, the Kenites are from the Egyptian point of view the people to the *east*, and since the canopic hawk represents the East, its name El-kenah might well refer to the god of an eastern region or people.

Dick: So we have three choices. Doesn't that leave us up in the air?

Mr. Jones: No more than students of the Canaanites have always been. There is still no agreement on the meanings of the names Canaan, Kenite, and how they are related. Remember, our business is not to provide final answers—we do not close doors, but open them. All we can do here is to show that the name El-kenah, far from being an absurdity, is a very promising candidate for research. Before we go any further, it would be well to make a chart to show these four canopic idols in their symbolic perspective. The possible variations on the chart will remind us how very fluid the interpretation of things still is, and how very little is really known about any of this business[118] (see chart below). Notice that in Egyptian thinking these figures are gods, races, nations, directions of the compass, and parts of the body all at once; it is the same free-wheeling type of interpretation we find in the Pearl of Great Price. Of course when we think in cosmic terms the four canopics are stars—the four stars of the bowl of the Big Dipper, spirits that "carry Osiris in the procession" to heaven.[119] ○

Number	*Figure*	*Egyptian Name*	*Parts of the Body*	*Direction*	*People*	*Pearl of Great Price Name*
5	hawk	Duamutef	stomach	east	Desert People ('Amu)	Elkenah (Elkkener)
6	jackal	Kebhsenef	intestines	west	Libya (Temhiland)	Libnah
7	ape	Hapi	lungs	north	Palestine & Syria (Retjnu)	Mahmackrah
8	human	Imset	liver	south	Nubia (Nhsy)	Korash (Koash)

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[1]A. De Buck, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 35 (1949), p. 87. The title is that given by T. G. Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (University of Chicago, 1960), p. 150. Budge calls it "The Chapter of Making Transformation into a Divine Falcon."

[2]E. A. W. Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani* (New York, 1913), Vol. 2, p. 535.

[3]De Buck, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-97; the text is in his *Coffin Texts*, IV, 68-86.

[4]E. Drioton, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Vol. 10 (1953), p. 171; H. Brunner, in *Ztschr. der Dt. Morgenländ. Ges.*, Vol. 3 (1961), p. 445.

[5]If one underlines all passages in the Naville text of *Book of the Dead* 78 (*Das aegypt. Todtenbuch* [Berlin, 1886], pp. 164ff) which are identical with those in *Coffin Text* 312, more than four-fifths of the material will be found to be the same in both texts.

[6]De Buck, *op. cit.*

[7]J. A. Wilson, in *Dialogue*, Vol. 3 (Summer 1968), pp. 67-88. Thus it is easier to assemble a jigsaw puzzle even when many pieces are missing if one has a completed sketch before one than it is to put together a complete set of pieces without a guide to follow.

[8]De Buck discusses the merits of D. Gunn's assertion that it is sufficient for the student to confine himself to the text at hand without reference to what form it may have had in the remote past—a pointed commentary on the willful myopia of scholarship. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[9]De Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 89.

[11]Drioton, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

[12]*Ibid.*, p. 171.

[13]Brunner, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 442.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 445.

[15]Drioton, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 171.

[17]Line 68c, rendered "govern for me" (Drioton), "watch over me" (Brunner), and "clear my ways" (De Buck), the common idea being "relieve me from my helplessness!"

[18]T. G. Allen, *Eg. Book of the Dead*, pp. 160f, Pl. XXVI. Of course there is always the possibility that the vignette has nothing to do with the text it accompanies.

[19]Brunner, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

[20]*Ibid.*, p. 440. De Buck renders *hwi* as "Command," while Drioton, p. 169, paraphrases the passage: "He must go and ask for a decision from the supreme Lord."

[21]Brunner, pp. 442, 444.

[22]*Ibid.*, p. 442.

[23]Drioton, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

[24]*Ibid.*, p. 169; T. G. Allen, *B.D.*, p. 151. It reminds one very much of the all-important turban in the Mandaean initiations: "Sam-Haije sent me with the turban of radiance to be a garment for the King so that the Uthras might shine through him." *Mand. Johannesbuch* (Lidzbarski), p. 206; *Ginza*, pp. 191f, 194.

[25]This expression has caused all the translators trouble; two of them take it as a mistake, while Drioton (p. 169) says it refers to some lost episode of the drama. That it is not a mistake in Ms. B2Bo, where it occurs twice (87c, e), should be apparent when one considers that Egyptian scribes in a hurry do not go out of their way to dig up forgotten archaic ideograms and words when modern alternatives are at their disposal. Here the expression is "through the partition" (*Wörterbuch* IV, 14,

4), and the ideogram represents the archaic door or screen made of rushes and rolled up from the bottom. One is also reminded of the "reed wall" through which God was said to have spoken to Utnapishtim, the Babylonian Noah, warning him of the Flood and giving him the instructions necessary for his escape from it.

[26]So Drioton, p. 171.

[27]Brunner, p. 442.

[28]Such as this writer discussed long ago in the *Classical Journal*, Vol. 40 (1945), pp. 515-43.

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[31]C. J. Bleeker, in *Numen*, Vol. 11 (1964), p. 80.

[32]E. Drioton & J. Vandier, *L'Egypt*, p. 90.

[33]P. Derchain, *Rites Egyptiens*, I, 40, 52.

[34]He wears the mask both as executioner and healer, Appian, *Bell. civ.*, IV, 47, Artemidorus, *Onirocrit.*, V, 92, in Hopfner, *Fontes*, p. 359; Apuleius, *Metam.* XI, 11.

[35]H. Altenmueller, in *Chron. d'Egypte*, Vol. 42 (1967), p. 81.

[36]Drioton & Vandier, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

[37]H. Nibley, in *BYU Studies*, Autumn 1968, pp. 81-85.

[41]Derchain, *op. cit.*, I, 52.

[42]H. Junker, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien* (Vienna, 1910), p. 2; G. Jequier, in *Sphinx*, Vol. 14 (1911), p. 179.

[43]H. Mueller, in *Mitt. des dt. Inst. der Altertumskunde zu Kairo*, Vol. 7 (1937), p. 59.

[44]*Ibid.*, pp. 59ff.

[45]P. T. v. Recklinghausen, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 63 (1928), p. 15; M. de Rochemonteix, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 3 (1894), pp. 183-85, 248; H. Schaefer, *Von aegyptischer Kunst* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963), pp. 308-10.

[45a]*Lebensmüde*, 79-80, cit. A. Gardiner, *Eg. Gram.*, p. 317.

[45b]In Pyr. Text No. 674 (1999) "they who are before Thoth are slaughtered with the knife belonging to Seth." For the type of knife, E. Massoulard, *Prehistoire et Protohistoire d'Egypte* (Paris, 1949), Plates xliii, lix, lx.

[46]H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 78 (1942), pp. 46f.

[46a]*The Blinding of Truth by Falsehood*, in A. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories* (Brussels, 1932), pp. 30-36. There is a remarkable parallel to this in the Norse Folk-tale of True and Untrue, No. 1 in G. W. Dasent's *Popular Tales from the Norse* (Edinburgh, 1888), pp. 1-7.

[47]*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. 1 (Plates), p. 382f.

[48]For a complete bibliography of the Classical sources, Th. Hopfner, *Fontes Hist. Relig. Aegypt.*, p. 821.

[49]Hopfner, *loc. cit.*, lists 15 sources that have Hercules put Busiris to death and two that deny it. Three writers claim that the Busiris story is only a mythical presentation of the rough treatment afforded strangers in Egypt.

[50]G. A. Wainwright, *The Sky-Religion in Egypt*, p. 63.

[51]*Ibid.*, pp. 60, 62; Herodot., II, 139.

[52]C. De Wit, in *Chroniques d'Egypte*, Vol. 32 (1957), pp. 35-37.

[53]L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 54; Vol. 5, pp. 71f, with sources; M. J. bin Gorion, *Die Sagen der Juden*, I, 101; also a popular early Christian concept, Simeon of Gesir, *Potter's Songs*, in *Oriens Christianus*, Vol. 3 (1913), p. 225.

[54]M. Chassinat, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 38 (1916), pp. 39f.

[55]M. de Rochemonteix, in *Bibl. Egyptol.*, Vol. 3, p. 249.

[56]E. A. W. Budge, *Egyptian Magic*, p. 90.

[57]G. Thausing, in *Mitt. Dt. Inst. Arch. zu Kairo*, Vol. 8 (1939), pp. 54, 60. On a shrine from Medinet Habu four kings supporting the sky stand on pillars of heaven as depicted in Joseph Smith Papyri, No. 1. *Medinet Habu*, Vol. 4, Pl. 229, cf. 217. The idea of the four as stars survives in Cyprian's teaching, *de Sina et Sion* in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 4, Col. 994, that Adam's name is taken from the initials of four stars that God placed in each of the cardinal points.

[58]A. Varille, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 53, p. 90.

[59]J. Baillet, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 22 (1900), p. 193.

[60]A. Gardiner, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 36 (1950), pp. 10-12.

[61]De Wit, *op. cit.*, pp. 37f.

[62]At the end of the Sed festival the order "Silence" was repeated 4 times, the 4 arrows were shot, the king sat on 4 thrones, one facing each direction, Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 88. When the King is ordered by Osiris to appear as the second Horus "the 4 spirits of Heliopolis" write his name (Pyr. Text No. 467), and when Osiris comes out of heaven "the 4 pure poles are set up for him" (Pyr. Text No. 303). Only two poles (the solstices) are set up for Re, but they are set up 4 times (Pyr. Text Nos. 263, 264). In the purification rite the *Smn* priest goes around the statue 4 times, called *shenen* (A. Moret, *Culte Pharaonique*, p. 202, B.D. 34:2). In a mimic human sacrifice 4 red animals were slain at a round hole representing the mouth of the underworld, like the *"mundus"* or *"orcus mundi"* in the center of *Roma quadrata* (G. Lefebure, in *Bibl. Egyptol.*, Vol. 36, p. 288). In taking possession at his coronation the Pharaoh would "pass through the land, touching the 4 sides. . . . He ran across the ocean and the 4 sides of heaven . . ." (H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztscher.*, Vol. 52, pp. 68ff, from an inscription in Edfu). Not only power but danger comes from the four directions, "the enemies that converge from the 4 cardinal regions of the world" (J. Monnet, in *Rev. d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 8 [1951], p. 152).

[63]A. Moret, *Culte Pharaonique*, pp. 27f.

[64]H. Grapow, *Totenbuch, Kap.* 17, p. 43.

[65]G. Thausing, *op. cit.*, pp. 52f; Pyramid Text No. 573 (1483).

[66]A very old tradition has Geb sitting on the throne of the universe "at the place of the 4 crocodiles, Sobak-Ra, Shu, Geb, Osiris-Ra," as they planned the creation of the world, G. Goyon, in *Kemi*, Vol. 6 (1936), pp. 37f.

[67]De Wit, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[68]*Ibid.*, p. 39. *The Improvement Era*, February 1968, p. 40g; translated by Prof. J. A. Wilson, in *Dialogue*, Summer 1968, p. 75.

[69]De Wit, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[70]*Ibid.*, p. 31, citing a hymn to Khum, in which the 4 gods must come together and unite into one to give eternal life to Osiris.

[71]K. Sethe, *Uebers. u. Kommentar z. d. Pyramidentexten*, I, 96.

[72]P. Neugebauer, in *Archiv für Orientforschung*, Vol. 7 (1931-2), pp. 269-71.

[73]K. Sethe, *Zur Gesch. der Einbalsamierung* (*Preuss. Akad. Sitz. ber.*, 1934), p. 217.

[74]S. R. K. Glanville, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 12 (1926), p. 57.

[75]A. Rusch, *Die Entwicklung der Himmelsgoettin Nut zu einer Gottheit* (Leipzig, 1922), p. 46.

[76]L. Cohn, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 10 (1898), pp. 316f.

[77]E. Lefebure, in *Proc. of the Soc. of Bibl. Archaeol.*, Vol. 4 (1875), pp. 44-48.

[78]G. Posener, in *Goettinger Nachrichten*, 1965, No. 2, pp. 76f. Pyr. Text No. 457ff invokes "the four gods of the four regions who make their vigilant rounds of the four parts of the earth," which Prof. Moret equates with the 4 *qibratu* of the Cuneiform texts. The Egyptian underworld is depicted as a pool of fire with a cynocephalus ape guarding each of the four sides. A. Moret, *Le Jugement du Roi Mort* . . . (Melun, 1922), pp. 22, 26; Book of the Dead, Ch. 125. Up above, the 4 sons of Horus open and close the 4 gates of heaven, *ibid.*, p. 13, and Pyr. Text No. 688 (2078).

[79]A fairly recent bibliography of works relevant to this subect may be found in our footnotes in *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1966), pp. 602-7. See also W. Mueller, *Die heitige Stadt* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1961).

[80]E. G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri* (1953), p. 86; cf. C. De Wit, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

[81]J. Nougayrol, in *Revue d'Assyriologie*, Vol. 60 (1966), pp. 72-74.

[82]Z. Mayani, *Les Hyksos et le Monde de la Bible* (Paris: Payot, 1956), p. 92, Fig. 17.

[83]E. Drower, *The 1012 Questions* (Berlin, 1960), p. 240. The Mandaeans also had the idea that "the four winds . . . are four supports which hold up the skies," *ibid.*, p. 213. To the Egyptian mind "the intestines were necessary for digestion over which the four sons of Horus watched and whose four heads are on canopic jars," J. Zandee, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Vol. 19 (1962), p. 39. The concept goes back to prehistoric times, according to Sethe, *Balsamierung*, p. 220, though Rusch, *Nut*, p. 45, holds that the original function of the four canopic figures was to guard against hunger.

[84]E. Naville, *The Shrine of Saft el-Henneh & the Land of Goshen* (London, 1885), Pl. 6.

[84a]Kraeling, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[84b]D. M. duBuisson, in *Rev. de l'Hist. des Religions*, Vol. 169 (1966), pp. 36ff, 44, 48.

[85]S. Morenz, *Aegyptische Religion*, pp. 247f.

[86]P. Montet, *Le Drame d'Avaris* (Paris, 1941), p. 24.

[87]T. H. Gaster, in *Egyptian Religion*, Vol. 3 (1934), pp. 95ff.

[88]J. Cerny, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 126-27.

[89]*Ibid.*, p. 126.

[90]*Ibid.*, p. 127, and W. F. Petrie, *Religious Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 58f.

[91]Cerny, p. 138.

[92]R. Stadelmann, *Syrisch-Palaestinensische Gottheiten in Aegypten* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), p. 23.

[93]*Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

[94]The classic example is the Lady of Byblos, who though appearing in completely Egyptian dress and insignia retains none-the-less her old *non*-Egyptian name and personality. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[95]W. Wreszinski, *Atlas*, II, Pt. iii, Taf. 169, 170, 179f.

[96]N. Aime-Giron, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 42 (1943), pp. 290, 294, with many illustrations.

[97]E. Kraeling, in *Jnl. of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 6 (1947), pp. 201-8.

[98]A. Alt, *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 37-39.

[98a]B. Couroyer, in *Revue Biblique*, Vol. 61 (1954), pp. 108-9.

[99]*Alt.*, p. 34.

[100]The four Sons of Horus are matched by the four evil murderers of Osiris, K. Sethe, *Gesch. der Einbalsamierung*, p. 214, corresponding to the four fevers matching the four humors in man, Hippocrates, *De Nat. Hom.*, 21: 359f, 369. These correspond to the four Devil-Mothers ruling or misruling the seasons, M. J. bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, I, 337. Like the Egyptians, the Jews also taught that mankind was saved from destruction by the South-wind by a falcon which came and spread out its protecting wings. *Ibid.*, I, 54.

[101]G. Jequier, *Considerations sur les Religs. Egs.*, pp. 155f.

[103]A. Grenfell, in *The Monist*, Vol. 16 (1906), pp. 184-92.

[103]Above, note 95.

[103a]E. MacLaurin, in *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 2, p. 286; though the expression El Qanna appears in the Old Testament, only the Canaanitish records show it to be the proper name of a local idol.

[103b]*Ibid.*, p. 284.

[103c]H. Ranke, *Aegyptisch Personnen namen*, I, 220, No. 5; p. 335, No. 2, 7-10, 15, 18, 821.

[104]Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

[105]*Ibid.*, p. 13.

[106]Bar Hebraeus, *Chronology*, I, 9. (Trsl. E. A. W. Budge, Oxford, 1932.)

[107]R. de Vaux, in *Jnl. Amer. Or. Soc.*, Vol. 88 (1968), pp. 23f.

[108]See above, note 68.

[109]S. Schott, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 95 (1968), pp. 58f.

[110]*Ibid.*, p. 60.

[111]H. Klein, *The Code of Maimonides*, Bk. XI (Yale University Press, 1954), p. 219.

[112]*Midrash Rab.*, Gen. 44:23.

[113]B. Lewis, in *Bull. of the Oriental and African School*, Vol. 13 (1949), pp. 312f.

[114]N. Glueck, in *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 1940, pp. 22-24.

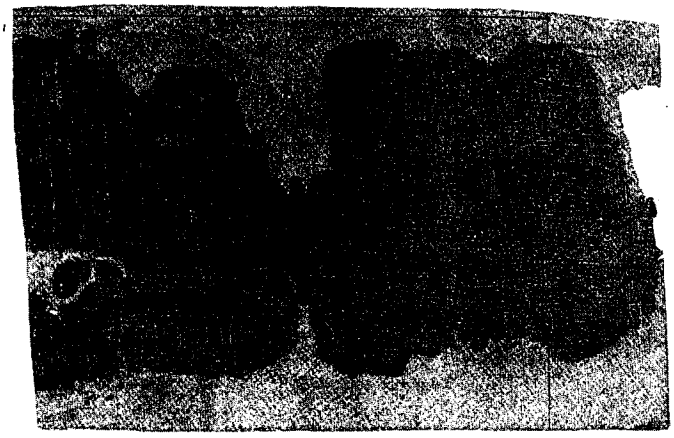
[115]Z. Mayani, *Les Hyksos et le Monde de la Bible*, p. 184; R. Eisler, *Die Kenitischen Weihinschriften der Hyksoszeit* (Freiburg, 1919), p. 86.

[116]Eisler, p. 81. According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. Kenites, the Midianites into whose people Moses married were Kenites, and "their eponymous ancestor was Cain." They later became completely absorbed into the tribe of Judah. See R. North, in *Jnl. Bibl. Lit.*, Vol. 83 (1964) pp. 373-89.

[117]H. Seebass, *Erzvater Israels, Zt. f. A.T. Wiss.*, Beiheft 98 (1966), p. 106.

[118]The chart is based on E. Naville, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 15 (1877), pp. 29f. The parts of the body follow the later interpretation, A. Piankoff, *Shrines of Tutankhamon*, p. 19, n. 39. Another system has *East*: Hawk-headed disk, Re-Harakhte Lord of Heaven; *West*: Scarab headed Khepri coming out of the ocean; *North*: Ram-headed Mendes the life (Ka) of the King; *South*: Human-headed Atum of Heliopolis, J. De Wit, in *Chron. d'Egypte*, Vol. 32, pp. 31f. At the purification of the king, the East is the Hawk, the West is the Ibis, the North is the jackal-like Seth-animal, and the South is Horus the Hawk, E. Otto, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 7, pp. 69ff. The doubling of the hawk, which occurs in the story of the Messenger-Hawk (above), has recently been noted by P. Munro, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 95 (1968), p. 37. The fullest discussion of the system is the oldest, H. Brugsch, *Die Geographie des alten Aegyptens* (Leipzig, 1857), pp. 30-34.

[119]K. Sethe, *Gesch. der Einbalsamierung*, pp. 218f. See above, note 84.



Facsimile No. 1, by the Figures

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

● *Dick:* Why are the figures in Facsimile No. 1 numbered backwards?

Mr. Jones: Some people have objected to the numbering and have even seen in it evidence of fraud. But if you will look very closely you will see that the numbers are not written in ancient Egyptian at all, but in modern American. They have been put in purely for convenience in identifying the various figures under discussion. And just as those figures can be discussed in any order, so there is no mystic or symbolic significance whatever intended in the numbering. The first eight figures are numbered in a perfectly consistent order beginning at the top and reading from right to left. The animated figures naturally come first, being the actors of the play rather than mere properties—that is why the crocodile, No. 9, has precedence over the purely symbolic lotus, No. 10; and the "gates of heaven," being far more conspicuous and specific than the vague hatch-lines "signifying expanse" (Fig. 12), are given priority over them.

Dick: But why does the numbering of the four jars go from right to left?

Mr. Jones: The natural transition from Figure 4 is to the nearest jar, Figure 5. That, I think, is all there is to it. Actually, the canopic jars are numbered in the correct order of their importance, but that is probably a mere coincidence.

Dick: How about the next figure?

Mr. Jones: The jackal head, called here "the idolatrous god of Libnah." That is the most easily recognized of all the names.

Jane: Why is it so easy?

Mr. Jones: Because the name has actually turned up in the Egyptian records, and been obligingly transposed into good Canaanite by Professor Burchardt as plain and simple Libnah, designating an unknown geographical region.[119a] Also, however you look at it, it always means the same thing. Take the Semitic root *l-b-n:* what do Mount Lebanon (the snow-covered), *leban* (which is Arabic for milk), and *lebanah* (which is Hebrew for moon) have in common?

Dick: That's easy. They are all white.[120]

Mr. Jones: Shining white. And according to the Rabbis the name of Abraham's relative Laban means white-faced or blond—another indication of blondness in Abraham's family.[121] And in the Indo-European family what do Alps, lamps, Olympus, and all limpid and lambent things have in common? They too are shining white. The ending *-ah* would normally be the feminine ending designating a land or region "as the mother of its inhabitants," as the formula goes. Libnah would be the White Land, and there were places in Palestine in Abraham's day called Libnah, "whiteness";[122] then too, Levi had a son Libni, whose name meant white.[123]

Dick: So Joseph Smith could have got the name from the Bible and found out what it meant from a dictionary.

Mr. Jones: Indeed he could have, but does he ever make capital of the name? Does he ever connect it up with whiteness or anything else? Neither he or any of his contemporaries knew that the Egyptians always identified the jackal-god of Figure 6 with the White Land.

Dick: Did they?

Mr. Jones: Most certainly and emphatically. Our friend Anubis of the jackal's head at all times enjoyed two constantly recurring epithets.

Jane: What's an epithet?

Mr. Jones: It is a descriptive tag put to the name of some famous person or thing, like "Long-haired Achaeans," or "Honest Abe," or "Mack the Knife." An epithet is used so often and so automatically that it is practically part of the name—a sort of title. Well, from first to last Anubis always had two special epithets: he was "Lord of the White Land" and "Chief of the Westerners." If you will look at the chart you will notice that the jackal-headed jar also represents the West.

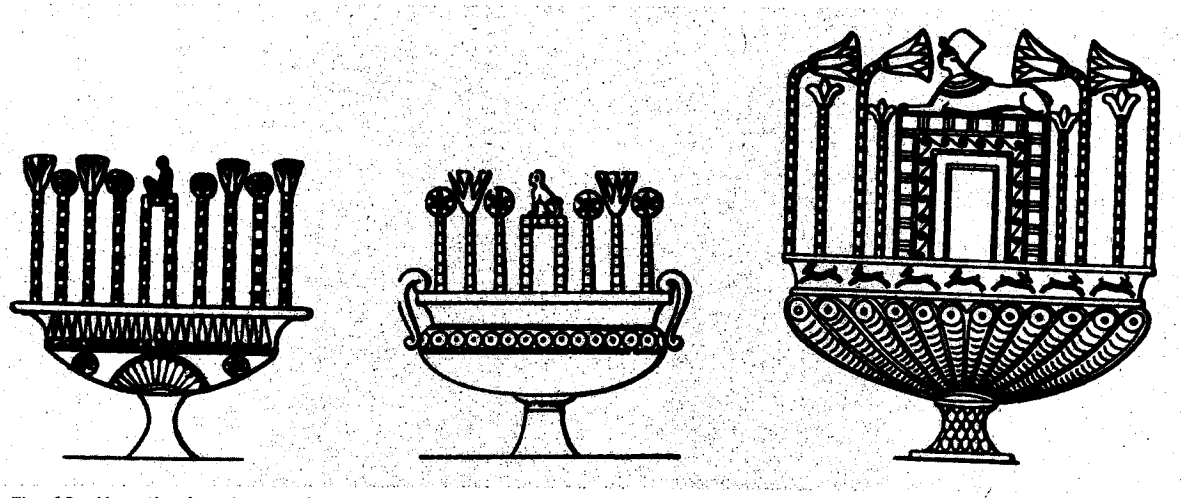
Jane: What is the White Land?

Mr. Jones: That is just what Professor Kees asked himself. He decided that "Lord of the White Land" (*nb ta djesr*) is derived from the idea of "Lord of the shining, sanctified [*prachtigen, geheiligten*] Land," that being a euphemism for the necropolis.[124]

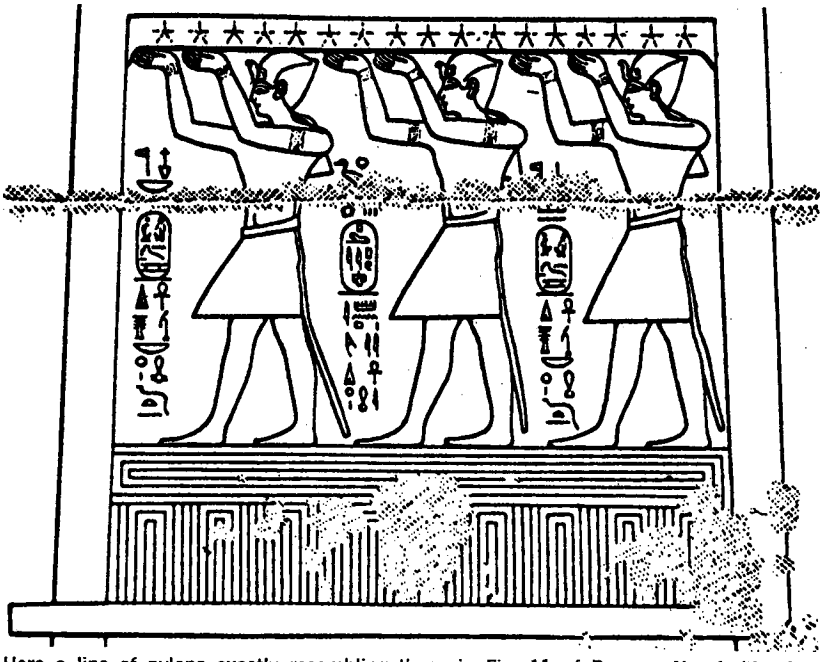
Dick: And everybody knows that the necropolis is in the *West.* That would make him Lord of the westerners!

Jane: But wasn't Upper Egypt, the Southern Kingdom, the land of the white crown and the white palace and the white mace, and all that?

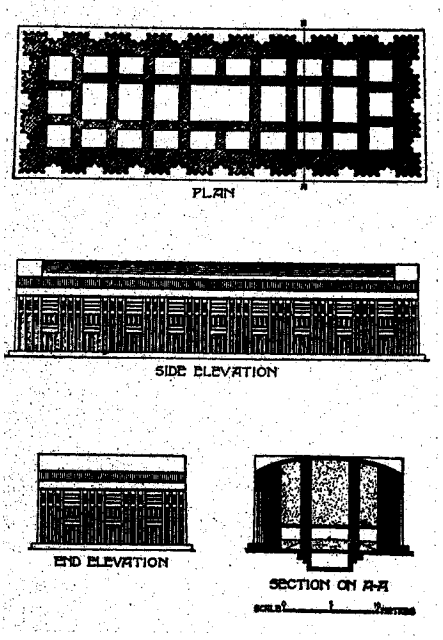
Mr. Jones: There was a strong temptation once to locate the "White Land" of Anubis in Abydos, but Kees showed



Fac. I, Fig. 10. Here the four lotuses frame the palace gate on which Pharaoh himself reposes as a lion. These vessels are of a type brought by foreign visitors to Egypt as gifts to Pharaoh. Here the lotus may well symbolize the exchange of courtesies between the court of Egypt and its guests.



Here a line of pylons exactly resembling those in Fig. 11 of Papyrus No. 1 (the facsimiles are unsatisfactory) supports three portraits of a Pharaoh who is very obviously holding up the sky. They are assisting him in this function as pillars of heaven.



Fac. I, Fig. 11. Most of the great early tombs are surrounded by 24 pylons, possibly signifying their nature as "pillars of heaven."

that White Land does not necessarily refer to Upper Egypt, though he admitted that the meaning of the term remained obscure.[124] But very early Brugsch noted that of the four canonical colors the official color of the West is, surprisingly, white—instead of a red sunset.[125] On the other hand, the Libyans to the west of Egypt, noted for their white skin and blue eyes,[126] were identified by Josephus with the Lehabim, from a root *lhb,* meaning "shining," "flashing," Arabic *lubhah,* "a clear, white colour, brightness of the complexion or colour of the skin," according to Lane.[127] But let's avoid too much playing around with words and sounds, which is altogether too easy, and settle for a few fairly certain points: (1) Libnah *does* mean White Land; (2) "the idolatrous god of Libnah" *does* have the mask of Anubis; (3) the jackal-headed canopic figure *does* stand for the West; (4) Anubis *is* the Lord of the West; (5) he *is* also "Lord of the White Land"; (6) white *is* the ritual color of the West. That's enough, without bringing in the white Libyans, to give you something to play with. It doesn't prove anything, except, perhaps, that Libnah is a very appropriate name to use if you want to divide up the world into four regions or races according to Egyptian practice.

Dick: But how about Mahmackrah? That's a beast of a different color.

Mr. Jones: But even more interesting because of its unusual name. Figure 7, "the idolatrous god of Mahmackrah," has an ape's head, though sometimes it is shown with the head of a bull or cow; the Egyptians placed it at the northern quarter of the horizon. What makes its name so intriguing is that it makes sense almost any way you divide it up. We must always bear in mind when confronted with the often exotic-looking foreign names that oc-



The bold and dramatic line panels and pillars are found only in sacred buildings in Mesopotamia and are characteristic of the earliest palace facades and tombs of Egypt, indicating the other-worldly nature of those structures. In Egypt the recessed panels represent gates to the other world, and the pillars flanking them the pillars of heaven.



The lion Nefertem guards Egypt's northeast frontier with his big knife and his lotus—the welcoming committee for those who came to Egypt from Abraham's Canaan. The lotus is the official symbol of the border control and of permission to enter the country.

cur in the writings of Joseph Smith that it is the sound and not the sight of the name that is being conveyed. Baurak Ale and Shaumahyeem are perfectly good Hebrew if you read them out loud; though they *look* absolutely outlandish, it would be hard to give a better rendering of the old sounds without the use of a phonetic alphabet. The names of our canopics are addressed to the ear and not the eye—that is why it is possible to fluctuate between Elkenah and Elkkener, Korash and Koash. Mamackrah suggests all sorts of things to the ear, and it would take us a long time to ring all the possible combinations that Semitic and Indo-European dictionaries could give us on the syllables *mah, mack,* and *rah,* all of which are full of meaning in any language. What grabs me, for example, is the middle syllable, not plain "mack" but "mackr-" and of course the final *-rah.* What I hear is "Mah-mackr-rah." That means a lot to me.

Jane: Why "mackr-," of all things?

Mr. Jones: Because it reminds me of an element occurring in some important Canaanite names. *Mhr*-Anat, for example, means "champion or upholder of the goddess Anat";[128] and Rameses II called himself *Mahr-B'l,* meaning upholder of Baal, the Canaanite god.[129] Mahr-Rah would be the champion or upholder of Rah, the Egyptian equivalent of Baal.

Dick: But this "-mackr-" is spelled with a *-ck-* instead of an *-h-.*

Mr. Jones: The *-h-* in "mahr" belongs to the root, and must have a heavy sound in order not to be swallowed up by the following *-r.* You can see the shift between a *-k-* and a heavy *-h-* sound in our writing of Mi-cha-el, which the Jews wrote Mi-ka-el. Incidentally, the form of the name rather neatly parallels our Ma-mackr-rah. Mi-cha-el, like Mi-ca-iah (1 Kings 22),

"Our lion-couch papyrus is a political as well as religious document... "

means "Who is like God?" or "He who is like God." *Ma-* (written *Mah-* to lengthen the vowel according to the invariable practice in Mormon scriptures) is the exact Egyptian equivalent of the Hebrew *Mi-*, so that Ma-mackr-rah would mean "Who is the upholder of Rah?" or the like—a very appropriate title for an idol whose worshipers were doing everything they could to equate and associate the gods of Canaan and Egypt. But here is another possibility. Among the "Old Canaanite Names" found in Egyptian is *ma'gar,* plus a vowel ending, transposed into Canaanite as *Maq'arah,* meaning "place of burning."[129a] Since Abraham was known anciently as "he who escaped the burning," Mah-mackrah could be the local deity of the place of sacrifice. Though "no precise geographical location is provided" for some of Abraham's most important experiences,[129b] a good deal is being written today (as we shall see) about his many confrontations with local gods in Canaan. Here is the idolatrous god of Beth-shan who is called Mkl-'a, "the great god."[130] The first element in his name, *Mkl-,* is Canaanite, but the second, *-'a,* is Egyptian; the first refers to the Canaanite god Mkl, whose name, according to L. H. Vincent, means "he who is able," "the Omnipotent," while the second is the Egyptian word for great—practically the same thing; so that the combination gives us a very powerful figure indeed—Mkl the Mighty, "the god of power."[131] Incidentally, since Semitic *-l-* is regularly written as an *-r-* in the Egyptian renderings, the Egyptian form of this name would be Mkr-'a.[132]

Dick: And since *ma-* is Egyptian too, Mah-mackr-rah would be the full name, I suppose. "Who is mighty like Re," or "How mighty is Rah" or something like that.

Mr. Jones: We must be careful not to go overboard—it is all too easy. But I do think it is in order to point out that the well-documented name Mkl-'a (Mkr-ah) exactly parallels El-kenah: in each case the name of a Canaanite god is followed by an Egyptian epithet meaning mighty. I can think of a better Egyptian name, though: Rank gives the name *Mai-m-hqa* as meaning "the Lion is ruler."[132a] On this pattern *Mai-m-akr-'ah* would mean "the Lion is Akr the great," Akr being the earth-god as a lion. At any rate, we are free to guess as long as we don't preach.

Jane: But what's it got to do with an ape's head?

Mr. Jones: Don't you remember? The jar with the ape's head signifies *north* for the Egyptians—that is the purpose of this particular symbol. For the Egyptians, Palestine and Syria were the lands of the north.[133] So now we have idols for the east, west, and north—

Dick: —so the only one left must belong to the south.

Mr. Jones: With a tip-off like that, we are naturally prejudiced, so we should proceed with care. Our last canopic, Figure 8, is the human-headed Imset, who in the Egyptian system stood for the south. All that remains to test in the Book of Abraham is his name, which is given as Korash or Koash.

Jane: Which is it?

Mr. Jones: The different spellings given to proper names in the Book of Abraham are plainly an effort to approximate their sounds. As might be expected, it is especially the *-r-* that causes trouble: Elkenah appears as Elkkener, and Korash as Koash, also Jershon as Jurshon and Potiphar as Potipher—your *-r-* is a great trouble-maker in ancient as well as in modern languages.[134] If you ask me which of the forms is correct, I unhesitatingly answer—they all are! Anybody who knows anything about Arabic also knows that you can't insist dogmatically on one official pronunciation for any single word—and it has always been that way in the East. Here is an Egyptian-Canaanite deity whose name can be read as Qesrt, Qeserti, Qsdt, Kousor, and Chrysor—and that is typical.[135] But what does Koash remind you of—a Bible land far to the south of everything?

Jane: The Land of Cush?

Mr. Jones: Of course. The most succinct essay on Cush is in the *New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia* (1966), p. 515, which defines Cush as "Region S of Egypt" (Nubia, Ethiopia) in Hebrew and other ancient languages. It extended "S from Elephantine and Syene (Aswan)." It has also been identified with southern Arabia and even India. The names of the four brothers, Mizraim, Punt, Canaan, and Cush certainly remind us of the division of the world into four regions. There is still no agreement as to where the lands of Punt and Cush really were; but the queen of Punt, who had dealings with Queen Hatshpsut, certainly lived in the South.

Jane: Wasn't the Queen of Sheba the queen of the south, too?

Mr. Jones: These mysterious southern queens have caused considerable perplexity. Saba was on the other side of the Red Sea, the Arabian side, where some people put Cush.[136] But however Sheba, Punt, Cush and Korash-Koash may be related, the one thing they have in common is that they are all in the deep south.

Dick: Including Korash?

Mr. Jones: Consider. The natives of Saba, way down there at the south end of Arabia, worshiped a goddess Iagouth; and where do you think she came from? Heliopolis!

Dick: We might have known.

Mr. Jones: In fact, she was simply a local form of the Egyptian lady Hathor, "the regent of Heliopolis," worshiped not only in Saba but also in Punt.[137] But the interesting thing is that her worshipers were known as "the people of Koraish", and also as the Beni-Qananee or Sons of Canaan. Back home at Heliopolis the lady went by the name of Wadjit, which was semiticized into Ozza, under which title she turns up as "one of the principal idols of the Qoreish" in Mekkah.[138]

Dick: Which puts her in the south again. But weren't the Qoraish the tribe of Mohammed, and didn't they come much later?

Mr. Jones: Well, A. B. Kamal believed that even the religion of the classical Qoreish was strongly influenced by Heliopolis. He sees a connection in the tradition that an ancestor of Mohammed "converted the tribe of Khozaa and the Himyarites [an early desert kingdom] to the worship of Sirius," which they called Sh'ri, the middle sound being something between a deep guttural and a cough.[139] You may remember that Shagre-el, meaning "Sirius is god," was worshiped by the people who tried to sacrifice Abraham.[140] As to the Qoreish coming later, the name is the diminutive of an older Korash; as you know, the Jews held the Persian Koresh (Cyrus) in great esteem,[141] but there was another, Kharush, a legendary king of Babylon, who destroyed Jerusalem: his name is interesting because it is the reverse of Koraish, and means "big bad Korash."[142] Finally, a tradition preserved by the Arabic writers designates by the name of Korash the father or grandfather of the very king who tried to put Abraham to death.[143] The root *k-r-sh* can be tied to a great number of

meanings, but as a proper name it is peculiarly at home in the south and tied to the worship of the most important Egyptian goddess. Since the south is the only direction we have left, and the human-headed canopic jar does stand for the south, we may as well let it stand there for the present. Remember—we are not settling but raising questions, not shutting but opening doors. There are plenty of doors that need to be looked into.

Dick: But what about the next figure, number 9, "the idolatrous god of Pharaoh"? Doesn't he sort of spoil the four brothers act?

Mr. Jones: On the contrary, he is indispensable to it. In the "quadrilateral" geographical patterns of the Egyptians, Maspero observed, "we find the four cardinal points who with the creator form the *Five*." That is why the primal Ogdoad of Heliopolis, comprised of the four gods of the universe with their wives, ends up as an Ennead, an odd number—they have to have one president at their head, and he makes it nine.[144]

Dick: Why do they have to have just one at their head?

Mr. Jones: Because he is the One in the Center, and the center, which is a perfect and invisible point and the pole of everything, can only be *one*. Professor Posener notes that to the four directions is added "the center of the earth, *hry-ib ta*," so that we sometimes read of the "five parts" of the world instead of four.[145] Sethe has discussed the psychological reason for this: No matter where you are, there are always four main directions—from where? From you! You are the one in the middle, and the four directions exist only by virtue of your awareness.[146] Indeed, Friedrich Ratsel began his epoch-making geography with the statement, "Every man regards himself as the center-point of the universe around him." The Egyptians were keenly aware of this. In the Salt Papyrus, for example, we see the four houses of the world, the four gates, and the four cardinal points all arranged around a fifth sign in the middle, the *ankh* sign of life, signifying the presence in the center of the Hidden-One, Great-One, Unknown-One, Unseen-One, Amon the Father of All Life.[147] In "the Ideal House of Life," according to the Egyptians, the four houses surround "the hidden one who rests within . . . the Great God. . . . It shall be very hidden, very large. It shall not be known, nor shall it be seen."[148]

Dick: What's it all about?

Mr. Jones: A basic reality of existence. The Four Sons of Horus, as you know, were the stars of the Big Dipper, pointing ever to the pole of the universe—the most important object in the cosmos. Yet there was nothing there!

Jane: Why not?

Mr. Jones: Because in the days when the Egyptians first took their bearings on the universe there was no North Star such as we know it today—there was just empty space, as far as mortal eye could see, and that just at the point where all things come together and around which all things move as around the throne of God. The idea of the complete absorption of the Four in the One is most often expressed by the symbol of the four-headed ram sitting in the middle of the cosmic circle (we will get to that when, if ever, we talk about Facsimile No. 2!); the "four heads on a single neck" show that the Four by uniting create a perfect unity, a single individual to whom in turn they owe their own identity; they are thus the four great gods uniting to create the universe (the ram-headed god is always the Creator), and also to *re*-create Osiris by giving him eternal life.[149] They bring completion and perfection to the *ba* of Osiris when they all meet together to pool their natures and their powers.[150] The idea is compellingly expressed in the pyramid and obelisk, which designate "dominion over the four quarters of the world and the zenith," the zenith being the point on top at which four planes, lines, and solids all come to a single point.[151] Now to the Egyptians, who on earth is the One in the Center, in whom the life of the race is concentrated and by whom it is sustained? I'll give you a hint: The sarcophagus of King Tutankhamon shows that Egyptian kings were buried in four coffins, one within the other.[152] Also, the Pharaoh sat on a fourfold throne, and the Pyramid Texts describe the Four Children of Geb having a feast while in their midst sits "the king on his throne, incorruptible, unspoiled, unassailable."[153]

Dick: What has this to do with the idolatrous god of Pharaoh?

Mr. Jones: As everyone knows, the Egyptians carried their cosmic imagery over into the affairs of earthly government—or vice versa. Whereas in Canaan, as Stadelmann has shown, there was "no fixed and established 'Canaanite religion'" common to all the regions under Egypt, there was a single centralized Egyptian cult, centering in Pharaoh.[154] The gods of Syria and Palestine are extremely hard to study, he says, because their relations to each other are "constantly changing from time to time and from place to place,"[155] and though we know of their existence, we know almost nothing about their cults.[156] The one thing that brings them together in a sort of order is "the dogmatic position of the Egyptian King as overlord of the Syro-Palestinian area."[157] And that is the situation we find in the explanation to Facsimile No. 1, where everything eventually comes back to Pharaoh, and where "the idolatrous god of Pharaoh" (and we have seen that the crocodile was just that) takes his place among the Egyptianized gods of Canaan. This is a reminder that our lion-couch papyrus is a political as well as a religious document, and indeed the ancients never separated the two departments, least of all the Egyptians. This point is brought home with great force if we closely examine the next figure in the papyrus, which is

Figure 10. Abraham in Egypt:

Dick: If that's Abraham, I'm Julius Caesar.

Mr. Jones: Hail Caesar! Haven't you learned yet that the Egyptians have their own special ways of indicating things? Notice how this same design is identified in Figure 3 of Facsimile No. 3: "*Signifies* Abraham in Egypt." It is not a portrait but a symbol, pure and simple. In all symbolism there are varying degrees of realistic representation, ranging from near portraits to pure abstraction. The Egyptian could give a reader a pretty good idea of *a* man on *an* altar; but how would he indicate a *particular* individual and no other on a *particular* altar in a *particular* country? For that he would either have to accompany his drawing by an explanatory text, as Abraham has done, or else show everything symbolically, which has been done in this case with considerable clarity and economy.

Dick: I don't see it—Abraham in Egypt!

Mr. Jones: Of course you don't. Even an Egyptian would not see it unless he had been initiated into the elements of the symbolism involved, but I think most Egyptians would get the point of the lotus. When the Egyptologists of 1912 explained that the odd things called "Abraham in Egypt" were merely "an offering table covered with lotus flowers," they considered their job done—as if that explained everything.[158]

Dick: As if Joseph Smith couldn't recognize the flowers too.

Jane: He *said* it was a symbol, didn't he?

Mr. Jones: The experts who brushed the thing aside so easily seem to have been completely unaware of the vast richness and variety of the lotus symbol in Egypt. No subject has been the

object of more study and publication since 1912 than the meaning of the lotus to the Egyptians, and the very latest study, that of Peter Munro, concludes with the declaration that the many identifications of the lotus with this and that "are still imperfectly and only tentatively understood," and that we do not yet know how or when or where the lotus came to be associated with so many different ideas and individuals in the Egyptian mind.[159] Our job is to find out, if we can, what the particular lotus design in Facsimiles 1 and 3 represents, and it is not going to be easy. Dr. Spalding's informants were also apparently unaware that Professor Jequier had at the time just made a special study of Egyptian lotus symbolism and declared of this particular lotus arrangement: "Nobody . . . has given a satisfactory explanation of this type of monument."[160] The work still remains to be done, but at least we can find out what possible interpretations of the symbol an Egyptian would find acceptable.

To begin with, in both Papyrus No. 1 and Facsimile No. 3 we see an open lotus with buds above and below it arching over a small stand with a fat little pitcher on it. In Papyrus No. 1 the stand is flanked by two thin jars which are missing in Facsimile No. 3, and since the two drawings are given the identical interpretation, our attention is drawn to what they have in common—the lotus and the buds. Now this lotus combination is common enough in coronation and court scenes, so it is quite at home in Facsimile No. 3, but so far as I know this is the *only* lion-couch scene adorned by the presence of a lotus-stand. That in itself should be enough to make Egyptologists sit up and ask whether there might not be something special to this picture after all. If you will step into our Opet shrine, you will notice that there are no lotuses in the lion-couch scene. But look around you at the other walls—what do you see?

Jane: Lotuses everywhere!

Mr. Jones: So conspicuous, in fact, that Professor Rochemonteix concluded that the lotus must somehow express the basic idea of the Osiris cult as celebrated at this place.[161] He even goes so far as to declare that "the lotus and the papyrus are the emblems par excellence of Egyptian religion, exactly as the crescent is for the Moslems, and the cross for the Christians," the symbolism being by no means confined to funerary situations.[161]

Dick: Lotus *and* papyrus?

Mr. Jones: The exact identification of these flowers has been the subject of endless discussion. Some have maintained that the papyrus of Upper Egypt is a lotus and the lotus of Lower Egypt a papyrus, some that both flowers are lotuses, others that both are papyruses —and this confusion seems to go right back to the Egyptian artists themselves who "constantly and deliberately interchanged lotus and papyrus."[162] But whatever their botanical classification may be, these two flowers enjoy a position of unique importance in Egypt, especially the lotus, which turns up everywhere in Egyptian art.

Jane: Then it's just a decoration.

Mr. Jones: Far from it! Though some scholars have insisted that "there is no serious religious or symbolic significance . . . no rebus or code in the use of the lotus in decoration," the same authorities admit that apparently decorative use of the lotus may often conceal a sort of hieroglyphic code.[163] "If we know the value of these symbols," wrote De Rochemonteix long ago, "these ideograms, we can discover the dogmatic sense pursued by the designer . . . his piling up of emblems which at first sight simply astonished us."[164] Thus the lotus-and-stand combination in the tomb of Seti I "has adapted itself completely to the pattern of written symbols," as if it was trying to tell us something,[165] and the same design in tombs of the Pyramid Age may "represent the titles of the dead written in a specialized way," according to I.E.S. Edwards.[166]

Dick: So our lotus and stand may be trying to tell us something special after all.

Mr. Jones: It is the monopoly of a particular lotus that makes one suspicious. If all the Egyptians cared about was their decorative effect, what about all the other equally beautiful flowers they ignore? How is it that hieroglyphic flowers are almost exclusively lotuses?[167] That only the blue and white lotuses are represented, though the rosy lotus was more decorative and more popular?[168] That the lotuses, instead of being depicted in the free-and-easy manner of the Egyptian artists, are almost always drawn after "a very rigid pattern"?[169] That other plants never appear to compete with the lotus in heraldic contexts?[170]

Jane: What are heraldic contexts?

Mr. Jones: When the lotus appears as somebody's coat of arms. "The lotus is the flower of Egypt par excellence," wrote A. Grenfell; "also it is the symbol of Lower Egypt. . . . the lotus is the typical 'arms' of Egypt."[171] On the other hand, in the earliest times it would seem that the lotus stood for Upper Egypt and the papyrus for Lower Egypt,[172] though Maspero and A. Moret held that the plants were both lotuses.[173]

Dick: So the lotus can stand for both the land of Egypt and dead people.

Mr. Jones: That isn't even the beginning of it. We seem to have a whole language of the lotus. Recently Professors Morenz and Schubert wrote a book about it, and concluded that the various interpretations of the Egyptian lotus are in a state of hopeless confusion today.[174] And still more recently Professor Anthes has made a whole list of unanswered questions about the lotus.[175] It is easy and pleasant to speculate, and there can be no doubt that there is something very fundamental about the lotus. It is easy to see why, for example, the lotus and papyrus always stood for Egypt in the minds of the people, since "lotus and papyrus were essential constituents of this unchanging significant 'landscape of the first time,'" as H. Frankfort puts it.[176] And because the lotus growing wild "afforded ordinary food for the poor," it represents the prodigal life-giving abundance of the land.[177] Also, the first life that appeared from the primordial waters of chaos was the lotus, emerging pure and white at Heliopolis out of the primordial ooze of the "first land."[178] That is why at On the lotus went by the special name of Nefertem, the god "who represents the universe, who was before life existed and who will be when life has vanished. . . ," as Anthes puts it.[179] It is the lotus that holds the secret of life springing up spontaneously, apparently out of nothing; during the long ages of desolation when only the empty waters existed, the seed of life slept in the lotus, ready to come forth on the First Day: "Within the lotus was Re," the sun, waiting to be born as Khepri, according to a hymn from Edfu: "The Sleeper shall awake when the light comes forth from it. . . ."[180] Hence the idea that all life finds earnest of the resurrection in the miracle of the lotus.[181] The king is described in the Pyramid Texts as being "in the lotus" at the moment he awakes from the sleep of death.[182] As Anthes puts it, "the lotus at Re's nose gives him life for his daily journey; this refers to the first day of the Primal Time, when the Primal Lotus gave the sun the power to live and create."[183] You can readily see why the lotus gets a big play in funerary scenes.

Jane: Like lilies today.

Mr. Jones: Botanically the Egyptian lotus was a real lily.[184] And since Re and the king and Osiris were restored by the power of the lotus, so it was believed that everybody might enjoy the same privilege.[185] But the funeral lotus is only part of the picture. In the

latest lotus study, Peter Munro shows how the lotus being identified with Re is also the highest god, Atum-Re at Heliopolis; and how as the Father of the living king he must also be Osiris; and how as a living king he must also be Horus; and how father and son and Re-Harachte "fuse in the composite form of Nefertem."[186] This Nefertem seems to be the key to the whole business; a lot of studies have been written about him, one emphasizing one aspect of his nature and another another. Nefertem is the king at Heliopolis, represented as a lotus and embodied as a lion.

Dick: Lotus *and* lion?

Mr. Jones: You will notice that the guardian lion with the big knife always has a huge lotus on his head or behind his back—we shall soon see why. As Nefertem, the king comes down from heaven to rule among men, bearing the lotus sceptre that gives him all power on earth and below earth.[187] But it is important to note that his lotus power is limited to his earthly kingdom alone—Nefertem is "the representative of purely earthly Kingship," as Anthes puts it.[188] The Pharaoh sits on a throne on which the intertwined lotus and papyrus shows his rule over the Two Lands,[189] their stems also binding Asiatic and African prisoners back to back, showing that foreign lands are also brought under the beneficent sway of Pharaoh.[190] On the same throne designs you will see the king himself depicted as a lion treading on his foreign enemies.[190] The lotus and lion are constantly found together in such contexts because they perform the same two functions, one protective, the other aggressive.

Jane: Lotuses attack people?

Mr. Jones: Yes, but first of all they protect them. The gift of a lotus is often accompanied by the hieroglyphic symbols for protection.[191] In the broadest sense Nefertem, the lotus-lion, "protects the individual against anyone who might do him harm."[192] That is why the *lotus-sign* was put by the Egyptians on everything they wanted to protect—on utensils, clothes, houses, "on their dresses, furniture, chairs, boats, fans," while in the tomb of the dead the lotus-sign was used "as a talisman assuring . . . an effective protection against its enemies."[193] The power of the lotus, though formidable, is ever benign and protective in nature, as might be expected from its life-giving power.[194]

Dick: But you said it was aggressive.

Mr. Jones: Whenever you see a big lion with a knife, you can be almost sure of seeing a huge lotus on its head or back.[195] The connection is explained by their common home in the marshes of the northeastern frontier of Egypt, where they both guarded the land against marauding Asiatics of the desert. The lion Nefertem and his companion, or double Myesis, both "worshipped in a lotus-flower," were at home on the extreme northeastern borderlands, the home of Sopdu, right up against Arabia.[196] You will recall that the great fortress there was called the Dwelling of the Lion, and stood amidst the shallow lotus-filled lakes that along with the crocodiles and the lions of the surrounding deserts effectively discouraged unauthorized entry and exit. Right down to the time of the Caesars it was one of the main duties of Pharaoh to protect this all-important gateway, and it was the custom to "venerate the protector of this frontier of the land."[197] At nearby Heliopolis the king himself was Nefertem, both lotus and lion, "the guardian"; "not only does the sight of him make the mountains [that is, the Asiatics] to flee," wrote Naville, "but he is the protector of the other divinities."[198] His speciality is terrifying would-be invaders from the East, in which capacity he is also identified with the other lion-god Myesis, who also wears the lotus.[199] An inscription tells how Horus himself turns into a lion to drive the enemies of Egypt out of Heliopolis and back to the lion-house on the border.[200] Seth, the archtype of the wicked rebel and invader from the north and east, is stopped cold at the border by the lotus "Nefertem, who emerged from the primordial waters . . . who turned back Seth, who opposed the foreign countries when the heaven was overcast and the earth wrapped in mists."[201]

Dick: I can understand why a lion would chase strangers, but why a lotus?

Mr. Jones: Professor Kees found that odd too, and suggested that it might be because a lotus stem will cut the fingers of anybody who tries to pull it up.[202] But whatever the reason for it, this hostility brings the lotus, according to him, into a "syncretistic relationship to the guardian deities of the eastern Delta [Sopdu], who make him too a frontier guard."[203] It is obvious that the lotus is more "symbolic" than the fierce lion, but it plays an equally conspicuous role in the guarding of the northeast frontier. To the people in the hungry lands to the east, Egypt was something special: it was their last chance when they were starving, but while they were there they hated the place and yearned to get back to their old bang-up life in the desert.[204] They were a dangerous lot, and the Egyptian records show that they were carefully checked at the border and that their every move was watched while they were in Egypt.[205] E. A. Speiser has spoken of a "societal curtain that separated Egypt and Mesopotamia, call it the lotus curtain, if you will"—he too perceived the symbol of the lotus.[206]

The lotus in Facsimile No. 1 as a symbol for Abraham can be well documented, claims the author

Dick: But why did the Egyptians let the Asiatics in at all? Couldn't they keep them out?

Mr. Jones: They not only didn't keep them out—they actually offered them protection. Therein I think we can see the unique greatness of Egypt. Only recently Professor Montet pointed out that the Egyptians, contrary to what we have been taught to think, were really great travelers and, what is even more surprising, that the two main duties of Pharaoh were (1) to keep the movements of the Asiatics into and within Egypt under strict control, and (2) to protect Egyptian travelers, missionaries, merchants, and artisans abroad.[207] Now the concern for the helpless in a strange place is the special concern of Nefertem: in funerary reliefs the dead, newly arrived in the Netherworld, are drawn without arms, to show their condition of utter helplessness in a strange and frightening world. While they are in that condition, Nefertem comes to their rescue, puts his arms around them, and finally gives them a new set of arms, saying, "There now, you have become whole and complete, now you have your arms!" meaning, as Professor Naville put it, that the dead person "is now a complete person who has been entirely reconstituted. He lacked arms, but the gods of the East have given him

theirs."[208]

Jane: Who are the gods of the East?

Mr. Jones: None other than the two lions Nefertem and Myesis, with their huge lotus-crowns. The concern for strangers is very significant, for in many scenes and inscriptions the lotus stands for both guest and host. The lotus-god Harsotmus is called "a guest in Denderah,"[209] and if you were invited to a party in Egypt, especially at the royal palace, etiquette would require you to bring a lotus with you and present it to your host. There is a regular formula for "coming with a bouquet of Amon, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands in Karnak, after doing all that is commended," and a proper way to address one's host: "To thy Ka, happy king, Lord of the Two Lands, whom Re loves, a bouquet of thy father Amon. . . . Mayest thou remain on the throne of the living Horus like Re forever."[210] This is plainly a New Year's gift for the throne, which seems to have been the origin of the idea—remember that the lotus represents the birth of everything at the cosmic New Year. Another formula is, "Coming in peace with a bouquet of Amon with the compliments of his beloved son," this being followed not by the name of Horus, as you might expect, but by the name of the donor.[210] When the king appears in a reception on the throne, people bring him their Amon-bouquets with wishes for "a happy life-time in the royal dwelling."[211] It was a birthday as well as a New Year's gift.

Dick: But why should anybody have to give lotuses to the king if they belonged to his father Amon in the first place?

Mr. Jones: No idea was more familiar to the ancients than the pious truism that the god who receives the gifts of the earth as offerings is after all the real source of those same offerings. An inscription has the king bring a lotus to Horus, "who himself arose from the lotus,"[212] and Ramesside steles show people bringing lotuses to a queen who is already holding a lotus and stands completely decked and surrounded with lotuses![212]

Jane: But would you have to bring a lotus to the party—couldn't you bring something else?

Mr. Jones: No—it is always a lotus, and that shows clearly that it is a ritual and symbolic thing. Naturally the people who got invited to court, high nobility and officials for the most part, vied with each other in the splendor of their offerings and flatteries, until in the 18th Dynasty the Amon-bouquets finally got too big to handle.[213] But no matter how showy and vulgar they got, the bouquets always had a lotus as the centerpiece. An inscription in the Tomb of Amenemhab says of a lotus-bearer, "He comes as one welcome, bringing the life [?] of Amon," to which his host replies, "To thy person the symbol of life [?] of Amon, who is pleased with thee, who loves thee and admits thee."[214] Here the word for "admit" is *s.wah-k*, meaning to make a place for a person, like the Arabic *Marhaban*—welcome to the party!

Dick: So the lotus is really a sort of ticket then.

Mr. Jones: Yes, like the *tesserae hospitales* of the Greeks and Romans. Every guest brings a token for his host and receives one in return—often the identical gift![215] Thus the Egyptian brought a lotus to Pharaoh as "a sign of submission and love," which lotus he professed to have received from the king's father Amon, the giver of all blessings, including life itself.[216] All were expected to bring such a gift "coming in peace to that place where the king is."[217] With the expansion of empire, Amon became the god of all the lands under Egyptian sway, and the Egyptian lotus is as conspicuous in throne scenes from Palestine and Syria as it is in Egypt itself. Indeed, the object of Morenz's and Schubert's cooperative study is to trace the spreading of the royal lotus motif from Egypt all over the Old World. Among the Joseph Smith Papyrus is one very fine picture of the four Sons of Horus, the canopic figures, standing on an enormous lotus before the king on his throne.[218] Here the lotus represents all the regions of the earth brought under the sway of Egypt.[219]

Dick: So Abraham would have known all about the lotus in Palestine.

Mr. Jones: And so would everybody else. On scarabs of the First Intermediate period (to which Abraham is commonly assigned) we see the *non*-Egyptian Hathor, the type of the lady Qudshu, the hierodule and hostess to all the world, bearing the lotus as her special insignium.[220] Later she is represented standing on a lion with a bunch of lotuses in her hand;[221] she rides her lion when she visits Min (Amon) in Egypt too, and she wears the Hathor wig, but for all that, according to Stadelmann, she is still "a Near Eastern and *unegyptian*" figure.[222] But we also have the hospitable lotus-queen in Egypt: the cow-head of the lady Hathor is always seen emerging from a lotus stand of capital,[223] and people who brought lotuses to the party would describe them as gathered by the queen's own hand in her own garden.[224]

Jane: Some nerve!

Mr. Jones: Not at all—just giving honor where honor was due. In the Temple of Seti I the king himself is greeted by a lady wearing a magnificent lotus crown who identifies herself as the hostess when she hails his majesty with "Welcome! Welcome!"[225] In putting their arms around the armless and defenseless stranger, the two lotus-lions of the East were, according to Professor Naville, simply performing the office of the Lady, "the Protectress."[226] I think it is significant that we find the same sort of lotus-hostess in archaic Greece as well as in Palestine: "It was said of the lotus-crowned goddess of the Corinthian mysteries. . . . Her service is perfect freedom, and, indeed, her habit [was] . . . always to grant or withhold her favors according as her guests . . . came to her with exactly the right gifts in their hands—gifts of their own choice, not of her dictation."[227] Thus Robert Graves reports, and we can guess what gift would most please "the lotus-crowned goddess"! As a token of admission, the lotus is a sort of certificate, without which no one is admitted to "the region of truth."[228]

Dick: I suppose that everything you have said has some sort of reference to Abraham, but it would sure help if you would sort of pull things together for us.

Mr. Jones: I'll try, but we still have nothing to work with but a lot of loose ends, or rather "an inextricable tangle" (*ein verworrener Knauel*), as Professor Morenz puts it.[229] And Dr. Anthes has concluded that such fundamental questions as whether the Primal Lotus was a prehistoric idea, whether it originated with Nefertem, how it was related to the sun, in what form the sun originally emerged from the lotus, etc., are "insoluble."[230] But still the very richness and variety of Egyptian lotus symbolism gives us hope—since we are not closing but opening doors. We must realize, as Morenz reminds us, that nothing expresses more completely than the lotus "the astonishingly extensive possibility of association of ideas which the Egyptian possessed."[231] So nothing could be more rash or foolish than to insist that a lotus in a particular picture cannot possibly be one thing because it happens to symbolize something else.

Now of one thing there is no doubt at all, and that is that the lotus is the symbol of the land of Egypt, in particular Lower Egypt, where Abraham was visiting. Also, the lotus is the embodiment of Pharaoh as the ruling power of Egypt, a beneficent and hospitable power. Characteristic of the

lotus is that it is most at home in situations of hospitality, where it represents both guest and host. In both capacities it can represent individuals, including foreigners in Egypt—a wall painting from an 18th Dynasty tomb shows a Syrian bringing a magnificent lotus offering to Pharaoh, just as any good Egyptian would.[232] According to Joseph Smith, the lotus in Figure 10 represents *two* entities and specifices their *relationship:* It is "Abraham in Egypt," Abraham as guest, and Egypt as host. We can refine the image by bringing in a good deal of interesting and relevant data—the special function of the lotus in protecting strangers, the lotus as the stamp of official protection and safe conduct (a sort of visa, as it were), the lotus as the mark of the frontier control station through which Abraham would have to pass (that customs house is the scene of an important Abraham legend), the oddity of the lotus in this particular scene.

Dick: Odd is right. The welcome guest is being murdered.

Mr. Jones: All the more welcome for that. Remember, it was considered the highest honor to substitute for the Pharaoh in any operation. Incidentally, the little spouted jug on the tall stand is, according to S. Schott, an ointment jar for the use of honored guests.[233] You must admit this is a strange place to find one, and I can't think of a better explanation than the one given. But along with all the details, there is a broader symbolism to the lotus that I think would have been widely recognized almost anywhere in the ancient world; it is the subject of Morenz's and Schubert's fascinating little book—the wandering of the lotus. Those two scholars have combined their formidable specialties to show how the lotus symbol spread from Egypt throughout the Old World. In one important context the lotus marks the trail of the righteous man, the messenger of truth, bearing his light into dark and dangerous places: the lotus was identified with Hercules as the wandering benefactor of mankind, the perennial stranger and guest;[234] it sprang up in the footsteps of the Bodhisattva when he went forth to bring light into a benighted world;[235] the "God of Wisdom" held the lotus in his hand as he rode on his lion into China to take the shining truth to the ends of the earth.[235]

Jane: Lotus and lion again!

Mr. Jones: Which is certainly a broad hint as to the Egyptian origin of the business. But let me ask you, who is the archtype of the righteous man, the bearer of revelation and preacher of righteousness, the courageous stranger in alien and hostile countries and courts? Who but Abraham the Wanderer? In the very early Judaeo-Christian *Hymns of Thomas* the righteous man in the world is compared with a king's son spending a dangerous sojourn in "the Land of Egypt," following the ancient and established prototype of "Abraham in Egypt." Abraham is qualified if anyone is for that distinguished company of wandering inspired teachers whose symbol is the lotus, and so I don't know just how surprised we should be to find a nineteenth-century prophet designating the lotus as the symbol of "Abraham in Egypt."

Dick: Here are some more fancy abstractions—

Facsimile No. 1, Figure 11. Designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians.

Mr. Jones: How could anyone possibly make it clearer that this is supposed to be not a picture but a representation, with a meaning ascribed arbitrarily and culturally? Long ago Deveria condemned Joseph Smith for giving any interpretation at all to the pillars, which he calls a "characteristic ornament in Egyptian art, having no known significance."[236]

Dick: "Nothing at all; yet all that is I see."

Jane: Hamlet.

Dick: No, Gertrude. When will they learn?

Mr. Jones: If we want to know whether Professor Deveria really saw everything, we've got to do a little seeing ourselves. Let's find out how this particular ornament is used by the Egyptians.

Dick: What an ornament!

Mr. Jones: I'm afraid the successive engravers of Facsimile No. 1 have done us all a disservice by turning the "gates of heaven" into a meaningless and untidy jumble of verticle lines arbitrarily and irregularly connected by crude horizontal strokes. But the original papyrus is a different story: it shows us ten clearly drawn gates or a series of pylons. If we are looking for parallels, we don't have to go far—Egyptian art is full of them. The characteristic of the earliest royal tombs is the decoration of their outer surfaces with what is called the "palace facade" style of recessed panelling—a long line of imitation doors flanked by square pillars. The structure is abundantly illustrated on the earliest seals, showing the elaborate palace-gate or "*serekh*" design.[237]

Jane: What's a *serekh?*

Mr. Jones: The picture of the entrance to a tomb or palace—a rectangular door flanked by massive supports sometimes extended into towers on each side, usually with a big hawk perched right above the gate between the pillars. H. Balcz has collected over a dozen different types for comparison; to him the structure suggests a fortress —"*Wehrbau.*"[238] But he has no doubt that the central panel is always a door.[239] The label *sbht-tawi,* "Gate of the Two Lands," shows that the door was identified with the palace gate, though high officials were sometimes allowed by special courtesy to employ the motif in their own tombs.[240] The same design was employed in the tomb as in the palace, especially in the earliest dynasties, and Balcz maintains that the false door of an Old Kingdom tomb was really a niche "to which the significance of a passage for the dead was attributed."[241] The earliest steles, which were certainly not houses, also have the same false door and panel design,[242] which is also repeated on the sides of wooden coffins, where we find the same vertical lines with empty spaces in between, designated by the experts as "pillars" with "false doors" between them.[243] And the same motif is used to decorate the sides of boxes and chests designed to hold any precious objects.[244]

Dick: Is the idea always the same?

Mr. Jones: We cannot say until we know what the idea was. Professor Balcz reaches the sensible conclusion that the false door on funerary objects must represent "a passage for the dead."[245] But a much later study concludes that we still do not understand the undoubtedly religious significance of "such a curious architectural phenomenon."[246] While some maintained that the peculiar structure of the palace-facade style was the result of building in brick, others held that the design was imported into both Egypt and Mesopotamia from northern Syria, where they built in wood.[247] And while some suggested that all the vertical rills were for drainage, others pointed out that there was no need for drainage in Upper Egypt, and that the pylons and

The Prophet's identification of Figure 11 as "pillars of heaven" is fortified by Dr. Nibley

pillars must therefore have a special significance.[248] This is indicated by the fact that in Mesopotamia this particular building style, which closely resembles the Egyptian structures of the Thinite and Predynastic periods, is employed *only* in temples.[249] Surveying the phenomenon throughout the whole ancient East, Stuart Piggott writes: "An essential part of the temple decor was an elaborate system of niches and reveals which appears to have been a mark of religious as opposed to secular architecture."[250] In Egypt whether the false door of the palace facade is "the gate of the house of the dead," as Balcz calls it, or the door of the divine residence, as Borchardt called it, it is always a passageway into another world, a sacred ceremonial gate of heaven or the underworld.[251]

Dick: And what about the pillars?

Mr. Jones: They make the gates, of course. The Egyptians, like other people, talk of the *four* pillars of heaven;[252] but also of *one* world pillar, like the ancient German Irminsul,[253] and of two, as in an inscription from the Temple of Hathor at Philae that says, ". . . even as the heaven is fixed upon its two pillars. . . ."[254] That is, there is no fixed number for the pillars of heaven—sometimes the four are increased to many more.[255] Indeed, the ceiling of an Egyptian temple represents the sky, and the columns supporting it, no matter how many, stand for the pillars of heaven.[256] Here the coffin of Prince Min-Khaf of the 4th Dynasty has pillars of heaven all around it; on each side there are "eight vertical columns on the panels that frame the seven false doors"; in this as in a coffin from a neighboring tomb, the number of gates seems to be determined by the space at the artist's disposal.[257] If I were to choose a significant number for the gates, I think I would pick some multiple of five.

Dick: Why of five?

Mr. Jones: Well, in the coffin of Prince Min-Khaf there are 20 gates or niches; here in a lion-couch scene from Abydos there are five *serekh* gates under the couch;[258] and again in our old familiar tomb of Seti I we see the god Shu holding five such gates between the arms of his *Ka.*[259] In another lion-couch scene, from the tomb of Puyemre, are ten such gates, and also a chest on a lion-couch under which are nine or ten "gates."[260] Here in a later scene are three *serekh* patterns supported by 15 such gates.[261] All multiples of five, you see.

Dick: That may be all right for the later period. But in the good old days when recessed paneling was in its glory, there was a distant preference for multiples of 12 gates—a cosmic number that strongly supports the heavenly nature of the pylons.

Mr. Jones (miffed): What makes you say that?

Dick: I bought Professor Emery's paperback on Archaic Egypt at the entrance of the museum, and I too have been counting doors or windows. Of the 18 archaic tombs depicted in the book, nine have 24 niches each and one has 12,[262] and one and possibly another has six.[262]

Mr. Jones: And what about the others?

Dick: Some of them are multiples of ten, I'll admit. One has ten doors, if you count the half-doors, and there are two with 30 panels and one with 40.[263] Interestingly enough, of all the tombs there are only two that do not have pylons that are multiples of 10 or 12, and they have 38 and 22 doors.[264]

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

[119a]M. Burchardt, *Die altkanaanaeischen Fremdwoerter u. Eigennamen un Aegyptischen* (Leipzig, 1909f), II, pp. 71, 73, 32; III, 209c.

[120]Egyptian and Semitic names for Lebanon are discussed by S. Ronzevalle, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 17 (1917), pp. 261-64.

[121]B. Beer, *Leben Abraham's*, p. 81.

[122]Num. 33:20f, Josh. 10:29-32, 39; 12:15; 21:13; 2 Kings 8:22; 23:31; Jer. 52:1, etc.

[123]Exod. 6:17; 1 Chron. 6:20, etc.

[124]H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 71 (1935), p. 155.

[125]H. Brugsch, *Geographie der Nachbarländer Aegyptens* (Leipzig, 1858), pp. 90-91.

[126]Honigmann, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realenzyklopaedie*, 13:1:150f.

[127]A. Epstein, in *Rev. Etudes Juives*, Vol. 24 (1892), p. 96; Gen. 10:13; 1 Chron. 1:11. Honigmann, *loc. cit.*, and Lane's *Arabic Dictionary.*

[128]B. Couroyer, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 33 (1964), pp. 443ff.

[129]*Ibid.*, p. 448.

[129a]Burchardt, *op. cit.*, Nos. 518, 925.

[129b]R. Clements, *Abraham and David* (London: Scm Press, 1967), p. 24.

[130]R. Stadelmann, *Syrische-Palaestinensische Gottheiten in Aegypten*, pp. 53, 62.

[131]*Ibid.*, p. 55; the whole problem is discussed, pp. 52-63.

[132]*Ibid.*, p. 15.

[133a]Ranke, *op. cit.*, I, 444, Nos. 4, 5.

[133]In the broadest sense, the "Asiatics" of the north began already in Lower Egypt and included the islands of the sea, S. Schott, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 95, pp. 58f.

[134]Collating the texts in the original English, W. L. Whipple, *Textual Changes in the Book of Abraham* (BYU, M.A. Thesis, 1959), made the sensational discovery that we find both Elkkener and Elkenah, Koash and Korash, Potipher and Potiphar, Abram and Abraham, Zeptah and Egyptus, Egyptes and Egyptus, Nahor and Nehor, Jurshon and Jershon, Thummim and Thummin. There is no reason for doubting that all these forms were used anciently.

[135]J. Leibovitch, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 48 (1948), pp. 435-44.

[136]2 Chron. 21:16 has "the Arabians that were near the Ethiopians" invading Judea. The problem is treated in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, S. V. Cush.

[137]A. B. Kamal, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 24 (1902), p. 23.

[138]*Ibid.*, p. 24.

[139]*Ibid.*, p. 20.

[140]Abr. 1:9; see *Improvement Era*, March 1969, pp. 82-84.

[141]W. Bacher, in *Rev. Etudes Juives*, Vol. 55 (1908), pp. 251-63.

[142]According to a saying attributed to Jesus, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, 19: 584f (No. 195 of the early Arabic Logia).

[143]H. Schützinger, *Ursprung der Abraham-Nimrod Legenden*, p. 139.

[144]G. Maspero, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 2, pp. 367, 369.

[145]G. Posener, in *Goettinger Nachrichten*, 1965, No. 2, p. 74.

[146]K. Sethe, *Gesch. der Eimbalsamierung* (Berlin Acad., Sitzber., 1934), p. 217.

[147]E. A. W. Budge, *Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the Br. Mus.* (1923), p. 20.

[148]A. Gardiner, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 24 (1938), pp. 167-69.

[149]C. De Wit, in *Chron. d'Egypte*, 32:31; E. A. W. Budge, *Papyrus of Ani*, I, 240. At night Re joins the 4 canopics to tow the sunboat; by day the ram-headed god joins them for the same purpose, S. Hassam, *Solar Boats of Khafra* (Cairo: Govt. Press, 1946), p. 117, fig. 38b.

[150]Since *ba* means "ram" as well as "soul," the ram was the normal expression of the idea, De Wit, *op. cit.*, p. 30. G. Thausing, in *Mitt. d. Dt. Inst. zu Kairo*, Vol. 8 (1939), pp. 54, 60, identifies the 4 Children of Horus with the 4 stars of the Dipper, the 4 glorious *Akhw* spirits, the 4 guardian apes of the Underworld, the 4 primal elements, and the 4 divine couples that make up the *nine.*

[151]R. Graves, *The White Goddess* (Vintage Books, 1958), p. 457.

[152]A. Piankoff, *Shrines of Tutankhamon*, pp. 41, 21.

[153]Pyramid Texts, No. 576: 1510, 1515. One came to Heliopolis "to be purified, resurrected, deified, to behold the god face to face," G. Maspero, in *Bibl. Egyptol.*, Vol. 1, p. 378; cf. 370, and Coffin Text No. 124, 125: "I have come as your fourth . . . to see Tnm, the fifth of the stars of Sahu (Orion)"; Pyr. Text No. 264: "Tenen has summoned them, and each of the four gods . . . brings those summoned, to come and tell their names to Re and Horus," cf. P.T. No. 139.

[154]R. Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

[155]*Ibid.*, p. 26.

[156]*Ibid.*, p. 146.

[157]*Ibid.*, p. 140.

[158]*New York Times*, Supplement, Dec. 29, 1912.

[159]P. Munro, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 95 (1968), p. 40.

[160]G. Jequier, in *Sphinx*, Vol. 13 (1910), p. 206.

[161]M. de Rochemonteix, in *Bibl. Egyptol.*, Vol. 3, pp. 177-78, and *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 3 (1881), p. 76.

[162]W. Kroenig, in *Mitt. d. Dt. Inst. Kairo*, Vol. 5 (1934) p. 151. E. Drioton, in *Chron. d' Egypte*, Vol. 10 (1934), pp. 202f, notes that lotus and papyrus are also confused in hieroglyphic. K. Appelt, in *Mitt. d. Dt. Inst. Kairo*, Vol. 1 (1930), pp. 153-57, gives a classification of Egyptian lotuses. Botanical identification is also treated by G. Benedite, in Acad. Inscr., *Mon. et Mem.*, Vol. 25 (1921-2), pp. 1-28, and M. Jacquemin, in *Melanges Maspero* (Vol. 66 of *Bibl. Egyptol.*), I, ii, 799ff. On the various esoteric symbols of the lotus, E. Naville, in *Rev. de l'Egypte Ancien*, Vol. 1 (1925), pp. 31-44, and Vol. 2 (1929), pp. 210-253; R. Lepsius and K. Sethe, *Denkmäler*, Vol. 2 (1904), pp. 74ff, and W. D. Spanton, in *Ancient Egypt*, 1917, pp. 1-20, and 1929, pp. 65-73, who treats botanical types and decorative uses.

[163]H. Senk, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 72 (1936), pp. 71-73, conceding that there *may* be hidden significance in various lotus designs. J. J. Clere, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 68 (1932), pp. 45f, and H. Schaefer, *Von aegyptischer Kunst*, pp. 21f

(from which we quote), both minimize the importance of symbolism, though the latter, p. 23, admits that the lotus is almost never used as "pure ornament." W. Kroenig, *op. cit.*, p. 154, suggests that since there is no decorative or logical explanation for the monopoly of lotus and papyrus, it must have a hidden meaning which escapes us.

[164]M. de Rochemonteix, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 6 (1885), p. 24.

[165]W. Kroenig, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

[166]I. E. S. Edwards, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 52 (1966), p. 182.

[167]L. Keimer, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 48 (1948), pp. 96f.

[168]K. Appelt, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

[169]L. Keimer, in *Rev. de l'Egypte Ancien*, Vol. 2 (1929), p. 248.

[170]H. Kees, *Der Goetterglaube im alten Aegypten*, p. 85.

[171]A. Grenfell, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 32, p. 130.

[172]So L. Keimer, in *Aegyptus*, Vol. 7 (1926), pp. 169f, 175f; K. Sethe, *Urgeschichte Aegyptens*, p. 165; J. Capart, in *Chron. d'Egypte*, Vol. 32 (1957), pp. 229-31, says the southern plant can be "a liliaceous plant, a palm, or sometimes a lotus."

[173]G. Maspero, in *Bibl. Egyptol.*, Vol. 28 (1921), pp. 61f; A. Moret, *Mysteres Egyptiens*, p. 166.

[174]S. Morenz and J. Schubert, *Der Gott auf der Blume* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1954), p. 13.

[175]R. Anthes, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 82 (1957), pp. 6, 1.

[176]H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 154; so also S. Morenz and J. Schubert, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

[177]W. D. Spanton, in *Ancient Egypt*, 1917, p. 8. The idea is depicted in endless friezes from the walls of temples, showing lotus-crowned goddesses with huge breasts and bellies moving among lotus and papyrus plants, e.g. *Mem. Miss. Fr.*, XI:i, Pl. xl.

[178]E. Naville, in *Rev. de l'Egypte Ancien*, Vol. 1 (1925), p. 33; Morenz and Schubert, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 46, noting the peculiarly water-repellent nature of the lotus, which keeps it miraculously free of mire and filth, p. 109.

[179]R. Anthes, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 80 (1955), p. 80.

[180]Cited by E. A. E. Reymond, in *Chron. d'Egypte*, Vol. 40 (1965), p. 62. See especially A. Moret, in *Journal Asiatique*, Ser. XI, Vol. 9 (1917), p. 502.

[181]Moret, *loc. cit.*; Morenz and Schubert, *op. cit.*, p. 106, see in the lotus the basic idea of "self-containment," "self-creation."

[182]Moret, *op. cit.*, pp. 507-8. It was said that the soul of Osiris hid in a lotus awaiting the resurrection, M. de Rochemonteix, *Bibl. Egyptol.*, Vol. 3, pp. 177f, and that Horus's two eyes were restored by becoming lotus-bulbs, A. Gardiner, *Chester Beatty Papyri in the British Museum*, Vol. 1 (Br. Mus., 1931), p. 21; cf. Senmut's Poem in *Kemi*, Vol. 12 (1952), p. 45. The oldest texts tell how Re by smelling the lotus is revived every morning, and so "the primeval beginning is reiterated," R. Anthes, in *Jnl. of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18 (1959), p. 176. The King made a lotus offering to the sun every morning in the temple of Heliopolis, Pyr. Texts, 264a-266b, cited by Anthes, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 80, pp. 81f.

[183]Anthes, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

[184]J. Capart, in *Chron. d'Egypte*, Vol. 32, pp. 229-31; G. Maspero, in *Bibl. Egyptol.*, Vol. 28 (1912), pp. 61f, following the botanist Goodyear.

[185]A. Moret, *op. cit.* (in note 180 above), p. 606; E. Chassinat, in *Mem., Inst. Arch. Fr.*, 16, Pl. xlvi.

[186]P. Munro, *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 95 (1968), p. 37.

[187]Pyr. Text No. 213:130a-134. "The King NN is on the nose of Great Power . . . he appears as Nefertem, the lotus-flower at the nose of Re. . . ." Pyr. Text No. 265/6, discussed by H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 78 (1942), p. 44.

[188]R. Anthes, *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 82, pp. 4-5.

[189]L. Borchardt, *Grabmal des Koenigs Sa-hu-Re*, Vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1913), Pl. 42, is a good example, though almost any throne picture will do, e.g. Lepsius, *Denkm.*, II, 136.

[190]An extremely common motif, J. Capart, *Chron. d'Eg.*, Vol. 32 (1957), pp. 228f; for a bibliography, W. D. Spanton, in *Ancient Egypt*, 1917, p. 13. The tied lotuses on the throne of Thothmes III even without human figures "may be something in connection with this king's Syrian victories," A. Grenfell, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 32, p. 133; cf. Borchardt, *op. cit.*, p. 46, Abb. 30 and Pl. 16.

[191]With the lotus, Hathor bestows the symbol of protection, G. Gayet, *Temple de Luxour*, Pl. xx; xxiii, Fig. 79; lviii. At Edfu the lotus-staff is presented to the queen with the words, "Protection and life-giving," *Miss. Arch. Fr., Mem.*, Vol. 30 (1943), Edfu, Pl. 445; Vol. 29, Pl. 334, where the king says the same in presenting a lotus to a god.

[192]E. Naville, in *Rev. de l'Eg. Anc.*, Vol. 1, p. 41.

[193]*Ibid.*, p. 44.

[194]Some have maintained that the power of the lotus lay in its smell, which counteracted the smell of death and decay and therefore demonstrated the power to overcome death, S. Morenz, discussed in *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, Vol. 48 (1953), p. 348. Kees, Morenz, Anthes, and others suggest that Nefertem began as a god of perfume, R. Anthes, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 80, pp. 81, 87. But as P. Munro notes, *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 95, p. 37, Nefertem is far more than a Duftgott. Other Egyptian flowers have far stronger scent than the lotus, and the normal opposition to strong odors was not the delicate fragrance of the lotus but the powerful influence of burning incense.

[195]A. Varille, in *Ann. Serv.*, Vol. 53 (1953), p. 94, Figs. 4, 5, 6; U. Schweitzer, *Loewe und Sphinx*, Taf. XV, Figs. 5, 6; R. T. R. Clark, *Myth and Symbol* (New York: Grove, 1960), pp. 66f, holds the lotus to be "the symbol for the final defeat of the powers of the Abyss."

[196]H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, pp. 508-10; Naville, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 36; H. Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 57 (1922), pp. 117f.

[197]V. Chapot, in *Melanges Maspero*, Vol. 2 (1934), pp. 225-31.

[198]Naville, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 39.

[199]R. Anthes, *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 82, p. 7, on the King as Nefertem at Heliopolis; cf. A. Piankoff, in *Egyptian Religion*, Vol. 1 (1933), pp. 100-2. The Sphinx of San is a mixture of the Egyptian and the Asiatic lions, P. Montet, *Le Drame d'Avaris*, p. 64. Shu also is "the King's good companion" and "the living lion who keeps (enemies) away, who wards off. . . ." K. Sethe, *Zur Sage vom Sonnenauge* (Leipzig, 1912), p. 25. Nefertem "confronts alien nations that they retreat . . . guarding Sopdu, the Lord of the Eastern Land," according to a hymn in H. Kees, *Aegyptisches Lesebuch*, p. 13.

[200]V. Chapot, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 231. The lotus-crowned lion is often represented attacking Asiatics from the rear, U. Schweitzer, *Loewe und Sphinx*, and A. Piankoff, in *Eg. Relig.*, Vol. 1, pp. 103-5.

[201]H. Kees, *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 57, pp. 92f.

[202]H. Kees, *Goetterglaube*, p. 90.

[203]*Ibid.*, pp. 117f.

[204]S. Hermann, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 91 (1964), p. 74.

[205]I. Levy, in *Rev. des Etudes Juives*, Vol. 51 (1906), pp. 38ff, discussing the Papyrus Anastasi VI, vi, 14.

[206]E. A. Speiser, in *Centennial Review*, Vol. 4 (1960), p. 218.

[207]P. Montet, *Le Drame d'Avaris*, p. 19.

[208]E. Naville, *op. cit.*, I, 40. The helpless armless dead are shown in the *Tomb of Puymere*, Vol. 2, Pl. xlvii; and in the Tomb of Rameses IX someone is bringing two lotuses to an armless spirit who has just arrived in the Lower World by ship and stands waiting helplessly, *Miss. Arch. Fr., Mem.*, Vol. 15, Pl. lxxii.

[209]S. Morenz and J. Schubert, *Der Gott auf der Blume*, pp. 36f.

[210]S. Schott, *Das Schöne Fest im Wüstenthal*, p. 116.

[211]*Ibid.*, p. 117.

[212]G. Jequier, *La Pyramide d'Aba* (Cairo, 1935), Pl. 18; Pl. XXII, No. 16. There is a formula "for receiving bouquets that were raised in the Temple of Amon at Karnak." Schott, *op. cit.*, p. 119, and bouquets "*for* Amon and Hathor, the Lord of the Desert," *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[213]Schott, *op. cit.*, pp. 56f, 62.

[214]P. Virey, in *Miss. Arch. Fr., Mem.*, Vol. 2 (1891), p. 2. Such a flower was in fact called 'ankh and was a symbol of life, according to Schott, p. 55.

[215]We have treated the concept at length in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 40 (1945), pp. 515-43.

[216]S. Schott, *op. cit.*, pp. 56f. In the temple of Seti I the royal lion is seen with a hawk on its head, while on the hawk's head is an enormous lotus—the king is a lotus too. *Ibid.*, pp. 20f.

[217]Schott, p. 115.

[218]*The Improvement Era*, Vol. 71 (February 1968), p. 40B.

[219]J. Duemmichen, *Geographische Inschriften altaegyptischer Denkmäler*, III Abt., *Denderah* (Leipzig, 1885), Taf. i, showing all the nomes of Egypt, plus the 4 cardinal points, plus the symbols of the Two Lands, all mounted on a monster lotus. Cf. *Mem., Miss. Arch. Fr.*, Vol. 4 (1882-84), Pl. 38. The lotus-design is common in the East representing a geographical map of "the earth and its parts," Morenz and Schubert, *op. cit.*, p. 127, as well as a map of the whole cosmos, *ibid.*, p. 104.

[220]R. Stadelmann, *Syrisch-Palaestinensische Gottheiten*, p. 15; on the lady as hostess, p. 150.

[221]*Ibid.*, p. 110.

[222]*Ibid.*, pp. 118-19. The Canaanitish Rashap is also accompanied by a parasol or lotus, p. 64.

[223]Morenz and Schubert, *Der Gott auf der Blume*, p. 34; M. de Rochemonteix, in *Bibl. Egyptol.*, Vol. 3, p. 172.

[224]S. Schott, *Das Schöne Fest im Wüstenthal*, p. 56.

[225]A. M. Calverly, *Temple of Sethos I*, Vol. 2, Pl. 29.

[226]E. Naville, in *Rev. de l'Eg. Anc.*, Vol. 1, p. 39.

[227]R. Grave, *The White Goddess*, p. 539.

[228]S. Schott, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

[229]Morenz and Schubert, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[230]R. Anthes, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 82 (1957), p. 6.

[231]Morenz and Schubert, p. 42.

[232]H. Schaefer, *Die Altaegyptischen Prunkgefässe* (Leipzig, 1903), p. 13, Abb. 26.

[233]S. Schott, *op. cit.*, pp. 67f.

[234]Morenz and Schubert, *op. cit.*, pp. 39f.

[235]*Ibid.*, pp. 134f.

[236]T. Deveria, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 4 (1896), p. 196.

[237]For lavish and easily available illustrations, see W. B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt* (Pelican Books, 1967). Cf. A. Rusch, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 58 (1923), pp. 101-24. B. J. Kemp, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 52 (1966), pp. 13-22.

[238]H. Balcz, in *Mitt. d. Dt. Inst., Kairo*, Vol. 1 (1930), pp. 60-61; on fortresses, 65ff.

[239]*Ibid.*, p. 69.

[240]L. Borchardt, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 36 (1898), p. 99; H. Grapow, in W. Wreszinski, *Atlas*, III, p. 136.

[241]Balcz, *op. cit.*, p. 69. Egyptian variations on the recessed-panelling theme are illustrated by A. Rusch, *loc. cit.*

[242]P. D. Scott-Moncreiff, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae* (Br. Mus., 1911), Pt. I.

[243]W. B. Emery, *op. cit.*, Plates 24a-b, 25b; E. Zippert, in *Archiv für Orientforschung*, Vol. 7 (1931), p. 299.

[244]W. Wreszinski, *Atlas*, I, 85b.

[245]Balcz, *op. cit.*, pp. 70ff.

[246]N. 243 *loc. cit.*

[247]Balcz, *loc. cit.*, and p. 86.

[248]M. Pillet, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 7 (1950), p. 139.

[249]Balcz, p. 86.

[250]S. Piggott, in *The Dawn of Civilization* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. 86.

[251]Balcz, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Borchardt, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

[252]See the note in H. Grapow, *Das 17. Kapitel des aeg. Totenbuches* (Berlin, 1912), p. 38, if you can find the work.

[253]Pharaoh is hailed as "the Atum of humanity . . . the pillar of heaven, the beam of earth," H. Kees in A. Bertholet, *Wörterbuch der Religionen*, X, 41. The central pillar is added to the four in the primitive sacred booth, R. Anthes, *Mitt. d. Dt. Or. Ges.*, Vol. 96 (1965), pp. 81, 84, cf. p. 11; H. Winlock, in A. C. Mace, *Tomb of Senebtisi* (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1916), p. 37.

[254]F. Daumas, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 95 (1968), p. 2.

[255]J. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara*, Vol. 1 (1926), Pl. 57: Nos. 1, 6, 7; Pl. III, pp. 15, 66.

[256]M. de Rochemonteix, in *Bibl. Egyptol.*, Vol. 3, p. 187.

[257]W. Stevenson-Smith, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 19 (1933), pp. 150ff; Pl. xxi-xxiv.

[258]W. F. Petrie, *Abydos*, Pt. I, Pl. lxxii.

[259]A. M. Calverly, *Tomb of Sethos I*, Vol. 2, Pl. 29.

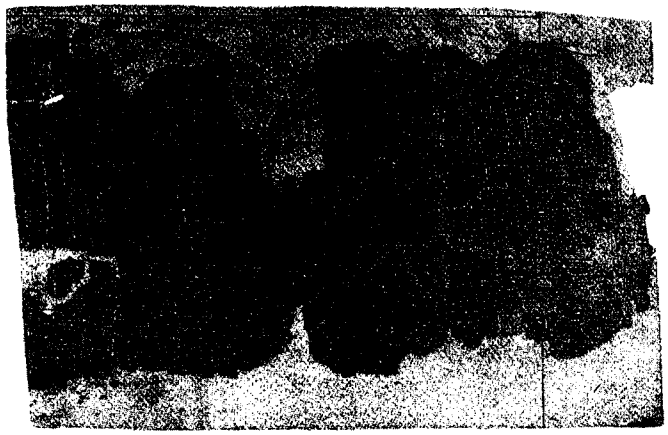
[260]N. de G. Davis, *The Tomb of Puymere*, Vol. 2, Pl. xlvii.

[261]*Ibid.*, Pl. lx.

[262]W. B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt*; the 24-niche tombs are on pages 55, 64, 66, 83, 132, 136, Pl. 24b and p. 146; the tomb on p. 89 has one side un-niched: if the pattern were finished here it would give 24 niches. The 12-panel tomb is on p. 137; the 6-panel on p. 148, though one wall is not niched. The coffin in Plates 24a and 25b has six panels if one does not count the half-doors.

[263]Ten panels in Pl. 24a, 25b; 30 on pp. 72 and 141; 40 on p. 77.

[264]*Ibid.*, pp. 48 and 146 respectively. ○



Facsimile No. 1, by the Figures

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

●*Mr. Jones:* They wouldn't be good Egyptians if they didn't break the rule sometimes, but the rule is there, all right. In the Joseph Smith Papyrus No. 1, ten doors are clearly drawn. So everything is in order. But are these the pillars of heaven? Dr. Mercer scoffed at the idea when he wrote, "Figure 11 represents rather the pillars of earth than 'the pillars of heaven.' "[265] But where, I ask you, do the Egyptians speak of "the pillars of earth"?

Dick: Didn't they have the *djed*-pillars?

Mr. Jones: If any Egyptian pillars could qualify as pillars of earth, the four-in-one *djed*-pillar, as the symbol of enduring solidity, would be it—it has its place in the Osiris cult and the underworld, yet that would seem to be secondary, for Professor Bonnet is emphatic in his conclusion that the original and only function of the compound *djed* symbol is to denote the pillars of *heaven*.[266] Very recently W. Kornfeld has reexamined the *djed*-pillar and found it to be the prehistoric symbol of durability both of the temple itself and of the dynasty that erected it; as such it always has a cosmic, astral significance, and is to be identified with the pylons of the temple facade.[266a] Busiris is the city of the *djed*-pillars, which play a prominent role both in the coronation of the king and in the raising of Osiris from the dead; the "raising of the Djed-symbol" represents the establishing of the world-order, since the multiple-pillar symbol itself stands for the cosmic supports that extend from earth to heaven.[266b] Since Mercer's day the palace-facade and *serekh* design have come to be understood in a new light: it represents the gate by which the big Horus-hawk passes between earth and heaven,[267] by which the spirits pass between worlds above and below: "This communication," wrote Lacau, "was one of the great preoccupations of the Egyptian. The stele was the instrument of this communication."[268] In the first chapter of the Book of the Dead we stand before the gate of the underworld,[269] but who is the figure in the tomb of Seti I between the uplifted arms of whose *Ka*-crown are five of our gates? It is Shu, the god of the upper regions, and what he holds are the pylons of the heavens.[270] Their nature is clearly and unmistakably indicated on two portable shrines, depicted on the walls of the great temple of Amon at Karnak. One shows Rameses III as four men standing in a row supporting the symbol for heaven (*pt*) with upraised arms. The arrangement and attitude of the four portraits, in which the Pharaoh appears once as a priest and three times as king, show that he is meant to represent the four Sons of Horus supporting the sky; the figures all stand on a palace-facade design with the familiar row of pylons.

Jane: How many gates are there?

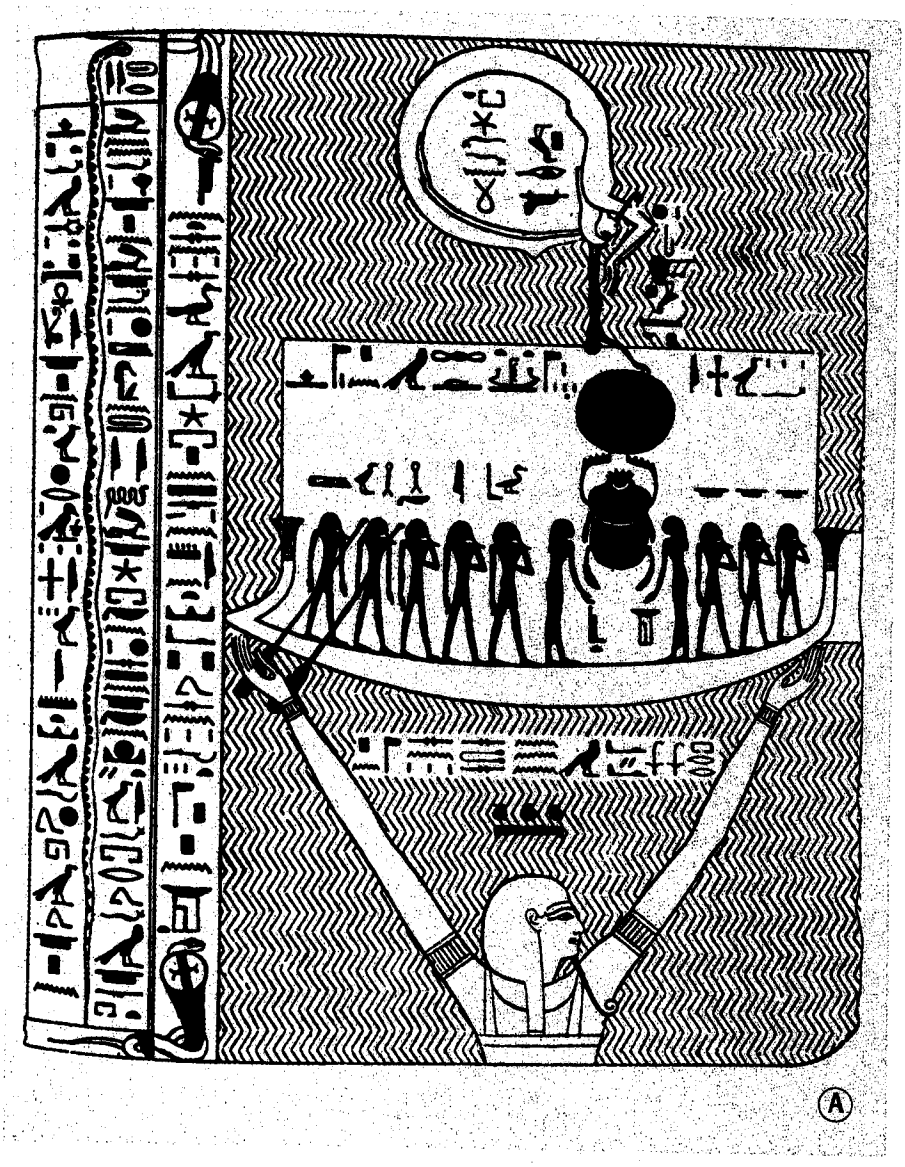
Mr. Jones: Just as many as the artist has room for. When he reaches the end of his space he does not hesitate to cut one of the gates neatly in two, making 16½ in all.[271] In the other picture a later Pharaoh appears as three kings—the priest is missing this time—supporting the heaven-symbol in the identical manner of Rameses, only this time the *pt*-sign is adorned with stars and the king himself is a heavenly being, "beloved of Amon-Re," as the inscription says, "endowed with life like Re." The three kings here stand on a row of nine pylons.[272] In our 24-niche archaic tombs, incidentally, there were always nine niches on a side with three at either end, so this probably harks back to the ancient form, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that the row of gates is supposed to be supporting the heavens. In many gate-and-pillar designs the top rim is decorated with stars, showing that the pillars are supporting the heavens.[273]

Dick: You say that the Egyptians don't talk about the pillars of earth, as far as you know. Do they ever talk about the pillars of heaven?

Mr. Jones: Indeed they do, and they leave us in no doubt as to what they refer to. An inscription in the temple of Amenophis III at Luxor tells how the temple's "pylons reach to heaven, joining themselves with the stars." This is "a stereotyped expression,"[274] and here is another: "Its pylons reach to heaven like the four pillars of heaven. . . ." Also the tall cedar flagpoles that flanked the pylons were said to reach the stars.[275] Such expressions make it perfectly clear that the temple pylons, going back to the old palace facade, were, in the words of the Book of Abraham, "designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians." Another feature of the palace facade was the "window of apparition."

Jane: What was that?

Mr. Jones: A ceremonial window-and-balcony arrangement to provide a theatrical appearance for the Pharaoh and the royal family. The window was a sort of elevated stage above the great gate; there the king would appear to his worshipful subjects in the court below, to cast down golden gifts among them in the manner of the beneficent



Concerning Facsimile 1, Figure 12, "Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify *Shaumau*, to be high, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word *Shaumahyeem*." While "Shaumahyeem" is given as a Hebrew word, no indication is given of the origin of "Raukeeyang" and "Shaumau"—neither is put forth as Egyptian, and it needs no demonstration to show that both of them, written with meticulous care to indicate pronunciation, are meant to be Hebrew.

(A) Here the zigzag lines represent the expanse of the heavens. The inscription above the head of the deity with upraised arms tells us that it is Nu, supporting the Sun-bark as it passes over the heavenly sea. In Nu the primordial waters and "the firmament over our heads" were always identified by the Egyptians. In the careful and accurate drawing of the zigzag series, guidelines were obviously used, but not drawn in as they are in the small and hasty sketch of Facsimile 1.

(B) Here a series of five bands of zigzag lines is plainly meant to indicate the waters of life. Exactly such a series is represented in Figure 12.

(C) When the artist does not pay sufficient attention to the guidelines, the zigzags get out of line, as can be seen from the right end of this panel. Note also the line of doors or pylons below as in Facsimile 1, Figure 11, and the indication of human sacrifice in the beheaded figures.

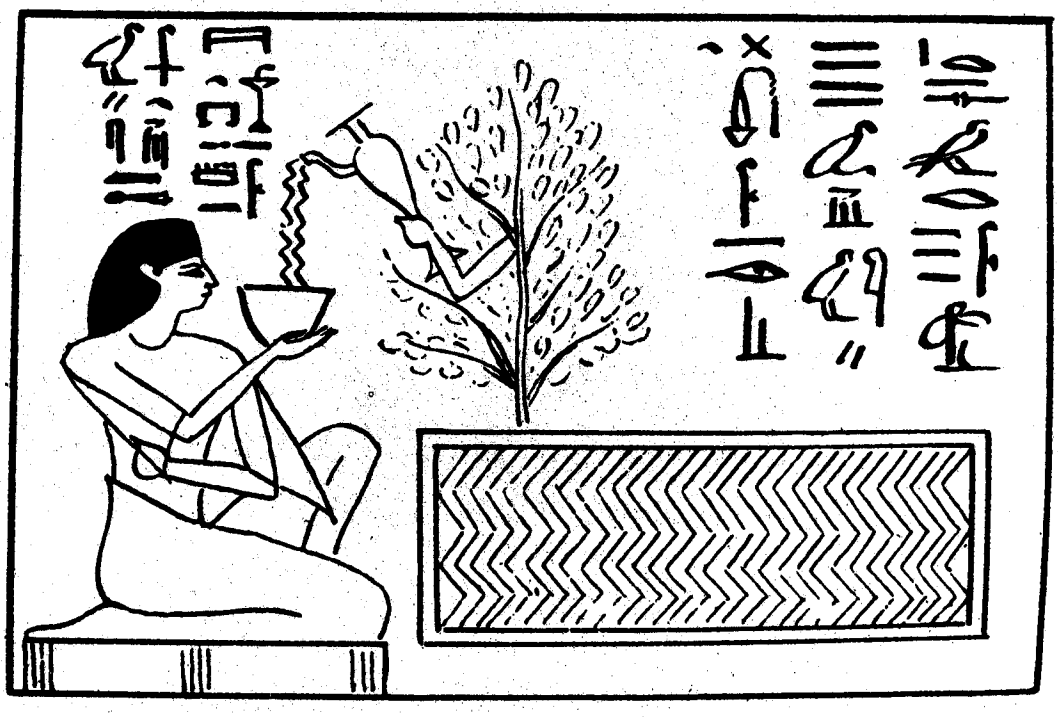
(D) Here we see a crocodile surrounded by zigzags, exactly as in Figure 12. This carving, from the Middle Kingdom, demonstrates both the antiquity of the motif and the difficulty that artists had with keeping their zigzags neat and regular without the aid of guidelines. That is why the scribe of Facsimile 1, Figure 12, not interested in producing a work of art, did not hesitate to draw in the horizontal lines to enable him to finish the zigzags in a hurry.

There is no doubt whatever that Figure 12 represents water and that the Egyptians always thought of the "expanse, or the firmament over our heads," or the high heavens to be a vast sea of water. The Egyptians thought of two such primordial seas, one above and one below the earth, meeting at the horizon. The concept is perhaps reflected in the word *Shaumahyeem*, which is a dual.

that is, at the gate of the temple [was] . . . conceived as the entrance of the Sun-king into his 'Heaven,' i.e. the temple," as W. Spiegelberg puts it.[278] Egyptian temples were so orientated that the sun actually rose directly between the pillars of the main pylon on a certain day, so that the pylons "are not a purely abstract free theological speculation," but a physical arrange-

have seen Egyptian inspiration in the two lotus-crowned pillars, Boaz and Jakin, that flanked the main entrance to Solomon's temple;[281] the latest study of these concludes that "the sun must have risen between the columns at the Equinoxes," and that they "were symbols of the cosmic pillars," being derived from the temple-pillows and obelisks of the Heliopolis.[281a] And here

as crowned with a line of what look like the classic double-axe symbols—the well-known thunder-axe found throughout the ancient world.[283] It has been suggested that they originated as two lotuses bound together to recall the uniting of a prehistoric kingdom in the Delta, but they were early confused with the well-known thunder emblem.[283] Also, the pylons are often



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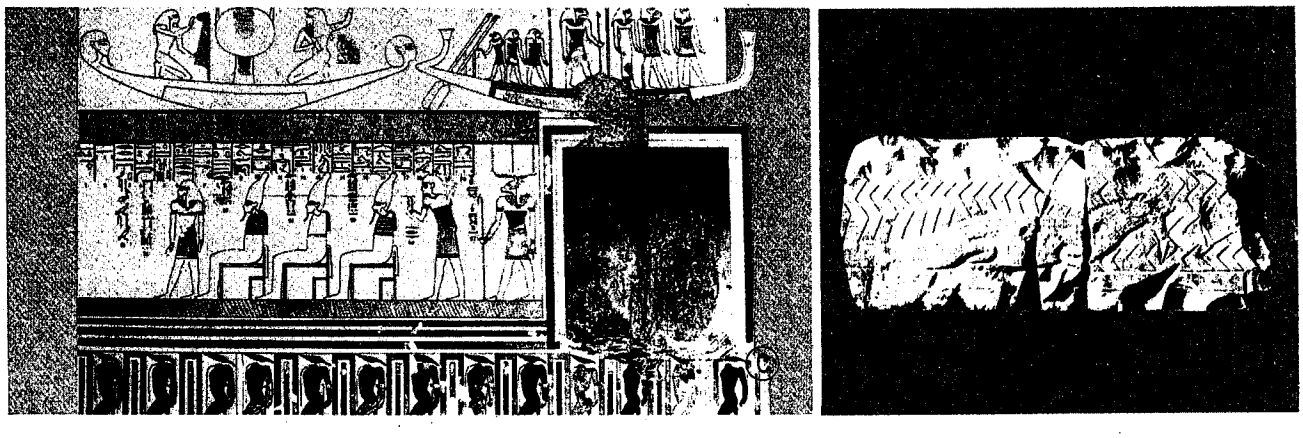

covered with zigzag designs which sometimes represent woven screens but are sometimes quite obviously water symbols, showing the life-giving waters descending from heaven.[284] We mustn't get too involved with this sort of symbolism—it would take us all over the world. But it is in order, I think, to point out that the line of pillars that we always associate with Greek temples were called the *kiona ourania*, "the pillars of heaven."[285] But I think we have said enough to make it clear that it is quite correct and proper to refer to the line of pylons in Papyrus No. 1 as "representing the pillars of heaven."

Jane: But if they are the pillars of heaven, then all those zigzaggy lines above them must be heaven!

Dick: It looks more like water, if you ask me.

Mr. Jones: And water is exactly what it is supposed to be. Any doubt about that is removed by a fragment from an XI Dynasty tomb which shows just such a crocodile as this one against just such a zigzag background as that shown here.[286] These horizontal rows of hatchings in alternating directions are a common Egyptian way of showing big waters. On the Cenotaph of Seti I they are used to depict the waters of the cosmic ocean.[287] But the most instructive parallels to our papyrus, I think, are found in the tomb of Rameses IX. Here in one scene we find above just such a series of pylons as our "pillars of heaven" just such another series of five long horizontal bands of hatched lines, the strokes moving in contrary directions to give a zigzag effect, and upon this mass of zigzags the heavenly bark is sailing. It is very neatly done, for this was being put on the wall of a great king's funeral chamber, the horizontal bands are perfectly straight, and the hatching-strokes perfectly even and regular—it was all done with rulers, though the guidelines today are invisible.[288] In a subsequent scene, however, the artist tried to do the job freehand, and though he was very skillful, he got tired before he finished and his horizontal zigzag strips got all out of line.[289] Now the artist of Papyrus No. 1 was not making a carefully supervised adornment for an everlasting royal memorial but merely dashing off a small free-hand

sketch, so to get his five lines of hatching straight he does not hesitate to draw in guide lines. The neat way would have been to use a ruler, but that would also have been the hard way, and there can be no doubt that the same waters are being represented in the papyrus as in the tomb.

Jane: What waters?

"There is nothing to exclude any of the interpretations given by Joseph Smith..."

Mr. Jones: Ah, that is just the point. Notice the ship that is sailing on the waters in the tomb-drawings; it is the heavenly solar bark, and the deity who kneels before the huge sun-disk in the center of the ship is Shu himself, the god not of the lower but of the upper spaces. These are the waters of Nw, the primordial heavens. You may recall that it was from these heavenly waters that the crocodile emerged in the manner of the sun-god Re. And these were, of course, matched by the waters of the underworld.

Dick: Why "of course"?

Mr. Jones: Because the sun spends half his time in the heavens above and half in the heavens below—he must negotiate both by ship.[280a] Everybody knows that water comes out of the ground from below and out of the heavens from above. The Egyptians devised some very sophisticated ways of describing these heavenly phenomena, of which Professor Anthes wrote, "If any simple Egyptian wanted to view these images as actual pictures of the heavens, he would necessarily become totally confused."[290] We can avoid confusion by sticking to one well-known and firmly established idea, namely, that the Egyptians started out with the common sense conception of heaven as "a flood, spreading its expanse of blue waters above the earth," the lady Nut and the Hathor cow, though quite "primitive," being "nothing else but personifications" of this "great Flood."[291] This remained the basic Egyptian theory of the firmament forever after—it was a vast expanse of waters, the very waters depicted in the tomb-drawings and in our identical design in the Joseph Smith papyrus. "The expanse or firmament over our heads" is exactly what these hatched horizontal strips were meant by the Egyptians to signify. The explanation adds a special, secondary meaning to the design, and explains that this is *not* the ordinary one: ". . . *but* in *this* case, in relation to *this* subject, the Egyptians *meant* it to signify Shaumau, to be high. . . ." That is, they wanted to emphasize in the special context one particular aspect of the heavens—their height and aloofness.

Dick: Would the Egyptians do that —just pick out certain things like that from all the rest?

Mr. Jones: They were up to that sort of thing all the time. Here is a votive statuary offering of Rameses II depicting a typically Egyptian combination of a solar disk, a child, a reed, and a falcon. Do you get the message?

Dick: You mean that each figure symbolizes something?

Mr. Jones: It goes farther than that —the composition actually spells out a name. A smart Egyptian would realize that the sun-disk was *Ra-*, the child *-mes-* (an Egyptian word for child), and the reed *-ses*.

Dick: Spelling Rameses, of course; but what's the hawk doing?

Mr. Jones: He signifies, according to Stadelmann, "that Rameses places himself under the protection of the Near Eastern god Horon," just as the kings of the 4th Dynasty (whose style is being imitated here) used to place themselves under Horus.[292] So here we are back in Canaan again, with the Egyptians playing charades. *There is nothing at all to exclude any of the interpretations given by Joseph Smith to the various figures in Papyrus I, and a great deal to substantiate them. I'm not claiming for a minute that any of this is* proven, *but I am claiming that the experts who condemned the Prophet without a hearing were not playing a very honest game.*

Jane: But why would anybody bring the pillars of heaven and the expanse of heaven into this particular Abraham episode?

Mr. Jones: Because what we have here is not merely the telling of a story, but the placing of that story in its proper context of timeless significance. What happens to Abraham and what he does is of enduring effect in the history of the whole human race, past, present, and future. He is one of those key figures in whom all the events of the past are brought into focus as by a burning-glass, and whose actions are in turn projected into the future as an ever-expanding image. What we see here is a moment of immeasurable significance in the history of the race: the messenger-bird is there to represent the Ruler of All; the crocodile is no less necessary to represent the ancient opposition in all things; the lion is (in early Jewish and Christian parlance) the relentless force that consumes all material things; the lotus is the symbol of the righteous man's pilgrimage through a hostile and dangerous world—everything has a meaning, and the pillars and expanse of heaven remove the whole story from this transient world to its proper relationship to the eternal plan of things. That's one way of looking at it.

FOOTNOTES

[265]S. Mercer, in *Utah Survey*, Vol. 1, p. 18.
[280]H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, pp. 150, 153.
[280a]W. Kornfeld, in *Zt. f. A. T. Wiss.*, Vol. 74, pp. 56f.
[267]J. Bennett, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 53, p. 166.
[268]P. Lacau, in *Rev. d'Egyptol.*, Vol. 19 (1960), pp. 42f.
[269]A. Piankoff, *Shrines of Tutankhamon*, pp. 93f.
[270]Above, n. 248.
[271]*Rameses III's Temple*, Pt. III (Univ. of Chicago, *Or. Inst. Publ.*, Vol. 74.
[272]*Ibid.*
[273]Thus E. Naville, *Temple of Deir el-Bahari*, Pt. I, and Pt. V, Pl. cxxxviii, cxlviii, cxlix, cl, etc.; W. Borchardt. *Das Grabmal des Koenings Sahure*, (Leipzig, 1913), Bd. II, Pl. 45; J. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqarah*, Vol. 1 (1926), Pl. 57.
[274]W. Spiegelberg, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 20 (1898), p. 45, n. xix (text p. 41, line 11).
[275]*Ibid.*, p. 46 (p. 42, line 22); T. Dombart, in *Egyptian Religion*, Vol. 1 (1933), p. 98. The poles as well as the pylons represented the supports of heaven, see H. Nibley, in *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1966), p. 604, for references.
[276]The most dramatic representation is the famous scene from the tomb of Eye, R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, III, 103-9.
[277]The design is discussed by U. Hoelscher, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 67 (1931), pp. 43-51.
[278]W. Spiegelberg, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 53 (1917), p. 101.
[279]*Ibid.*, pp. 99-101.
[280]F. Jeremiás, in Chantipie, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte* (1927), I, 618.
[281]G. Jequier, *Considerations sur les Religions Egyptiennes*, p. 92, cf. pp. 88f, relating the pylons to the Bull of Heaven.
[281a]Kornfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-53. Cf. Count De M. du Buisson, in *Rev. Hist. Religs.*, Vol. 169, pp. 44f, who discusses the pillars of heaven in the Near East in general, associating them especially with the heavenly lion, pp. 45-48.
[282]Y. Aharoni, in *Archaeology*, Vol. 18 (1965), p. 18.
[283]Illustrations may be found in note 273 above. The lotus origin of the design is apparent in W. B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, p. 178, Fig. 100, and p. 181, Fig. 103.
[284]Most strikingly illustrated in *The Tomb of Pepi II*, Pl. xxii, xxvii, 15, 17, 19ff, in G. Jequier, *Fouilles a Saqqarah* (Serv. Antiq., 1936), and 1933, p. 13. When the zigzags are drawn horizontally down the whole length of a pillar, the meaning is unmistakable, H. Bonnet, in *Bilderatlas zur Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1924), No. 137. With the 15 pylons in the *Tomb of Puymere*, Vol. 2, Pl. lx, goes the inscription: "Thy mother bestows the waters of heaven in her capacity of *ssht* of heaven." Cf. *Coffin Texts* (De Buck), I, 263-64.
[285]J. Trumpf, in *Hermes*, Vol. 86 (1958), pp. 131f.
[286]Ed. Naville, *The XIth Dyn. Temple at Deir el-Bahari* (Eg. Expl. Fund., 1907), Part I, Pl. xvi, D.
[287]H. Frankfort, *The Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos* (Eg. Expl. Soc., 1933), Vol. 2, Pl. xlix.
[288]R. Guilmont, in *Mem. Inst. Fr. Arch. Or.*, Vol. 15 (1907), Pl. 63, 65-67, 71-75.
[289]*Ibid.*, Pl. lxxv.
[280a]See above, Note 149.
[290]R. Anthes, in *Mitt. d. Dt. Or. Ges.*, 96: 11-12.
[291]H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, pp. 302f.
[292]R. Stadelmann, *Syrisch-Palestinensische Gottheiten*, p. 87.

Setting the Stage - The World of Abraham

Part 9:

Hard Times Come Again: One of the main objections of the higher critics to the patriarchal stories as history was that they were altogether too idyllic in their peaceful pastoral setting, which belonged to the bucolic poets rather than to the stern realities of life. But as Professor Albright now reminds us, the calm pastoral life of the Patriarchs has turned out to be a myth.[1] And the myth was invented by the scholars, for neither the Bible nor the Apocrypha gives it the least countenance: the world of Abraham that they describe was little short of an earthly hell. Furthermore, the peculiar nature of those terrible times as described in the written sources is in such close agreement with what is turning up in the excavations that it becomes possible to assign to Abraham a very real role and, possibly within a short time, a definite date, in history.

In reconstructing the world of Abraham, it is customary procedure first to determine upon an approximate date for the hero and then to look for things in the history of that period which fit into his career. But since the world of Abraham has already been described for us in the traditional sources, we are going to reverse the process and withhold any attempt at dating until we have the clearest possible picture of what was going on: then, given enough details and particulars, the dating should pretty well take care of itself. What justifies such a course is the remarkable clarity and consistency of the accounts of the Bible and the ancient commentators when they describe the physical world of Abraham, the state of society, Abraham's reactions to the challenges that met him, and the wonderful body of covenants and ordinances that he handed on to us. Let us consider each of these briefly in order.

Each of the great dispensations of the gospel has come in a time of world upheaval, when the waywardness of the human race has been matched by a climactic restlessness of the elements. When Adam was cast out of the Garden of Eden, he found himself, we are told, in "a sultry land of darkness" where he was lost and confused,[2] where temporary survival was a matter of toil and sweat amidst the all-conquering dust—"for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (See Gen. 3:17-19.) Worse still, Satan was on hand to add to his burdens, deride his efforts, and make fearful inroads into the integrity of his progeny. Who but our first parents could have sustained the appalling "birthshock" of sudden precipitation from one world to another, from the presence of God to thorns, thistles and dust?[3]

If we fancy Noah riding the sunny seas high, dry, and snug in the ark, we have not read the record. The long, hopeless struggle against entrenched mass resistance to his preaching, the deepening gloom and desperation of the years leading up to the final debacle, then the unleashed forces of nature—the family absolutely terrified, weeping and praying "because they were at the gates of death," as the ark was thrown about with the greatest violence by terrible winds and titanic seas.[4] Albright's suggestions that the Flood story goes back to "the tremendous floods which must have accompanied successive retreats of the glaciers . . ."[5] is supported by the tradition that the family suffered terribly because of the cold, and that Noah on the waters "coughed blood on account of the cold."[6] The Jaredites had only to pass through the tail end of the vast storm cycle of Noah's day, yet for 344 days they had to cope with "mountain waves" and winds that "did never cease to blow." Finally Noah went forth into a world of utter desolation, as Adam did, to build his altar, call upon God, and try to make a go of it all over again, only to see some of his progeny in short order prefer Satan to God and lose all the rewards that his toil and sufferings had put in their reach.

All of Moses' life was toil and danger, the real, intimate, ever-present danger such as only the Near East can sustain at a high level for indefinite periods of time. No one would ask to go through what Lehi did, or Jared and his brother, or Joseph Smith in his dispensation. And the one who suffered most of all was the Lord himself, "despised, rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." In short, the leaders of the great dispensations have truly earned their calling and their glory, paying a price that the rest of the human race could not pay even if they would. Preeminent among these was Abraham, whose life, as the Rabbis remind us, was an unbroken series of supremely difficult tests.[7] As in some frightful nightmare, the narrator ticks off the principal episodes: "But Sarah was barren; she had no child (Gen. 11:30). . . . Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house (12:1). . . . going on still toward the south. And there was a famine in the land (12:9-10) . . . . the Egyptians beheld the woman . . . and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house (12:14-15). . . . And Pharaoh . . . said, What is this that thou has done unto me? . . . and they sent him away (12:18, 20). . . . And the land was not able to bear them . . . and there was a strife (13:6-7). . . . [The kings came and made war.] And they took Lot . . . and his goods (14:1-2). . . . I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus (15:2). . . . lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him (15:12). . . . My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and . . . I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee (16:5). . . . Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? . . . Oh let not the Lord be angry (18:23, 30). . . . lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace (19:28). . . . and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took

Sarah (20:2). . . . they will slay me for my wife's sake (20:11). . . . And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar . . . and sent her away (21:14). . . . And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away (21:25). . . . Take now thy son, Thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him there for a burnt offering (22:2). . . . I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead (23:4)."

Abraham's life was filled with "an incredibly severe time of probation..."

Any one of these crises is enough to break any man's spirit. There are various standard lists of the classic "Ten Trials of Abraham," and while the later lists are confined to events mentioned in the Bible, the earlier ones significantly give a prominent place to Abraham's imprisonment in Mesopotamia and the attempt to sacrifice him.[8] But all are agreed that Abraham's career was an incredibly severe time of probation, and that the problems he had to face were forced upon him largely by the evil times in which he lived.

Signs in the Heavens: On the night Abraham was born, his father had a party to celebrate the event. As the guests were leaving the house very late at night, they were astonished at the sight of a great fireball that came from the east at great speed and broke into four parts as it passed overhead, the parts seeming to converge as it passed on and out of sight.[9] There have been times of intensified meteoric showers in history, and Abraham's time seems to have been one of them. G. Lanczkowski has pointed out significant resemblances between the Genesis account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's day and the famous Egyptian tale of the shipwrecked sailor, who was told by a great serpent how his whole race was wiped out by a huge flaming star that fell upon their island home.[10] Of this, G. Wainwright asks "whether the detail of the destruction of the serpents may not be the romanticized record of an actual event," in which the island, which he identifies with Zeberged or St. John off Ras Benas, was blasted "by the fall of a meteorite" or by an eruption . . . not later than the XII Dynasty."[11] Even Jewish tradition tells of a time when "great dragon-like monsters had taken over the earth," until God cut them off suddenly,[12] and also of a "planet" that comes out of Scorpio and "spews gall and a drop of unhealthy blood that fouls the waters of the earth."[13] To a great comet that appeared periodically in the north "and destroyed crops and kings in East and West," the Greeks gave the name of Typhon,[14] identifying him with the Canaanite Resheph, the sky-god who came from Palestine to Egypt as a fiery meteorite rushing through the heavens[15] and whose sacred symbol was an iron meteorite in his shrine.[16] Now Resheph is closely bound up with Abraham, and we are told that "the stars fought for Abraham" the night he marched against the marauding kings, and slew his enemies "by the almighty power of God."[17] The Egyptians were, according to Wainwright, convinced that "destructive falls of meteorites" were an affliction particularly reserved for the wicked.[18]

It has been suggested that the remarkable interest in stargazing that meets us in the Abraham traditions and is so vividly brought home in the Book of Abraham may be the normal result of a period of unusual celestial displays. Thus the Sefer ha-Yashar reports that it was by observing the planets that Abraham was able to calculate that the earth itself was behaving erratically on its axis.[19] This misbehavior, according to the same source, had been apparent ever since the days of the Flood and the Tower, since when "the world no longer stood firm, the order of the creation having been altered."[19] The people of Abraham's day believed that "the heaven shifted once every 1656 years," and they devised a means to prevent this by building a series of towers, of which the great Tower was the first; for their folly Abraham denounced them.[20] This is supposed to be the first time that the planets had been disturbed since the days of Adam: "Before the Fall the planets moved with greater speed and in shorter orbits than after."[21] In Abraham's day, Jupiter is said to have changed its orbit,[22] and even the fixed stars were troubled: "Because men had perverted the order of life, God altered the order of nature: Sirius became irregular and two stars were removed from their places."[23] Egyptian observers seem to say that Sirius was earlier a variable star, "ruling all the other stars," wrote Horapollo, "as it changes its brightness."[24] We have already seen that Abraham's contemporaries were singularly devoted to the star Shagreel —Sirius—which they associated with the sun, according to the Book of Abraham and other sources. The great mural discovered in 1929 at El-Ghassul, thought to be one of the "Cities of the Plain" of Abraham's day, is dominated by a huge and impressive star figure that has been identified with both the sun and Sirius and has been hailed as establishing "the meeting-point between the two great empires of Egypt and Chaldaea, where celestial phenomena played such an important role in the moral life of men."[25] We can avoid the enticing twilight zone of science fiction by confining our conclusions to the minimal speculation—which seems quite safe—that unusual displays in the heavens, whatever they were, belonged to the general disturbances of Abraham's restless world.

Far more conspicuous in the reports are seismic and volcanic disturbances. When "the Lord broke down the altar of Elkenah, and of the gods of the land, and utterly destroyed them . . ." (Abr. 1:20), it was no doubt in the same manner in which he dealt with the proud and wicked Nephites: ". . . that great city Moronihah have I covered with earth. . . . I did send down fire and destroy them. . . ." (3 Ne. 9:5, 11.) Just so in the days of Abraham he dealt with Sodom and Gomorrah, which, like the American cities, lay along one of the most active earthquake zones in the world. No minor catastrophe or the death of a single haughty priest would have caused "great mourning in Chaldea, and also in the court of Pharaoh." (Abr. 1:20.) The overthrow of the altar and the wide destruction are confirmed by the legends. Just as Abraham prayed on the altar, "there was a violent upheaval of the heavens and the earth and the mountains and all the creatures in them. . . ."[26] An older account, the Pseudo-Philo, says that "God sent a great earthquake, and the fire gushed forth of the furnace and brake out into flames and sparks of fire and consumed all them that stood around about . . . 83,500 of them. But upon Abraham there was not any least hurt by the burning of the fire."[27] The attempted sacrifice is sometimes placed at the site of the Tower, in northern Mesopotamia, where the rites are interrupted "by a vast burst of roaring flame," which destroys many people and saves Abraham, but does not bring the people to repentance.[28] The traditions consistently associate earthquakes with fires bursting from the earth, as at Sodom and Gomorrah,

which were overthrown while fire enveloped them from above and below (see Gen. 19:24-25): "the rivers of the region turned to bitumen, we are told, and the ground became sulphurous and burned, while the five cities on their elevations were all toppled over."[29] Earthquakes, fumeroles, fissures, rumblings, sulphurous smells, etc., all go together in the story, as they do in nature.[30] "For 52 years," according to a well-known tradition, "God warned the godless" by a series of preliminary rumblings and quakings; "he made the mountains to quake and tremble, but they hearkened not to the voice of admonition."[31] The last 25 years were particularly ominous, with the earth subsiding and quaking almost continually.[32] All through the life of Abraham, even before the fall of the Cities of the Plain, we meet with earthquakes.

The Abraham cycle includes the tradition that one-third of the Tower was swallowed up by the earth and one-third was burned by fire from heaven.[33] The Pearl of Great Price itself tells us that when Enoch led the people of God against their enemies, "the earth trembled, and the mountains fled . . . and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness, and all nations feared. . . ." (Moses 7:13.) The Jewish tradition is that in the days of "Enos," when men started to worship idols, the mountains on which men once farmed became broken up, rocky, and no longer arable.[34] The passage from the Book of Moses reads like an accurate description of the great Assam earthquake of 1955—including even the "roar of lions . . . out of the wilderness." When Abraham's grandfather Nahor was 70 and his people had become confirmed idol worshipers, there was another great earthquake, so violent that all the people fell down unconscious—but for all that they only increased in their wickedness.[35]

One of the best-known stories of the childhood of Abraham tells how the boy's father, out of patience with his son's lack of respect for the king's claim to divinity, took him to the palace for a personal interview with Majesty, hoping the boy would be properly impressed. Just as the father and son entered the throne room, there was a short and violent earthquake, which shook the throne and threw all the courtiers off their feet. This shattered their dignity, and the king, impressed by the coincidence of the tremor with the appearance of Abraham, cried, "Truly thy God, Abraham, is a great and mighty god, and he is the King of all Kings."[36] In another version it is Pharaoh's palace that is shaken by an earthquake while Abraham is visiting there.[37] Carrying things to extremes, the Apocalypse of Abraham reports that when as a youth he was one day leaving his father's house, "there was a great clap of thunder, fire fell from heaven and burned up Thera, his house and all that was in it for 40 ells around."[38] This seems to reflect the story of the death of Haran, who got involved with the idol worship of his father and suffered death as a substitute for Abraham while trying to extinguish supernatural fires.[39] One report has it that Nimrod sacrificed his victims in inextinguishable fires of petroleum, which Abraham nonetheless extinguished.[40] All in all, fire and earthquake go well together in the Abraham traditions: ". . . and the fiery furnace fell down, and Abraham was saved."[41] "In Abraham's day," says the Clementine Recognitions (1:32), "the world was afflicted by fire, which beginning at Sodom, threatened to destroy the entire world." After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham had to leave his beloved Mamre, because the entire region had been completely blighted by the catastrophe.[42] All plant life was destroyed, and seeds transplanted from Sodom would not grow anywhere.[43] No wonder Lot's daughters, hiding in a cave, thought they were the only surviving mortals.[44] "The entire landscape was desolation; there were almost no travellers; everything stopped."[45]

Archaeology confirms the general picture of disaster in Abraham's time. "Our archaeological discoveries in the Negeb," wrote Nelson Glueck, "are in harmony with the general historical background of the accounts in Genesis 12, 13 and 14." Southern Canaan right to Sinai is marked by many sites of permanent settlements and caravan stopping places, reminding one that "all the plain of Jordan . . . was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." (Gen. 13:10.) Then suddenly "all of these sites are destroyed at the end of the Abrahamitic period, and for the most part were not reoccupied ever again or not until at least 1000 years, and in most cases . . . not until 2000 years had elapsed."[46] In Ghassul, the only City of the Plain that has been located so far, "everything was ruined completely by an earthquake."[47] Otto Eissfeldt, one of the most sober and cautious of scholars, believes that the story of Sodom is "a very obscure and distorted memory of a real historical occurrence," noting that a great earthquake actually did take place at the southern end of the Dead Sea sometime in the second millennium B.C., and concluding that the best solution to the problems of the stories of Lot and Abraham in Genesis 19 is to regard them as real history.[48] While R. Graves and R. Patai observe that "the shallow basin south of the Lisan (the tongue of land that protrudes into the Dead Sea from the east) may once have been a plain encroached upon by salt water after severe earthquakes about 1900 B.C.," they would explain away the fire from heaven as a description of "the intense summer heat."[49] An easier explanation would be those fires which, according to seismologists, are always the main cause of destruction when cities suffer earthquake.

A century ago B. Beer listed a number of ancient sources reporting the rather sudden formation of the Dead Sea.[50] Yet until recently scholars have rejected the whole story as impossible. "Critical scholarship," writes F. Cornelius, "insists emphatically that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are purely fantasy"; yet it now appears that the Jordan Valley is a very active earthquake zone, and Cornelius calls attention to disturbances that afflicted the whole ancient world about the middle of the seventeenth century B.C., when "an enormous earthquake destroyed the Cretan palaces, Ugarit and Alalah VII. . . ."[51] "It is quite possible," he notes, "that the southern end of the Dead Sea, a plain which is only 4 to 6 metres under the level of the sea, was formed at the time of Sodom and Gomorrah." Though there is no lava in the area, "the ignition of earth gases among the tarpits (*Asphaltsee*) is virtually unavoidable in an earthquake," such as is described in Genesis 19.[51] A. Parrot speculates that "Sodom was destroyed perhaps by an earthquake accompanied by a sinking of the ground-level, which caused a moderate extension of the Dead Sea which could have submerged the cities."[52] He suggests that we take seriously the notoriously persistent place names of the desert, which still designate features of the region as "Mt. Sodom" (Djebel Usdum), Zoar, etc., remembering that St. Jerome, who lived in Palestine, reported that the latter village was actually swallowed up by an earthquake in his day.[52] The fate of Sodom and Gomorrah reminds us of the account in the Iliad XXI, 139-204, of how Hephaestus dried up the river Scamander and chased the Greeks out of the place, with a mighty flame.[53] The fact that earthquakes of appalling violence have occurred within that very area within the last few years is a reminder that the disasters described, if not the mythical beings, who personify their destructive wrath, can have been

quite real. That such disturbances reached a peak in Abraham's lifetime is implied by the tradition that after him and because of him the state of nature has remained more stable.[54]

Great natural disasters do not come singly. Earthquakes and volcanoes are regularly accompanied by great storms.

The world of Abraham—a world of "earthquakes, famine, and trouble"

Typhon was not only the flaming meteorite; he was also the bringer of great storms and disastrous flood, according to the Egyptians, while Horus and Osiris held back the waters and cleared the skies.[55] The three great floods of water, wind, and fire were assigned by the old desert sectaries to the times of Noah, Abraham, and Lot, respectively; a tradition kept alive in the Old Syrian Church has it that when the Great Wind destroyed the generation of the Tower, only Abraham was saved.[56] It is interesting that Abraham should be made the central figure of some of the old stories of the great winds, even the story of Ram and Rud, the righteous brothers whose language was not confounded at the Tower and who wandered back toward Eden, makes place for Abraham, for while Rud may be a Mandaean form of Jared, Ab-ram has been suggested for his brother.[57] What made it easy to confuse the two periods was the persistent report that Abraham did indeed have to cope with great winds and storms—but mostly hot winds. In the one hundredth year of his grandfather Nahor, "God opened the vessels of the Winds and the gate of the storms, and a great hurricane swept over the land, carrying away the idols and covering the settlements with sand-hills which remain to this day."[58] The poetic language is remarkably like that of Ether 2:24, ". . . for the winds have gone forth out of my mouth . . ." but the reality of the winds is attested in many old Egyptian and Babylonian sources, such as "The Lament for Ur" (Abraham's city?), in which we read of "the evil winds of Gibil the fire-god . . . the great heaven-storm with its floods, and the hot wind that darkens the sky," scatters the flocks, lays bare the fields, and depopulates the cities and the holy places, "like a field desolate after the harvest."[59] The Egyptians have left us a whole literature of lamentation vividly describing the dire circumstances that attend the hot desert winds and the low Niles at times when even the ultra-stable government of Egypt was shaken to pieces.[60] Even the Flood story of the Egyptians, according to Anthes, "goes back to far distant climatic changing—not speculative, but a real experience of the human race."[61] The best attested account of a super-storm, however, is found on the stele of the Pharaoh Amosis. In it, that monarch recounts in a dry, factual manner his tour of inspection of the disaster area: the face of the land was changed, a major valley was formed overnight, the land was in total darkness, so much so "that it was impossible to light a torch anywhere," and the most awesome aspect of the thing was the total silence that met the king wherever he went: "the population sat in total silence in the east and in the west, after God had shown his power."[62] Parallels to the Book of Mormon and Abraham 1:20 are no more striking than the genuinely religious interpretation that the pious Amasis puts on the event.

World Food Shortage: But far more conspicuous in the Abraham traditions than the raging storms and floods is the blasting heat and drought that bring famine to the scene. In the Book of Abraham, the prophet, even before the conflict with the people of Ur of the Chaldees, learns from the Lord that there is going to be a famine in the land; and after his escape from the altar the famine descends in earnest, blighting the whole land of Chaldea. (Abr. 1:29-30.) Leaving the country, Abraham, as his first act on crossing the border into Canaan, sacrifices to God, praying "that the famine might be turned away from my father's house, that they might not perish." (Abr. 2:17.) But even in Canaan the famine only got worse and worse, forcing the patriarch to go clear to Egypt for food, "for the famine became very grievous." (Abr. 2:21.) Of the ten great famines to afflict the world, according to Jewish tradition, the greatest was that in Abraham's time, it being the first worldwide famine.[63] Needless to say, hunger was one of the Ten Trials of Abraham.[64]

In the last days of Methuselah, when men began to apostatize and defile the earth and steal from one another, God purposely caused the harvests to fail.[65] This tradition is clearly recalled in the Pearl of Great Price, Moses 8:3-4. With the birth of Noah, things began to improve, and Noah himself sought to improve conditions by inventing plows, sickles, axes, and other agricultural machinery.[66] Next, when men reverted to evil "during the time of the scattering from the Tower, the time of God's wrath, it did not rain"—the great winds were dry winds.[67] In the "Lament for Ur" we are told how "the good storm, Nannær, is driven out of the land, and the people are scattered. . . . everywhere corpses lie withering in the sun; many die of hunger; the heat is unbearable; all government collapses, parents desert their children. . . ."[68] Kenan, the son of Enos, is said to have recorded the great famine that followed the preaching of his father.[69] Then in the days of Terah, just before the birth of Abraham, "Mastema [Satan] sent ravens and birds" and by the starving birds the people were robbed of their grain and fruit and "reduced . . . to destitution."[70]

So we find Abraham at the age of four (some say 15) driving the birds from the fields, but politely explaining the situation to them and reaching an amicable understanding as he does so.[71] All his life he is escaping from heat, drought, and hunger, or helping others to escape from them. Everywhere he goes he digs wells and plants trees (most of which perish);[72] he invents important improvements in agricultural machinery and methods,[73] and distributes food wherever he can.[74] He undertakes search-and-rescue missions for wanderers in the desert when "it was as hot as the day of judgment, God having released the fires of hell" on the earth,[75] and tangles with marauding bands "amidst dust and stubble."[76] But above all it is in a *ritual* capacity that Abraham is involved in the business of checking heat and drought. This may seem very strange until we realize that the running of the waters and the tempering of the blasting heat is the *Hauptmotiv* of the great yearly ritual assemblies of Abraham's day from one end to the other of the inhabited world.[77] The Book of Abraham is aware of the strange system in which human sacrifice and famine are closely connected. The ancients, though they knew perfectly well that it was the sun that dried up the earth, nevertheless attributed the most deadly heat and drought to the Dog-star, Sirius, who in Abraham's day was propitiated with "the thank-offering of a child," as "the god of Shagreel." (Abr. 1:10, 9.) It was when famine prevailed in spite of everything that Abraham's father decided not to make such an offering of his own son: ". . . a famine prevailed throughout all the land of Chaldea, and my father was sorely

tormented . . . and he repented of the evil which he had determined against me, to take away my life." (Abr. 1:30.) But Abraham's brother, Haran, died in the famine. (See Abr. 2:1.) We are not told why this was permitted while the rest of the family survived, but numerous legendary accounts have it that Haran died as an offering in the fire in the place of Abraham.[78]

As we have seen, Abraham's delivery from the altar in the Land of the Chaldees is often described as his escape from the fire or the furnace of Chaldaea, and we are told how at the moment he was cast from the altar into the flames, the latter became a lush and lovely garden.[79] In the most mysterious episode in all his career, we find Abraham driving off birds of prey from a sacrifice while he is overcome with a *tardema,* which some scholars interpret as sunstroke.[80] The first altar Abraham built, according to Abraham 2:17, was for an offering and prayer "that the famine might be turned away from my father's house. . . ." What is most significant for our study is that the "Busiris" type of sacrifice, of which our Facsimile No. I is an illustration, has the specific object of propitiating the heavens in time of drought and famine.[81]

A *World in Trouble*: The great insecurity of life accompanying major natural upheavals, when men can no longer count on the stability of the earth itself, is not without marked psychological effect. A basic teaching of the Talmud is that there is a definite correlation between the behavior of man and the behavior of nature. The universe is so organized, according to this, that when man revolts against God's plan of operations, to which all other creatures conform, he finds himself in the position of one going the wrong way on a freeway during rush hours: the very stars in their course fight against him. The blight of nature follows the wickedness of man in every age. Thus, when Adam fell, an angel cut down all the trees of the Garden but one; when Abel was murdered, all the vegetation in the world withered until Seth was born, when it bloomed again; but when men started worshiping idols in the time of Abraham's great-grandparents, "the sea rose along the whole eastern Mediterranean seaboard, flooding one-third of the land from Akho to Jaffa"; and when in the last days of Methuselah men again defiled the earth, God caused all the harvests to fail.[82] This same philosophy is strikingly expressed in the Book of Moses of the Pearl of Great Price, especially in the seventh chapter, where we even hear the earth itself, personified as "the mother of men," weeping for the wickedness of her children that have defiled her. (Moses 7:48.) It was because of wickedness among the people that the birds came to destroy their crops when Abraham was a child.[83] As it was in the days of Noah, so in the days of Abraham, a very old Christian writing explains, the world was ripe for destruction, according to the principle that whenever men fall away completely from God, destruction must follow.[84] Indeed, the people had sunk so low, says one very old source, "that God caused their civilization to degenerate back to the stage of cave-dwelling, and brought Abraham out of the land."[85]

After the Flood, men were haunted by an understandable feeling of insecurity, to overcome which they undertook tremendous engineering projects; among these was the famous tower, which was to be the symbol of man's ultimate mastery of nature, being so ingeniously designed and solidly constructed as to be absolutely safe against flood, fire, and earthquake. Within the walls of the tower was to be stored the sum total of man's knowledge of the physical universe, enabling him to meet and master any situation that might arise—"and it was all done out of fear of another flood!"[86] A great economic boom and commercial expansion enabled them to undertake "all kinds of engineering projects for controlling a dangerous nature, but the Lord fooled them by altering the course of nature and creation."[87] That was in Abraham's day: the Nimrod legends are full of marvelous gadgets and structures —super-buildings, mechanical thrones and altars, flying machines, and whatnot. It was a time of great scientific and technological progress—the Abraham stories, including the Book of Abraham, are unique in their concern for a *scientific* understanding of the cosmos, as against a purely religious and moral teaching—but toppling on the edge of destruction: those hot winds were breathing down everybody's neck.

In desperation, men turned to worshiping idols. Why idols, of all things, in a scientific age? It was "because in the whole world the people were without a teacher or a lawgiver or any one who could show them the way of truth. . . ."[88] Of course, there was Abraham, but they didn't want him, and precisely therein lay the convenience of having idols. Even when the boy Abraham argued with his father that the idols were blind, dumb, and helpless, as any one could see, and therefore could not possibly help others, Terah stuck to his idol business. The one salient, outstanding, universal, undeniable characteristic of all idols is their utterly passive helplessness; and if men persist in worshiping them, it cannot be in spite of that quality, but *because* of it. The sophisticated people of Abraham's time wanted the sanction of holy beings which at the same time were one hundred percent compliant with their own interests and desires, just as people today search out those scriptures which support their interests and push the rest aside. As Brigham Young pointed out time and again, the enlisting of systematic piety in the interest of private greed and ambition is the very essence of idolatry.[89] We can believe that the smart and cynical people of Abraham's day were sincere and devout in their idol worship—after all, Abraham's own father was willing to put him to death in support of the system.

Move On!: The Bible does not tell us why Abraham left Ur,[90] but the Book of Abraham (1:1-2) clearly implies that he found the general atmosphere of Mesopotamia unbearable. There are indications that he was swept along to the west with many others under the pressure of world unrest and political crisis: "When you see the Powers fighting against each other," says the Midrash, "look for the feet of the Messiah. The proof is that in the days of Abraham, because the great powers fought against each other, greatness came to Abraham."[91] Recently E. MacLaurin has suggested that "the advancing armies of the great Semitic ruler Hammurapi were probably the cause of departure from his native city of Abraham."[92] Others emphasize religious reasons: he was escaping from the idolatrous rites and ceremonies of the fathers, according to Judith (5:6-8); Thera left Ur because he hated the atmosphere of the place, says Josephus (*Ant.* I, 152); and when the family moved, Abraham was in serious trouble with both Chaldeans and Mesopotamians, and finally had to leave the country altogether (I, 157). He left for the west, according to the Pseudo-Philo (VII, 1-4), because his homeland had become completely degenerate, and because he had become disgusted with the tower building and the whole business.

The religious background of Abraham had been Babylonian, "Chaldean" rather than Egyptian, and that at a time, as F. Cornelius puts it, "when Babylonian religious degeneracy was flooding the Syrian regions."[93] It was to escape this spreading miasma, some have maintained, that Abraham fled to the purer air of the west.[94] While on a return visit to Haran after 15 years in Canaan, according to one story, Abraham was terribly shocked

by the general immorality of the old home town and yearned for the simpler frontier life of Canaan.[95] A Roman soldier with a keen eye and a sound head has left us a description of the hot, sultry, mosquito- and lion-ridden district of Harran, with its voluptuous, rich, carefree, immoral inhabitants, and though his account is as far removed from Abraham's day as it is from our own, still this particular corner of the "unchanging East" has indeed remained unchanged even down to our times, as A. Parrot has strikingly demonstrated.[96] The ancient Ur to the south has been described by its excavators in much the same terms as are the great contemporary cities of the Indus Valley by their discoverers: they were depressing places to live—huge, ugly, monotonous, geometrical, rich, sultry, joyless metropolises.

But Abraham's Canaan did not offer escape for long. The fabulous prosperity of the cities of the Plain turned them too into little Babylons.[97] The only "city of the Plain" yet discovered, El-Ghassul, displays astonishing luxury and sophistication, the style being Babylonian rather than Egyptian, and apparently "already in a state of decadence" just before its destruction by an earthquake.[98]

Some have explained Abraham's departure to the west simply as a test—he migrated because God told him to do so.[99] If it was a test, it was a severe one: Professor Albright has recently pointed out that the ancient pioneers, far from finding a Golden West awaiting them, were "ethno-political intruders in the West,"[100] and as such "were not well received but were closely watched and were usually driven away by the local inhabitants, who bitterly resented any attempt on the part of outsiders to move in and take over their fields or pastures."[101] Even in Canaan, moreover, the Babylonian threat followed the Patriarch, who was forced to leave Damascus, according to a very ancient source, because of military and political pressure from the East.[102] In Canaan, Abraham's nephew Lot, catching the spirit of the times, declared that he preferred suburban Sodom to the society of his uncle, saying, "I want neither Abraham nor his God!" and moving down into the crowded and prosperous plain.[103] ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

1 W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (University of London: The Athlone Press, 1968), pp. 56f.

2 M. J. bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, I, 333.

3 We have discussed the reality of such a "fall" in *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1966), pp. 600f, 628-29. The specific mention of thistles, thorns, and dust in Gen. 3:17-19 is a clear indication of drought conditions.

4 Bin Gorion, *S.d.J.*, I, 186.

5 Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 86. We discussed this in *The World of the Jaredites*.

6 Midrash Rabbah, XXXII, 11 (H. Freedman's trsl., I, 256).

7 F. Bohl, *Zeitalter Abrahams*, pp. 35f.

8 B. Beer, *Leben Abraham's* (Leipzig, 1859), pp. 190ff; J. Goldin, *Rabbi Nathan*, p. 132; T. Boehl, *loc. cit.*; the older list is in G. Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, Ch. 26, pp. 187-92.

9 *Sefer ha-Yashar* 18a-20b, and b. Gorion, *S.d.J.*, II, 26-28.

10 G. Lanczkowski, in *Ztsch. d. dt. Morgenlaendische Ges.*, Vol. 105 (1955), pp. 257f.

11 G. A. Wainwright, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 32 (1946), p. 285.

12 B. Gorin, *S.d.J.*, I, 12.

13 *Ibid.*, II, 310.

14 Hephaestius of Thebes, *Astrologia*, XXIV, in T. Hopfner, *Fontes Hist. Relig. Aegypt.*, p. 562.

15 G. Wainwright, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 18 (1932), p. 161.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 160, and in *Ztschr. f. Aeg. Sprache*, Vol. 71 (1935), p. 44.

17 Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

18 In *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 18, p. 166.

19 Bin Gorion, *S.d.J.*, II, 185.

20 *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, pp. 396f; R. Eisler, *Iesous Basileus* (Heidelberg, 1930), Vol. 2, p. 108.

21 Bin Gorion, I, 104.

22 ". . . shifting its position from west to east," whatever that means; *Ibid.*, II, 185.

23 *Ibid.*, I, 206.

24 Horapollo, *Hieroglyph.* I, 3. Eratosthenes says Sirius gets its name from the fact that its brightness changes (*dia ten phlogos kinesin . . .*), which can hardly refer to twinkling, since other stars twinkle just as much, T. Hopfner, *Fontes Hist. Relig. Aegypt.*, p. 760.

25 A. Mallon, in *Melanges Maspero*, I, i, 59.

26 Tha'labi, *Qissas al-Anbiyah* (Cairo, 1340 A.H.), p. 54.

27 *Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, VI, 17.

28 L. Cohn, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 10, p. 286.

29 Bin Gorion, *S.d.J.*, II, 238.

30 Cohn, *op. cit.*, pp. 288f.

31 L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 253.

32 Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 9, n. 84, for sources; also bin Gorion, II, 59; Sefer ha-Yashar, Ch. 22-31; B. Sanh. 109a; P. R. Eliezer, Ch. 24.

34 Bin Gorion, I, 154.

35 *The Cave of Treasures*, 25:17.

36 Bin Gorion, II, 45. In some legends God shakes and even overthrows the throne of Nimrod as a warning, without any mention of Abraham, H. Schuetzinger, *Ursprung der arab. Abraham-Nimrod Legende* (Bonn, 1961), p. 74.

37 G. Weil, *Biblische Legenden der Muselmaenner* (Frankfort, 1845), p. 59.

38 *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 8:7.

39 He was consumed by fire from heaven while Abraham was saved, Beer, pp. 16-17, cit. S. ha-Yashar; a fragment of Josephus says that he was killed trying to put out the flames that were destroying his father's idols and house, R. Eisler, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 523.

40 Schuetzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

41 Pseudo-Philo, VI, 18. The two pheonomena meet most dramatically in volcanic activity. The Egyptians have much to say about "the fire-island that emerged from the waters" at the time Egypt was first settled—perhaps a volcanic island emerging from the Mediterranean, G. Roeder, *Egyptian Religion*, Vol. I, p. 10.

42 Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

43 Bin Gorion, II, 238.

44 Gen. 19:30-31; bin Gorion, *S.d.J.*, II, 239f.

45 Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 44. Also at the attempted sacrifice of Abraham, fire burned all the birds and made all the surrounding region desolate, Tha'albi, *loc. cit.*

46 N. Glueck, in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 100 (1956), pp. 150f.

47 A. Mallon, in *Melanges Maspero*, I, i, 57.

48 O. Eissfeldt, in *Ex Oriente Lux*, Vol. 17 (1963), pp. 163-64.

49 R. Graves and R. Patai, *Hebrew Mythology*, p. 169.

50 Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

51 F. Cornelius, in *Ztsch. f. Alt Test. Wiss.*, Vol. 72 (1960), pp. 5-6.

52 A. Parrot, *Abraham et son Temps* (Paris, 1962), p. 105, n. 3.

53 Apollodorus, *Epist.*, IV, 1.

54 *Zohar*, Lech Lecha, 86b.

55 Plutarch, *de Iside*, 39-40.

56 R. Eisler, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 109.

57 *Loc. cit.*, n. 9. Interestingly enough, one of the most important accounts of the windflood recounts that there were no inhabitants in the Near East before the time of Noah, the world's population dwelling far to the eastward near the region of Eden, *Cave of Treasures*, 26:15, 17. To this area, according to the Ram and Rud story of the Mandaeans, Jared and his brother returned.

58 *Cave of Treasures*, 26:11.

59 M. Witzel, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 14 (1945), pp. 188-90, noting that this must be descriptive of a real historical event.

60 H. Kees, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 21 (1952), pp. 86-97; E. A. W. Budge, *Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, 1923, p. 19.

61 R. Anthes, in *Mitt. d. Dt. Or. Ges.*, Vol. 96 (1942), p. 18.

62 C. Vandersleye, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 19 (1967), pp. 133, 155-57; quote is from 140.

63 Different lists (but both including famine) in A. Wuensche, *Midrasch Rabbah*, p. 182, and L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 221.

64 P. R. Eliezer, Ch. 26; bin Gorion II, 159.

65 Bin Gorion, I, 174; cf. Helaman 11:4ff.

66 *Ibid.*, I, 176.

67 *Ibid.*, II, 83.

68 M. Witzel, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

69 Bin Gorion, I, 154. Among the oldest and most vivid products of Egyptian art are the famine reliefs from the III Dynasty, showing the horribly emaciated condition of the people.

70 Jubilees 11:11-13.

71 J. Bergmann, *Legenden der Juden*, p. 58. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography* (Budge), Vol. 1, p. 10, says he was 15 when he drove off the *qarqase* (ravens? locusts?) who were eating all the crops of the Chaldeans.

72 Jubilees 24:18; bin Gorion, II, 272; Book of Lights.

73 Jubilees 11:21, 23.

74 Book of Jasher, 22:11-12.

75 Bin Gorion, II, 198.

76 W. Braude, *Midrash Ps.* 110:2.

77 H. Nibley, in *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 4 (1951), pp. 226-30, 235-38.

78 Eisler, *op. cit.*, I, 523.

79 E.g. A. Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrasch*, I, 34. cf. 32.

80 Gen. 15:9-15; Josephus, *J. Ant.*, I, 185. On tardema, A. Caquot, in *Semitica*, 12.

81 This is well treated in A. Moret, *La Mise a Mort due Dieu in Egypte* (Paris: Geuthner, 1927). Cf. J. Berard, in *Rev. de l'Hist. des Religions*, Vol. 151 (1957), pp. 228-230.

82 These episodes are described, with the sources in bin Gorion, *S.d.J.* I, 317, 151, 153, 174.

83 Jubilees 11:13.

84 *Clementine Recognitions* I, 29-33.

85 Pseudo-Philo, VII, 1.

86 Bin Gorion, II, 64, 48.

87 *Ibid.*, I, 196.

88 *Cave of Treasures*, 25:8-9.

89 *E. g., Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5 (1857), p. 353.

90 N. H. Segal, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 52 (1961-2), p. 45.

91 Midr. Rab., Gen. 42:4. The Lord "was chosen by our father Abraham when the nations were divided in the time of Phaleg . . ." *Test. of Naphthali* 8:3 (in R. H. Charles, *Apoc. & Pseudepigr. of the Old Testament*, II, 363).

92 E. MacLaurin, in *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 2 (1963), p. 278.

93 F. Cornelius, in *Ztschr. f. A.T. Wiss.*, Vol. 72 (1960), p. 7.

94 Chwolsohn, *Die Sabaeer*, I, 620.

95 Midr. Rab., Gen. 39:8; L. Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 219; Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

96 Ammianus Marcelinus, *Hist.*, XVIII, 7, 5; A. Parrot, *Abraham et son Temps*—see especially the illustrations.

97 M. C. Astour, in A. Altmann, *Biblical Motifs* (Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 74.

98 A. Mallon, in *Melanges Maspero*, I, i, 57f.

99 Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 218.

100 W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, p. 93.

101 *Ibid.*, p. 57. This applies whether Abraham was a caravaneer or shepherd: "The life of wandering shepherds was anything but pleasant." *Loc. cit.*

102 Eusebius, *Praep. Evangel.*, IX, 16; cf. Josephus, *Ant.*, I, 159, who says that Abraham's house in Damascus was still being pointed out in his day.

103 Midr. Rab., Gen. 41.

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price

Setting the Stage - The World of Abraham

(Part 9 - Continued)

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

● *The Procrustes Cycle*: A number of legends fit Abraham snugly into the peculiar category of Victims of Procrustes. In the standard Procrustes-type story, of which there are many, a wandering hero and prince is entertained at the palace of a king who tries to subject him to a sacrificial death, but whose attempt fails when the hero at the last moment is miraculously freed and repays his host's inhospitality by putting either him or his priest to death. Among the most celebrated monsters of the Procrustes persuasion are Minos, Philomeleides, Amycus, Cycnus, Syleus, Antaeus, Phalarus, Cronus, Lityerses, Faunus, Cacus, Athamus, Proteus, Polyphemus, Eurytheus, Sciron, and many others, the most famous of all being Busiris of Egypt.

Among the heroes who met and bested them are Odysseus, Pollux, Menelaeus, Paris, Hermes, Jason, Bellerophon, Cytisorus, etc. The reader can look them all up in Pauly-Wissowa or a good Classical dictionary, preferably Robert Graves's *The Greek Myths*, which pays special attention to such sordid goings on and shows us time and again that the terrible doings we hear about in the Abraham legends actually could have taken place.

The greatest hero of this cycle is Heracles, who shall serve us here as an example. Heracles was a wandering, suffering, conquering benefactor of mankind who, like Abraham, wandered through the world meeting and overcoming the enemies of the race and in the process becoming the father of many nations. After ridding Crete of bears, wolves, and serpents, he went to Libya, where the tyrant King Antaeus, the son of Mother Earth and Poseidon the water-god, would force all strangers to wrestle with him, murder them in the contest, and nail their skulls to the roof of the temple of his father. (Graves, II, 134, 146-47.)

Heracles, accepting the challenge, killed Antaeus and turned his desolate kingdom into a blooming paradise. Then he moved on to Egypt where Antaeus's brother Busiris was king; every year, to combat the force of drought in his kingdom, he would sacrifice a noble stranger on the altar of Zeus.[104] Heracles, as we have seen, allowed himself to be led to the altar, and at the last moment burst his bonds and murdered the cruel king or, in some versions, his priest.[105] That labor performed, the hero went to Gaul, "where he abolished a barbaric native custom of killing strangers, and founded 'Alesia,' of 'Wandering-town.'" (Graves, II, 135.) In Italy he accepted the challenge to duel with the wicked King Cacus, slew him on the Great Altar (the Ara Maxima), married the queen, Acca Larentia, and so became the father of the Romans. According to a later account, Cacus was an idol to whom the natives would offer up their infant children—exactly in the manner of the Phoenicians and the Chaldeans of Abraham's Ur![106] While he was at it, he also killed Faunus, "whose custom was to sacrifice strangers at the altar of his father Hermes," marrying the royal widow to become the father of the Latin race. (Graves, II, 137.) He then reformed the Cronian year-rites by supplanting the throwing of human victims into the river by the use of puppet substitutes. (Graves, *loc. cit.*) At Celaenae, Lityerses, the son of Minos, would force his guests to compete with him in reaping, whip and behead them at sunset, and bind them up in a sheaf while singing a dirge for them; Heracles beat the king in the reaping game, cut off his head with his sickle, and threw him into the river. (Graves, II, 164.) The beheading, the dirge, the whipping, and the throwing into the river are all important in the Egyptian rites for Osiris, and remind us that Maneros, the son and successor of the first king of Egypt, also died in

such a harvest rite. At Itonus Heracles slew King Cycnus, who forced his guests to duel with him for a chariot and decorated his father's temple with their heads. (Graves, II, 197.) And he tore up the vineyards of the Lydian King Syleus, who used to make passing strangers toil amid the vines. (Graves, II, 164.) Here we should note that it was actually the custom in ancient Asia Minor and Syria to seize and kill strangers in the vineyards during the vintage season. (Graves, II, 164, 167.)

These few examples are enough to give one the idea. The noble Theseus got the best of Minos, the half-human monster who meant to murder his royal guest, and on his wanderings accepted King Sciron's routine challenge to wrestle—and threw him into the sea. And it was Theseus who finally settled the score with Procrustes himself; one can read all about that sort of thing in Marie Renault's *The King Must Die* and *The Bull From the Sea.* Sciron's father was Cronus, the Cretan killer, who used to eat his guests; and his neighbor was the king of the Bebryces on the Black Sea, who also murdered his guests. King Philomeleides compelled all his guests to wrestle with him until the wandering Odysseus retired him, as did the wandering water-god Pollux to King Amycus, who forced every visitor to box with him and threw them all into the sea, where he finally ended up himself. Menelaus suffered the cruel hospitality of the Old Man of the Sea, as Odysseus did of the Cyclops (another son of Poseidon), until each was able to turn the tables and force his host to help him on his way. And so on and on. Long ago G. Lefebure noticed the kinship of these stories to the tale of the Egyptian Busiris, who was Heracles's most famous host.[107] Because he ties in directly with the Abraham legends, Busiris deserves a little more attention.

"Who does not know about the infamous altars of Busiris?" which were proverbial among the ancients.[108] A whole string of Classical writers from the fifth century B.C. to the sixth century A.D., a full thousand years, recount the lurid tale with the normal and expected variations. As Apollodorus tells it (II, 5, 11, 116-17), Busiris was desperate when his kingdom was afflicted by a severe drought and famine, for the king, as everyone knows, was directly responsible for the prosperity of the land. The seer Phrasius came from Cyprus and told the king that the dearth would end if a stranger were sacrificed annually, and Busiris obliged the visiting prophet by making him his first victim. Thereafter the sacrifice was repeated annually until Heracles put an end to it in the manner described, killing, according to Apollodorus, not only the king but his son as well and the priest or "herald" Chalbes—with a good Canaanitish name. Names and details differ in various versions of the story, indicating that in the case of Apollodorus, who came along and tidied things up in the end, the name of Heracles was used as it often was as a convenient catch-all to avoid serious and laborious historical research. Ovid, a much earlier writer, says that the seer who advised the king and suffered death at his hands was a Thracian, and Hyginus reports that he was the nephew of the king of the Phoenicians.[109] Pherecydes, a contemporary of Lehi, reports only that after Heracles had restored fertility to the land of Libya by slaying Antaeus, he went straight to Memphis "and there sacrificed Antaeus's equally wicked brother, Busiris, on the same altar on which he was accustomed to sacrifice strangers to Zeus."[110] What all sources agree on is the real essential, and that is that once long ago an illustrious stranger and seer visited the court of Pharaoh at his invitation and that the king tried to put him to death; in one case at least he succeeded, but in the most famous story of all the stranger, whoever it was, got the best of the affair. We can neither accept nor reject the stories as they stand, for they are plainly conditioned by the memory of definite ritual practices, which were themselves very real and sometimes very important historic events. Abraham in the Book of Abraham emphatically tells us in the first chapter that the fate planned for him by the priest of Pharaoh was one that had been suffered by others before him—he was by no means the first, nor possibly the last, such victim. The picture is a complicated one.

In ancient times the name of Busiris was a byword for cruelty and inhospitality. The Emperor Maximin was so cruel, we are told, "that people called him Cyclops, Busiris, Sciron, Falaris, and Typhon."[111] It is interesting to see the name of Typhon, the slayer of Osiris, added to this list of authentic "Procrustean" heroes. Another emperor is accused of reviving the bloody altars of Busiris "in rites more savage than sacred."[112] Busiris was remembered as one who sacrificed substitutes to pay for his sins: "It was he who would propitiate for his crimes by making the gods participants in the blood of innocent guests."[113] While some go so far as to accuse Busiris of cannibalism, Isocrates in the fifth century B.C. caused a sensation by an oration in praise of Busiris, in which he debunked the whole story.[114] Diodorus, more cautious, says that the story is probably Greek propaganda, spitefully circulated against Busiris when he closed Egyptian ports to Greek merchants in his desire to protect the cult of Osiris. He admits, however, that the tale does reflect the notorious hostility of the Egyptians to strangers unless they were scholars of world reputation, such as Orpheus, Homer, Pythagoras, and Solon.[115] At any rate, "the cruel altar of Busiris" remained proverbial.[116]

The oldest and best-informed Greek commentators were quite aware that Busiris was a place rather than a person, though it could be both. To Eratosthenes is attributed the observation that "hostility to strangers is a common barbarian trait, which is also found among the Egyptians: stories told in the Busirite nome about Busiris are a criticism of that inhospitality."[117] Herodotus (II, 59) reports that in his day the main temple of Isis in all the world stood in Busiris, which with Bubastis formed the nucleus of Egyptian cult-life. Indeed, since prehistoric times Osiris was known as "the Lord of Busiris," and it was from there that his rites spread to the other cult centers of Egypt, notably Abydos. I.E.S. Edwards even suggests that Osiris was probably a real king, "first the king and then the local god of the 9th Lower Egyptian nome, with its capital at Busiris";[118] while H. Frankfort held that "Busiris was the tomb of some forgotten king."[119] Every dead Egyptian needed to take a ritual journey to Busiris, to "appear there as the dead King Osiris," his presence in the place qualifying him as "an Osiris."[120] The place was named, according to Sethe, after its local divinity, and was even older as a cult center than Heliopolis itself.[121] In the Pyramid Texts the king comes to Busiris for rites of human sacrifice,[122] and a Nineteenth Dynasty monument has the same rites still celebrated in Busiris.[123] Edwards believes that the yearly passion play of Osiris was performed at Busiris as early as the First Dynasty.[124] "I am enduring in Busiris, conceived in Busiris, born in Busiris," boasts King Tutakhamon, reminding us that Busiris is preeminently the place of the lion-couch.[125] When Heliopolis took over the ancient cult of Busiris under the guidance of the great Imhoptep, it supplanted the human sacrifice by the use of substitutes, thus leaving Busiris the distinction, which it retained right down into the Middle Ages, of being the right and proper place for human sacrifices.[126]

Our Hospitality: When Abraham

went forth into a starving world, he found the people understandably touchy and dangerous: ". . . and they persecuted Abraham our father when he was a stranger, and they vexed his flocks" as well as his servants, "and thus they did to all strangers, taking away their wives by force, and they banished them. But the wrath of the Lord came upon them. . . ." This is the Testament of Levi (6:9) speaking of Abraham in Shechem. But he found the same hostility elsewhere, that worldwide cruelty and inhospitality which is best represented by the notorious Procrustes and especially by Abraham's own stomping grounds, Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Bible tells us that the Jordan depression was a veritable paradise when Abraham first visited it, "before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah." (Gen. 13:10.) It is not surprising that "the men of Sodom were wealthy and prosperous people, on account of the good and fruitful land whereon they dwelt. For it supplied them with every earthly need of man."[127] Nor is it very surprising that "they did not trust in the shadow of their Creator, but in the multitude of their wealth they trusted, for wealth thrusts aside its owners from the fear of heaven."[127] Here Rabbi Eliezer seems to be quoting the same sources as Samuel the Lamanite was, both men being diligent students of the old Jewish writings; and he seems to be using the same source as King Benjamin as he continues: "They had no consideration for the honor of the real owner of their wealth by distributing food to the wayfarer . . . but they even fenced all the trees on top above the fruit, so that no one else could have any—not even the birds of heaven."[127] This was in the authentic Babylonian tradition, eye-witness accounts telling how the people of Babylon "oppressed the weak, and gave him into the power of the strong. Inside the city was tyranny, and receiving of bribes; every day without fail they plundered each other's goods; the son cursed his father in the street, the slave his master. . . . they put an end to offerings and entered into conspiracies. . . ."[128] The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were not condemned for their ignorance of the God of Abraham but rather for their meanness, their immorality, and their greed;[129] they were destroyed "because they did not strengthen the hand of the poor and heeded not the needy."[130] For them everything existed for the sole purpose of being turned into cash: they put a toll on all their bridges, with a *double* toll for wading; they charged visitors for everything and had the most ingenious tricks for getting money out of them.[131]

When Abraham's servant tried to help a poor man who had been robbed and was being beaten up by a gang in Sodom, he was attacked by the mob, arrested, and dragged into court, where he was fined the price of blood-letting as a perfectly legitimate physician's fee.[132] For like the Nephites under the Gadianton administration, these people were careful to keep everything legal: thus they would pay a merchant good prices for his goods but refuse to sell him any food, and when he starved to death would piously confiscate all of his wares and his wealth.[133] Of course, "the richer a man was the more favored he was before the law," for it was wicked to encourage idleness by helping the poor:[134] "Anyone helping the poor in Sodom got thrown into the river."[135] There are lurid tales of tenderhearted virgins, including Lot's daughter Pilatith, who suffered terrible punishment when they were caught secretly helping the poor.[136] It was one of these episodes, according to the Midrash, that finally decided God to destroy the city.[137] Just south of Sodom was the great plain (Olishem?) where the licentious yearly rites were held; in these all strangers were required by law to participate, and during the four-day celebration they were efficiently relieved of everything they owned[138]—the great pilgrimage centers of the Old World were understandably the worst places in the world for fleecing strangers, that being through the centuries the principal commercial activity of the natives.

It is not surprising that travelers and birds alike learned to avoid the rich cities of the Plain, while all the poor emigrated to other parts.[139] Interestingly enough, the records of Ugarit, which some hold to be contemporary with Abraham, show that "the practice of killing merchants was widespread" in that part of the world, even as the Amarna letters show us a world in which it is every man for himself.[140] Having no love for the stranger, the people of Abraham's homeland had even less to waste on each other, and finally there was so much crime and murder among them that everything came to a complete standstill.[141] Being grossly materialistic, they rated the hardware high above the software: "If a man was killed working on the Tower he was ignored, but if a brick fell they sat down and wept. Abraham seeing this cursed them in the name of his God."[142] One cannot help thinking of the church builders in Mormon 8:37 and 39, who adorn themselves "with that which hath no life" while calmly ignoring the needs of the living. "They were dwelling in security without care and at ease, without fear of war . . . sated with all the produce of the earth, but they did not strengthen the hand . . . of the needy or the poor, and it is said, 'Behold, *this* was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom."[143]

That this emphasis on wealth and status was the real wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah is attested by both the Bible and the Pearl of Great Price, the latter holding up as a lesson in contrast the world in which the Patriarchs lived—"there were wars and bloodshed among them"—and the Zion which they sought: "And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them." (Moses 7:16, 18.) In the Old Testament, the one time in his life when Abraham refuses to deal with one who makes him an offer is when he coldly turns down the King of Sodom: It was after his victory over the marauding chiefs of the East that Abraham willingly accepted whatever the grateful King of Salem offered him as a reward, freely exchanging gifts and compliments with "the King of Righteousness"; but he absolutely refused to take anything whatever from the fawning King of Sodom, whose goods he had also rescued: "I have raised my hand to Jehovah El-Elyon," that he would not take so much as a shoestring from that king, "so that he can never say, 'I enriched Abraham.'" (See Gen. 14:22f; Josephus, *Ant.* I, 179.) He knew his Sodom and saw just what kind of a deal the king wanted to make for himself; and God applauded his wisdom and reassured him: "Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield. . . ." (Gen. 15:1.) When Abraham and Lot started getting rich, their retainers took to quarreling, whereupon Abraham, determined to avoid involvement in that sort of thing, told Lot that he was welcome to Sodom while he, Abraham, withdrew to a less prosperous region: "Let there be no strife, . . . for we be brethren." (Gen. 13:6-8.) The rich cities of the Plain, where "they failed to serve the Lord by reason of the abundance of all things," were no place for Abraham.[144]

Bed or Altar? The most famous thing about Procrustes, as everyone knows, was his bed, and it is this notorious item that ties his story very closely to the Abraham cycle. The story goes that when Abraham's servant Eliezer, being the exact image of his master and serving as his proxy in the most important negotiations, once visited Lot and Sodom on business for

Abraham, he was entertained by an innkeeper whose unauthorized hospitality (which would, of course, encourage vagrancy!) got him banished from the town, while Eliezer himself was seized and taken to the marketplace to be thrown down on a very special kind of bed. All the cities of the Plain, we are told, had such beds: the judges of the other cities, Sharqar of Gomorrah, Zabnak of Admah, and Manon of Zeboiim, had all taken counsel together and advised their people "to set up beds on their commons. When a stranger arrived, three men seized him by his head, and three by his feet, and they forced him upon one of those beds. There they stretched or contracted him violently to make him fit the exact length of the bed, saying as they did so, 'Thus will be done to any man that comes to our land.' "[145] Beer, commenting on this, notes that Procrustes's epithet Damastes means "the Forcer," or "the Violater," that being, according to him, also the root meaning of the word Sodom![146]

So here is an authentic "Procrustes" story in which the victim on the bed is none other than Abraham's double. There is another "Procrustes" story of how the same Eliezer, again looking exactly like Abraham, came to the house of King Bethuel of Haran, where "they tried to kill him with cunning," the king arranging for poison dishes to be served Eliezer at a banquet in his honor; but "it was ordained by God that the dish intended for him should come to a stand in front of Bethuel, who ate it and died," the victim of his own treachery.[147] What is behind these many stories of the strangely inhospitable kings? The bed is an important clue. Professor Lefebure noticed when he was studying the Busiris tradition that the inhospitable kings specialized in strange and ingenious contraptions for putting their noble guests to death, such as bronze bulls or giant braziers.[148] The altar of Busiris was held to be a fiendish invention of that ingenious monarch, and no ordinary altar.[149] R. Graves notes that the bed of Procrustes itself must really have been a special kind of altar, and he compares it to the bed to which Sampson was tied (another sun-hero like Heracles) by his unhospitable Philistines.[150] In view of such things, somebody should someday give serious consideration to Abraham's strange insistence in the Book of Abraham that the altar on which he was sacrificed required a special note and a special illustration, being "made after the form of a bedstead, such as was had among the Chaldeans . . . and that you may have a knowledge of this altar, I will



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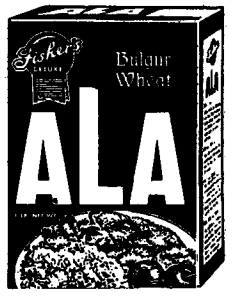

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refer you to the representation. . . ." (Abr. 1:13, 12.) For the interesting fact is that all the Jewish legends of the attempted sacrifice of Abraham make special mention of the peculiar altar employed, each one describing and explaining it in a different way.

Some of the oldest accounts mention the unusual altar while not attempting to describe it beyond saying that it was a *binyan* (Heb.) or *bunyan* (Ar.), i.e., a "structure" or "contraption."[151] But why not an ordinary altar? All kinds of explanations are given. For one thing, nothing less than a super-holocaust will do for Abraham; so the king sends a thousand camels for wood, and when "he had dug a pit on a hill (?), and trees thrown upon it, and spread everything that the camels carried, and set it on fire," the rites were underway.[152] Others explain that it was not the altar itself that was the "structure," but a wooden tower that the king had erected near his palace so that he could watch Abraham in the fire.[153] This might easily be a contamination of one of the well-known tower-building stories about Nimrod, such as the one in which he challenges Abraham to a duel as he comes out of the fire and builds a tower to give him an advantage against the God of heaven.[154] In the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, too, the piling up of the wood is an important detail; though the wood is never ignited and the instrument of sacrifice is really a knife, still the wood-pile-altar grows in the legends until it becomes a huge tower, "built straight up towards the heavenly throne of divine majesty."[155] It was after the attempted sacrifice had failed, we recall, that Abraham in the rites in the Plain of Safeh near Sodom was invited to sit atop a high cedar tower or altar (*benrah*) and be hailed as king.[156]

The super-bonfire, "30 ells high and 30 ells broad," raised bothersome questions: How, for example, could you put Abraham into it without getting burned up yourself? Since the victim had to have his blood shed by the knife before his remains could be committed to the flames, it would not do simply to light the wood and run; it was only when the sacrificial blade proved totally ineffectual that Satan appeared and suggested a solution to the problem, which was to throw the victim from the altar to the fire from a safe distance.[157] This explanation converted the altar into a sort of catapult or ballista.[158] Schuetzinger says that the first mention of the catapult is in Tha'labi,[159] but the account of that learned Persian has Jewish predecessors at least a thousand years older than his time, for in IV Maccabees (9:26 and 11:9f), we read of the heroic widow's sons being put to death by a Nimrod-type tyrant, two of them being tied to catapults while a third (11:20) is cast into a red-hot brazier. Another much older source than Tha'labi has the king plan to hurl Abraham into an immense brazier.[160] This suggests certain Egyptian practices,[161] as well as the addressing of the royal victim in Coffin Text, No. 135 (de Buck, II, 160) as "Thou who art raised upon the scaffold!"

According to the 'Antar legend, Nimrod had an iron oven for his victims.[162] Just after Facsimile No. 1 was published, Joseph Smith wrote: "But if we believe in present revelation, as published in the 'Times and Seasons' last spring, Abraham, the prophet of the Lord, was laid upon the iron bedstead for slaughter."[163] Turning to that issue (March 15, 1842) of the *Times and Seasons*, however, one finds no mention whatever of any *iron* bedstead, and so one naturally assumes that the word "bedstead" suggested to the Prophet the image of a standard iron bedstead. Still, it is interesting that by far the fullest parallel to the story of Abraham on the altar is a very early account preserved in the East-Syrian Christian Church in the very place where the event was supposed to have taken place, in which the hero, by a familiar transposition, is changed into St. Elias, who is bound on a bed of iron that is heated for three hours.[164]

Abraham the Friend of Man

Abraham the Hospitable: The history of Abraham is a story of contrasts and extremes. If meanness and inhospitality reach an all-time high in Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham holds the record for charity and compassion. The contrast is an intentional one and a mark of authentic Abrahamic literature.[165] The supreme example of such "coincidence of opposites" is found in the Pearl of Great Price, where, in Moses 7:36, over against the City of Enoch, the height of human perfection in this world, is set the most depraved society in all the universe: ". . . and among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren." In Abraham's day the world was in a desperate state, ripe for destruction.[166] And Abraham's own society was the wickedest: "If a man was very cruel," says the Midrash Rabbah (41), "he was called an Amorite." For the Patriarchs, as Theodore Boehl notes, the future was grim—and none had better cause to know it than Abraham.[167] By very definition "Abraham the Hebrew" was "a refugee, a displaced person."[168] The famous formula "Lekh lekha" (Gen. 12:1) is a double imperative, according to the Rabbis, telling Abraham to get going and keep moving, from one land to another (Midr. Rab. 39:8). His whole career, as Martin Buber puts it, was "an ever-new separation from the world and from his own people; this entire history is a consequence of choices and partings. . . ."[169]

If constant travel was one of the ten trials of Abraham, jeopardizing his family, fortune, and reputation (Midr. Rab. 39:11), travel in dangerous and hostile regions was a horror: such was the curse placed upon the Wandering Jew for his meanness and want of hospitable feeling.[170] The Zohar has an interesting psychological note on the state of Abraham's world: It is when things are going badly that Satan loves to spread his accusations abroad, "for this is the way of Satan to bring accusations against him on high . . . reserving his indictment for the hour of danger, or for a time when the world is in distress"—then hysteria adds fuel to the fires of destruction. In such times even the righteous have no guarantee of security, for while "the Holy One does not punish the guilty until the measure of their guilt is full" (Zohar, I, Vayera 113a), when that time comes, look out! "When punishment overtakes the world a man should not let himself be found abroad, since the executioner does not distinguish between the innocent and the guilty."[171]

In the most inhospitable of worlds, Abraham was the most hospitable of men. It was said that Charity was asleep in the world, and Abraham awakened it.[172] Even before he went to Canaan, he held continual open house near Haran, to try to counteract the evil practices of the time.[173] Then when he was forced to move, he dug wells and planted trees along his way, leaving blessings for those he would never see.[174] Arriving and settling in Hebron, he built a garden and grove and put gates on each of the four sides of it as a welcome to strangers from all directions, "so that if a traveller came to Abraham he entered any gate which was in his road, and remained there and ate and drank . . . for the house of Abraham was always open to the sons of men that passed and repassed, who came daily to eat and drink in the house of Abraham."[175] He also operated a school at the place, that none might want for spiritual food: "Abraham's house was a lodging-place for the hungry and thirsty and also a place of instruction where knowledge of God and his Law were taught."[176] When his guests thanked

him, he said, in the words of King Benjamin (an ardent student of early Jewish traditions), "Do not thank me; rather return thanks to your host, He who alone provides food and drink for all creatures."[177]

Inspired by the noble example and teaching of his uncle, Lot tried to operate the same kind of inn when he settled near Sodom, but he was soon reported to the authorities and had to operate secretly at night,[178] while his daughters practiced their charities with great stealth and suffered severe penalties when they were caught. Abraham's continued hospitality nearby was resented by the people of the Plain as a standing rebuke to their own sensible practices.[179]

Not content to admit the weary wanderer at all hours to his pleasant grove and board, Abraham in those dangerous times used to undertake search-and-rescue missions in the desert. It was at noon of a phenomenally hot day when "the entire earth was being consumed with unbearable solar heat" (Beer), as if "God had pierced a hole in the midst of Gehinnom, and . . . made the day hot, like the day of the wicked,"[180] or as if he had caused the sun to emerge from its protecting sheath, depriving the earth of its normal defense against deadly rays,[181] that Abraham, suffering terribly from illness, had his faithful Eliezer go out and search the byways for any lost wanderers. Eliezer couldn't find a soul, which was no wonder on such a day; but Abraham still felt uneasy—it was just possible that somebody might be out there needing his help. So the old man went forth all alone to search in that dusty inferno. For that supreme act of involvement he received his supreme reward—the son he had always prayed for. For as he was returning from his mission of mercy, still alone, he was met by three men, whom he at first, according to a very ancient tradition, took to be Arabs.[182] Joyfully he led them to his tent, where he soon discovered who they were: "Lord of the Universe!" he cried, as he served them with food. "Is it the order of the cosmos that I should sit while you stand?"[183] Then it was that Abraham received the desire of his heart (Gen. 18:9-14), and the commendation of his good works: "Thou hast done well to leave thy doors open for the wanderer and the home-journeyer and the stranger," nay, were it not for men like Abraham, "I would not have bothered to create the heaven, earth, sun, and moon."[183]

There is a story of how Abraham, to see what kind of a wife Ishmael, his son, had got, visited his camp in the

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desert as a simple wandering old man; Isaac was away at the time, and his wife turned the old tramp away. Abraham left a message with her, however, by the cryptic wording of which Isaac knew who had been there—and advised him to get another wife. Three years later Abraham visited the camp under the same circumstances and was shown kindness by the second wife, with whom he left another message for Isaac, commending her worth.[184] A more famous story tells how when God sent Michael to fetch Abraham back to his presence at the end of his life, the Patriarch was still his old hospitable self, kindly inviting the dread stranger —representing death itself—to be his guest.[185] Ever since then, when the world is in an evil way, the angels say to God: "The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth, he hath broken the covenant. Where is the reward of Abraham, he who took the wayfarers into his house?"[186]

Let It Begin With Me: Students of Abraham's life are impressed by the way in which he seems to start from scratch: with all the world going in one direction, he steadily pursues his course in the opposite direction. Granted that the tradition of the fathers, of which the Book of Abraham speaks so eloquently, was still known, yet his own father and grandfather had lost faith in it and departed from it. "Ten generations from Noah to Abraham . . . and there was not one of them that walked in the ways of the Holy One until Abraham our father," says Rabbi Nathan, who asks where, then, did Abraham get the idea of starting things moving?[187] The common explanation that Abraham was self-taught—"God appointed the two reins of Abraham to act as two teachers"—still does not make him a privileged character, for all men have the same promptings of the Spirit if they will only listen to them: ". . . for charity also was asleep, and he roused it."[188] The power was there, but it lay dormant from neglect: "When all the inhabitants of the earth had been led astray in their own pride and self-sufficiency, Abraham still believed on me . . . and so I made a covenant with him."[189] Abraham received his covenant only after he had made the first move. Speaking of him, the Zohar says, "the prophetic spirit rests upon man only when he has first bestirred himself to receive it." (Lech Lecha 77b.) Again, "the stirring below is accompanied by a stirring above, for there is no stirring above till there is a stirring below." (*Ibid.*, 88a.) But who was to start the stirring? It was Abraham's unique merit, "that he loved righteousness in a hard-hearted and wicked generation," without waiting for others to show him the way. (*Ibid.*, 76b.) A wonderful illustration of this principle is set forth in the newly found 1831/2 account of Joseph Smith's first vision, in which he recounts how for three years he sought diligently for something that apparently interested nobody else, and finally "I cried unto the Lord for mercy, for there was none else to whom I could go . . . and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness."[190] This was exactly the case with the young Abraham, who at an early age angered his father by questioning all the values and beliefs of his society.[191]

For generations the world had moved ever farther and farther from God, until by Abraham's time it had become what the Pearl of Great Price describes as the worst of all worlds.[192] Then Abraham single-handedly reversed the trend: "The Shechinah [Spirit of God] came to earth at the Creation, but through human sin removed itself farther and farther from the earth. Then Abraham . . . brought it down again."[193] He was, says the Midrash, like a man who saw a building all on fire and no one willing to put out a hand to save it: "He said, 'Is it possible that the world can be without a guide?' " (Midr. Rab. Gen. 39:1.) So he did the only thing he could do and, exactly like Joseph Smith, appealed directly to God at an early age—it was he who made the first move, according to Abraham 2:12: "Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee."

This independence of mind got both prophets into trouble from the beginning. "The man Abram is singled out, and sent out. He is brought out of the world of peoples and must go his own way. . . ."[194] The trials of both men begin immediately. What drives Abraham is set forth at the beginning of his story with great clarity and power: first of all, he is frankly seeking "greater happiness and peace and rest for me"; he wants to be more righteous, to possess greater knowledge than he has, to be a father of nations, a prince of peace, receiving and following divine instruction, to become "a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers." (Abr. 1:2.) In short, he wants happiness, peace, rest, righteousness, knowledge, and light, and he wants to be able to hand them on to others—to his own progeny and to all the world. The world is not interested in such things, but Abraham was willing to pay any price for them. The Midrash compares him to a son being soundly beaten by his loving father again and again, but never saying to his father, "I have had enough!" but only "Thine is the power."[195] "Abraham," says First Maccabees 2:52, "was accounted righteous only after he had been found true and faithful by passing through many testings." He was chosen, says the Midrash, only after God saw that he would follow him through the greatest tribulations. (Midr. Rab. Ps. 18:25.) If Joseph Smith had based the Book of Abraham on his own experiences, one might account in part for the astonishing parallels between the situation in which the two prophets found themselves and their uncompromising and epoch-making behavior in that situation. But our parallels do not come from Joseph Smith's account; they come from the studies and commentaries of Jewish scholars: it is *their* Abraham who seems to be almost a carbon copy of Joseph Smith.

Doing the Right Thing: The wonderful thing about Abraham is that he always does the right thing, whether anybody else does or not. He had to get along with all sorts of people, most of them rascals, and he treats them all with equal courtesy—he never judges any man. After Pharaoh had tried to put him to death, and after he had taken his wife away from him, Abraham could still not refuse his old enemy in his need, and laid his hand upon his head and healed him. He performed the same healing office for the King of the Philistines, who would also steal Sarah, and God recognized his great-heartedness and approved it: "On the day that Abraham assured the increase of the house of Abimelech, the angels asked God that Abraham's own house might increase."[196] He was "the Friend of God" because he was the friend of man. "When Abraham went to God with a petition for mercy," says the Midrash (Ps. 18:22), "God met him with mercy. . . . When Abraham went to the Holy One in singleness of heart, God met him with singleness of heart . . . with subtlety, God met him with subtlety; when Abraham asked to be guided in his doings, God guided him in his doings." Never, says Maimonides, did Abraham ever say to any man "God sent me to you and commanded me to do [or not do] so and so!"[197] for he knew that the priesthood operates "only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness . . ." (D&C 121:41); it may command the elements and the spirits, "but never force the human mind." "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee," he says to Lot; ". . . if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or . . . the right hand, then I will go to the left." (Gen. 13:8-9.) So Lot helped himself to the best land and as a re-

sult soon got all of his property carried away by raiders. Instead of saying "I told you so," Abraham got it back for him. He could have made a very good thing of this for himself when the King of Sodom, whose goods he had also rescued, came fawning to him ("wagging his tail," as the Midrash Rab. Gen. 43:5, puts it) and trying to win him with flattery, but without denouncing the wicked king, he simply turned down his offer.[198] (Gen. 14:20ff.)

"If Abraham does not play fair, who will?" says the proverb. (Midr. Rab. Gen. 41:9.) His passion for fair play breaks all the records in his pleading for the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, to whom he owed nothing but trouble. He knew all about their awful wickedness, but still, Josephus observes, "he felt sorry for them, because they were his friends and neighbors."[199] He appealed directly to the Lord's sense of fairness: "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" (Gen. 18:23.) The impressive thing is the way in which Abraham is willing to abase himself to get the best possible terms for the wicked cities, risking sorely offending the Deity by questioning his justice: ". . . far [be it] from thee . . . to slay the righteous with the wicked: . . . Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? (Gen. 18:25.) . . . Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes (18:27). . . . Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak (18:30). . . . now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord (18:31). . . . Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once (18:31)." It was not an easy thing to do—especially for the most degenerate society on earth. It can be matched only by Mormon's great love for a people whom he describes as utterly and hopelessly corrupt, or by the charity of Enoch, Abraham's great predecessor: "Enoch . . . looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity . . . ," and declared "I will refuse to be comforted" until God promised to have compassion on the earth. (Moses 7:41, 44, 49f.)

Abraham learned compassion both by being an outcast himself and by special instruction, regarding which there are some interesting stories. When Melchizedek was instructing him in the mysteries of the priesthood, he told him that Noah and his people were permitted to survive in the ark "because they practiced charity." On whom? Abraham asked, since they were alone in the ark. On the animals, was the answer, since they were constantly concerned with their comfort

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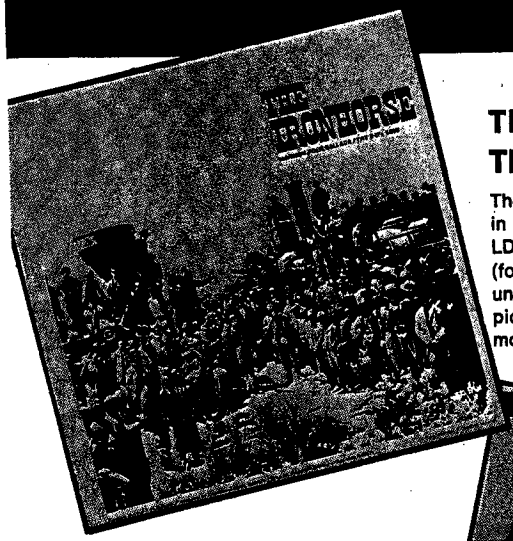

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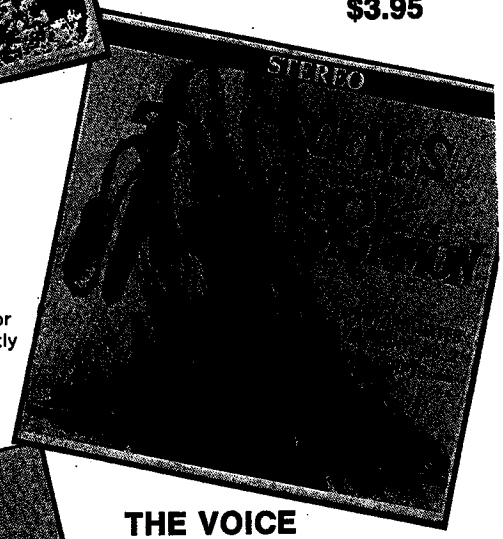

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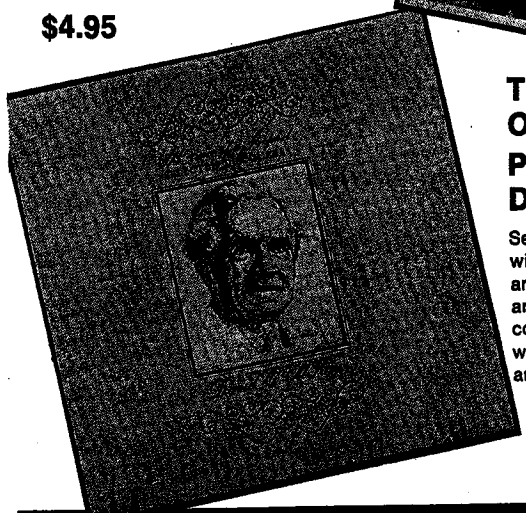

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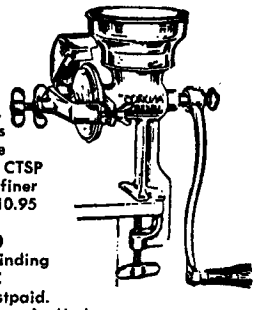

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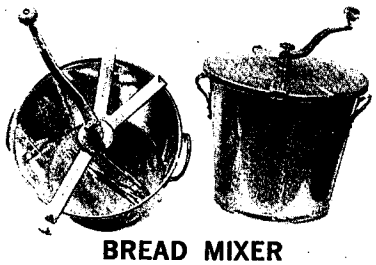

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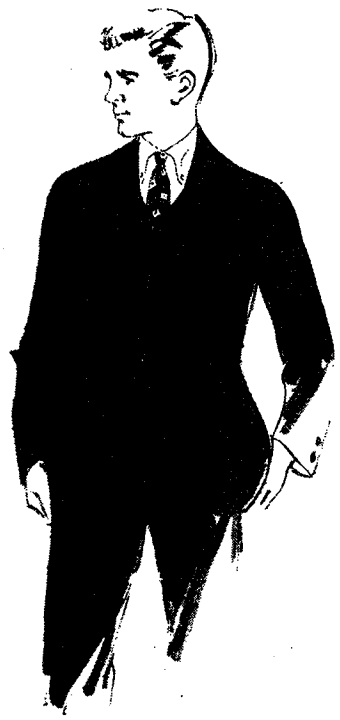

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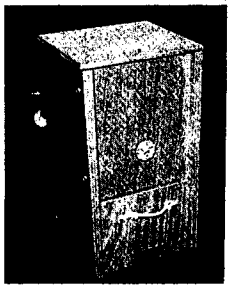

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and welfare.[200] Again, Abraham once beheld a great vision (described also in the Book of Abraham) of all the doings of the human race to come; what he saw appalled him—he had never dreamed that men could be so bad, and in a passionate outburst he asked God why he did not destroy the wicked at once. The answer humbled him: "I defer the death of the sinner, who might possibly repent and live!"[201] When Abraham saw with prophetic insight the crimes that Ishmael would commit against him and his house, he was about to turn the youth out into the desert, but the voice of God rebuked him: "Thou canst not punish Ishmael or any man for a crime he has not yet committed!"[202] He learned by precept and experience that men are judged by God not as groups but as individuals.[203]

But Abraham's most famous lesson in tolerance was a favorite story of Benjamin Franklin, which has been traced back as far as a thirteenth century Arabic writer and may be much older.[204] The prologue to the story is the visit of three angels to Abraham, who asked him what he charged for meals; the price was only that the visitor "invoke the name of God before beginning and praise it when you are finished."[205] But one day the Patriarch entertained an old man who would pray neither before eating nor after, explaining to Abraham that he was a fire worshiper. His indignant host thereupon denied him further hospitality, and the old man went his way. But very soon the voice of the Lord came to Abraham, saying: "I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonored me; and thou couldst not endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble?" Overwhelmed with remorse, Abraham rushed out after his guest and brought him back in honor: "Go thou and do likewise," ends the story, "and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham."[206] In the oldest version of the story the Lord says, "Abraham! For one-hundred years the divine bounty has flowed out to this man. . . . Is it for thee to withhold thy hand from him because his worship is not thine?"[207] One is strongly reminded of the Nephite law, which declared it "strictly contrary to the commands of God" to penalize one's neighbor if he does not choose to believe in God. (Al. 30:7.)

Once Abraham broke the ice, others began to follow. Pharaoh returned his generosity by escorting him on his way.[208] Abimelech loaded him with gifts. The Hittites matched his fair dealings with their own.[209] "Again and

again," writes J. S. Bloch, "it is compassion and foregiveness alone that are the unfailing family trait of the true descendant of Abraham."[210] Luzzato discussed the polarity of the human race between "Abrahamism" and "Atticism," with "Abrahamism elaborating the poetry and practice of compassion and tenderness, while 'Atticism' articulated man's cold, calculating, self-centered approach to life."[211] A disciple of Abraham, according to a well-known tract of the Talmud, can be distinguished by "a good eye, a humble soul, a lowly spirit," while the men of the world are marked by "an evil eye, a proud soul, a haughty spirit."[212] "Man is only worthy of his name, he is only 'really a man' if he has fully acquired the virtues" of Abraham. "It is only then that he is worthy of being called 'lover of God,' or 'God-friend,' like Abraham and David."[213] Like Brigham Young, Abraham sought to benefit his fellows in practical ways: as a young man back in Mesopotamia he invented a seeder that covered up the seeds as it sowed them, so the birds could not take them, and for this "his name became great in all the land of the Chaldees."[214] He apologized to the birds for driving them off, and came to an amicable understanding with them,[215] for he was kind to all living things: "No one who is cruel to any creature," says an old formula, "can ever be a descendant of Abraham."[216]

Compassion is the keynote of Abraham's life and the teaching that makes the Pearl of Great Price supremely relevant to our own time. This is most unequivocally affirmed in what is the most remarkable passage of the book, where God himself weeps as he is about to bring the flood upon the earth. ". . . naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne," cries Enoch; "and mercy shall go before thy face and have no end; how is it thou canst weep? The Lord said . . . in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency; And unto thy brethren . . . commandment, that they should love one another, . . . but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood." (Moses 7:31-33.) ○

FOOTNOTES

104 Apollodorus, II, 5, 11 (116-17).
105 Hyginus, XXXI, 65.
106 *Descriptio plenaria totius Urbis*, text in T. Hopfner, *Fontes Hist. Relig. Aegypt.*, pp. 532f.
107 G. Lefebure, in *Bibliotheque Egyptologique*, Vol. 36 (1915), pp. 22, 322.
108 Probus, *Georgics* (Schol.), III, 4.
109 Ovid is discussed by J. G. Griffiths in *Annales du Service*, Vol. 48 (1948), p. 411; Hyginus, 56:59-60, who also says that Heracles broke loose just as the sacrificial prayer was being uttered by the King, 31:65.
110 Quoted in Lactantius, *Div. inst.*, I, 121; see Lefebure, *op. cit.*, p. 273.
111 Historia Augusta, *Max. Prior*, 8:5 (Lampridius).
112 Claudian, in Rufinus, *Vitae Patrum*, I, 254-56 (Hopfner, *Fontes h. r. Aeg.*, p. 591).
113 Orosius, *Hist. adv. paganos*, I, 11 (2).
114 Isocrates, *Busiris* (9-10), praises the high moral standards of Egypt, and points out (15) that Busiris lived 200 years before Perseus, while Heracles lived four generations after him.
115 Diodorus, I, 57, 69, discussed by Griffiths, *op. cit.*, pp. 410f.
116 *Ibid.*, pp. 411f; which Rufinus turns to sarcasm: "O kindly altars of Busiris!" Claudian in Rufin., I, 254-56.
117 Strabo, *Geog.*, XVII, 1 (802).
118 I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids*, p. 24.
119 H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 200; C. Autran, in *Mel. Maspero*, I, ii, 533; J. Griffiths, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 53, p. 187.
120 J. Cerny, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 105f.
121 K. Sethe, *Kommentar zu den . . . Pyramindentexten*, I, 91.
122 Pyr. Texts, 477:962, 964, 966.
123 The monument of Mentu-her-khepeshef, G. Lefebure, in *Bibliotheque Egyptol.*, Vol. 36, p. 285.
124 Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
125 A. Piankoff, *Shrines of Tut.*, p. 59.
126 Budge, *Osiris*, Vol. I, p. 212; Kees, *Goetterglaube*, pp. 249, 254; Sethe, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 80, 78-79; *Coffin Text* (de Buck, Vol. 1, p. 155). Hence the crocodile remains ever Suchos the Lord of Busiris, Kees, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 58, pp. 88, 31-32. Even Min of Coptos survived as a sacrificial god at Busiris, H. Gauthier, *Min*, pp. 231f, 234, 236ff.
127 Pirke R. Eliezer, Ch. 25 (29A.ii), quoting R. Zeera.
128 W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford, 1960), p. 5.
129 Apocalypse of Abraham, 24:2.
130 Bin Gorion, II, 223; Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 248; Graves & Patai, *Heb. Mythology*, p. 167.
131 Bin Gorion, II, 235: Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 245-46. A visitor would often have an "accident" that put him at the mercy of the townsmen, Gorion, II, 235.
132 Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 246; cf. bin Gorion, II, 235.
133 Ginzberg, *loc. cit.*
134 Bin Gorion, II, 249.
135 Zohar, I, Vayerah 105b.
136 *Ibid.*, 106b; bin Gorion, II, 220-23.
137 Bin Gorion, II, 227.
138 *Ibid.*, II, 211f, 228.
139 Zohar, I, Vayerah, 106a.
140 A. Rainey, *Christian News From Israel*, 14:2 (1963), p. 19.
141 Midr. Rab. 329; Sefer ha-Yashar, 22-31; B. Sanh. 109a; P. R. Eliezer, Ch. 24.
142 P. R. Eliezer, Ch. 24 (28B.i).
143 *Ibid.*, Ch. 25 (29A.ii).
144 Zohar i, Vayerah 116a, cf. Dt. 28:47.
145 L. Ginzberg, Vol. 1, pp. 246-47; Beer, pp. 41, 164.
146 Beer, p. 164, noting that in the Iliad XVI, 386-9, Procrustes suffers the same fate as Sodom.
147 Ginzberg, I, 295.
148 G. Lefebure, in *Biblio. Egyptol.*, Vol. 36, p. 274.
149 Claudian, in Eutropius, *Breviarium*, I, 161-62 (Hopfner, p. 591).
150 R. Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Vol. 1, p. 332.
151 H. Schuetzinger, *Ursp . . . der arab. Abr.-Nimrod Legenden*, p. 36; Koran 37:95, 98.
152 Falasha, *Anthology*, p. 27.
153 D. Sidersky, *Origines des Legendes Musulmans*, p. 33.
154 *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9, p. 310.
155 Beer, p. 66.
156 Midrash Rabbah, Gen. 42:4, 7, 8; 53:2-4.
157 Schuetzinger, p. 186; p. 47 for sources on the problem.
158 Sefer ha-Yashar, 34-43; Maase Abraham, in *Beth ha-Midrasch*, I, 32-43.
159 Schuetzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
160 I. Levi, in *Rev. des Etudes Juives*, Vol. 69, p. 98.
161 The Egyptians had "an altogether special type of furniture," by whose ministrations one possessed "a new means of spiritualizing the offerings—by literal combustion" in a metal brazier, G. Jecquier in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 33 (1911), pp. 166-69. J. Garstang has commented on the strange sacrificial structures in

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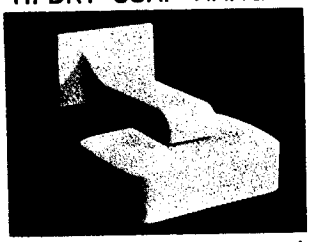

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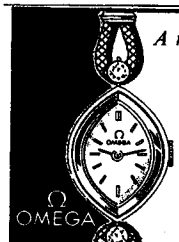

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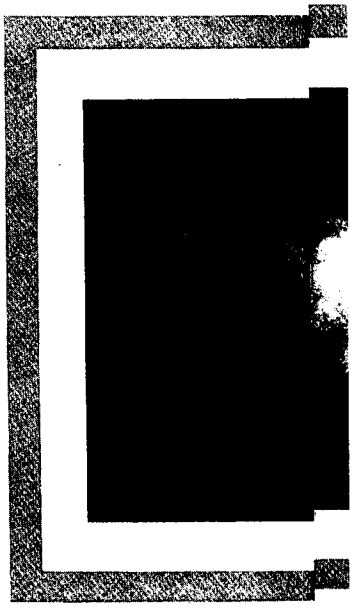

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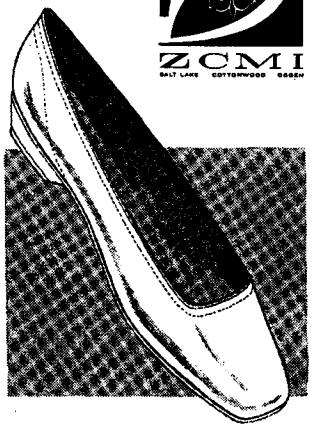

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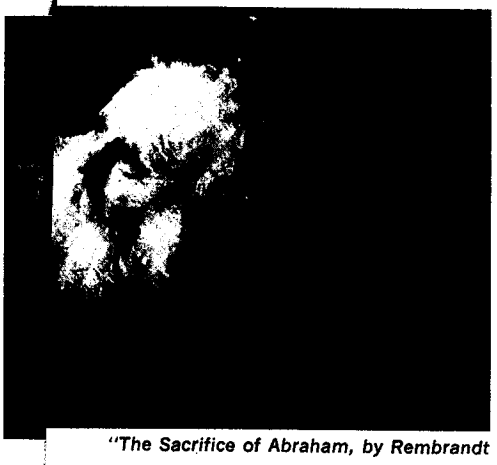
● *Abraham the Missionary*: The Book of Abraham refers specifically to Abraham's work as a missionary. "I . . . was sixty and two years old when I departed out of Haran. And I took Sarai, whom I took to wife when I was in Ur . . . and the souls that *we* had *won* in Haran . . . and dwelt in tents as we came on our way." (Abr. 2:14f. Italics added.) The corresponding Bible text reads: "Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls [lit., living things] they had gotten [lit., made] in Haran." (Gen. 12:4-5.) The puzzling "living things they had made" was interpreted by the Rabbis exactly as it stands in the Book of Abraham, the Midrash explaining that it means the people converted in Haran.[217] It goes even further to explain that when we are told that Abraham "called upon the name of the



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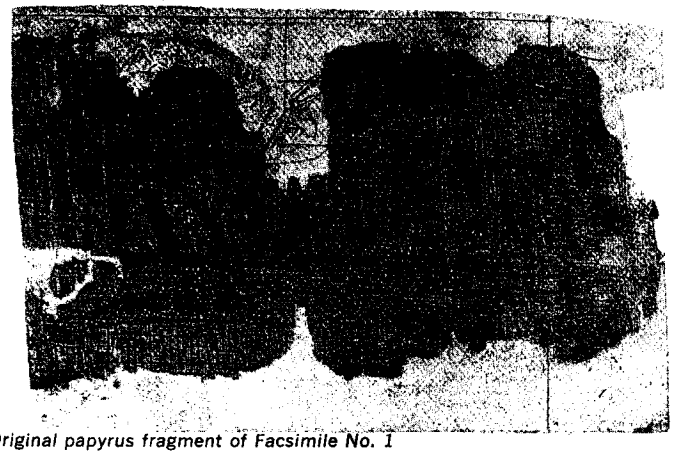

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Part 9 (Continued)

Setting the Stage: The World of Abraham

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

Lord" in Sechem, it means that "he summoned the people to the name, i.e., began to preach the Gospel to them and convert them." (Midr. Rab. 39:16.) According to the Sefer ha-Yashar, "the people of the land of Haran saw that Abram was good and just towards God and man. . . . Men from among the inhabitants of the land of Haran came to him, and attached themselves to him, and he taught them the discipline of the Lord and his ways."[218] As he moved on his way, "each altar raised by him was a centre of activities as a missionary," he and Sarah diligently preaching and making proselytes wherever they pitched their tents.[219] "Abraham converted the men," according to the Midrash (39:14), "and Sarah the women," and there was a tradition that "all proselytes and heathen are the descendants" of the infants of pagan mothers, whom Sarah nursed.[220]

The Book of Abraham clearly states that it was his preaching that got Abraham into trouble in the first place —they "hearkened not unto my voice, but endeavored to take away my life. . . ." (Abr. 1:7.) The oldest traditions agree with this: "Abraham having overcome them by argument, the king wanted to put him to death; but thanks to a miracle, he removed to Haran, where he began to declare unto the multitude with a loud voice."[221] Abraham, says a famous passage in the Midrash (39:2, 14), was at home like a vessel of precious perfume lying tightly closed in a corner: God wanted the precious fragrance as widely disseminated as possible, and so he said to Abraham: "Travel from place to place, and thy name will become great in the world." Thus from the outset Abraham was "the archtypal evangelist . . . whose reputation becomes suffused by his travels as a vessel of ointment suffuses."[222] Himself "the arch-proselyte," he became "the Father of all Proselytes."[223] He made no distinction between men, since all alike were without the faith, and to convert a soul was to give it a new life and a new being: "One who brings a foreigner near and makes a proselyte of him is as if he created him."[224] Hence "it is Abraham the missionary who makes brothers of all the world; who abolishes the differences between the nations and races. . . . In his hand God placed the power to bless all the world: this blessing descended to the Patriarchs and the priesthood."[225]

This missionary concept is not a modern one. It is interesting that in Abraham's time Canaan and Egypt were the scene of extensive missionary activities propagandizing for various deities,[226] and it may have been for that, among other reasons, that Abraham's mission at the time won very few converts.[227]

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is seen in his championing of those sinners who have died without redemption. As everyone knows, the poor man in the story of Lazarus and Dives was seen resting in *Abraham's* bosom. This is because the Jews believed that he was in special charge of the spirits between the time of death and the judgment and resurrection. "Lazarus was taken to the paradise where Abraham had gone," writes a modern Catholic scholar, "and where he rejoiced while awaiting the Great Day; the poor celebrate with him there in a place of honor. So the penitent thief will go to the same paradise, which is *not* heaven, but a place where certain spirits await the resurrection and the judgment."[228] Whether the Christian world wants to believe this or not, it was, according to this scholar, certainly the "current mythical concept" held alike by Jesus and the people he taught.[228] The old idea that it is Abraham who does all in his power to rescue every unredeemed spirit in his great concern for the welfare of the whole human race is actually very old and, according to K. Kohler, "has not a tinge of either Christian or of late Rabbinical color about it."[229] Abraham, according to the tradition, fearful for the souls of the wicked who died in his generation, proposed to Michael, who has charge of all the dead, that two of them unite their faith in prayer and supplication to the Lord in behalf of those spirits.[230] For he had beheld their miserable state in a vision, and wept at the sight, and said, "I had hoped that they would come to me; but they would not give me their love, but rather praised alien things and clung to things which did not belong to them," i.e., the things of this world.[231] He asks Abel, the great judge, whether there is anything he can do to help the spirits which remain "in the middle state" awaiting the final judgment, and he is informed that the work that will save them cannot be done "until the Judge of all comes at the end of time and decides their fate."[232]

Though proper "work for the dead" was only to come with the Messiah, Abraham was assured that it surely would come, and that his prayers on behalf of the dead would in time be answered. "Abraham's activity did not cease with his death, and as he interceded in this world for sinners, so will he intercede for them in the world to come. On that day he will sit at the gate of hell, and he will not suffer those who kept the law of circumcision to enter herein."[233] At once we think of "the Gates of Hell" and the promise to Peter, the other Rock; indeed, Genesis 12:3 might be taken as another form of the promise that what is bound and loosed on earth is bound and loosed in heaven. Abraham and Michael fell on their knees together when they were shown the broad and the narrow gates of which the Lord speaks in the New Testament, and prayed on behalf of the dead that they might yet enter into salvation.[234] In answer to their prayer, God sent an angel to take the spirits to an intermediate place, Paradise, upon which Abraham rejoiced and praised God for his boundless mercy.[235] A significant aspect of these other-worldly accounts is the way Abraham and Enoch can trade places—even as they do in the Pearl of Great Price. There, it is Enoch who makes the great appeal for the sinners, while he in turn is merely following the example of a higher one. (Moses 7:39.)

In the Jewish traditions Abraham claims the right of taking the place of both Enoch and Abel in sitting at the gate to examine those of his own dispensation who received the covenant from him.[236] In the shorter version of the Apocalypse of Abraham it is Enoch who keeps the records by the side of Abel the Judge, while Abraham stands before them to plead as an advocate for each spirit.[237] "Abraham's bosom" has been interpreted by the Rabbis as "a euphemism indicating the sign of circumcision," the sign that each of his children has received the covenant, that is, the assurance that he will give them his comfort and support in the hereafter.[238] In the ecstatic manner of the Thanksgiving Hymns of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the author of a Midrash (Midr. Ps. 40:4) bursts into songs of praise when he contemplates "the wondrous works and the thought (the Plan) Thou didst conceive, by which Abraham chose the yoke of the kingdoms for himself, for our sake, that we might . . . possess life in the world to come."

In traditional Judaism, according to K. Kohler, "the *main power* of Abraham" is in his constant intercession for the spirits who have passed on and are awaiting the judgment in another world; and this is considered "a specimen" of the type of work Father Abraham will do "after having entered Paradise. He will *always* be *milakh melitz* (the intercessor); on this idea the Kaddish or Prayers for the dead rests—that Abraham is the great champion of the dead."[239] Because of this work, each soul at the resurrection will be given a personal interview by one who will "effect a Tiqun for him, pray for him, and uplift him. . . ."[240] Recently Theodor Reick has argued that the Kaddish is the survival of an old "ancestor worship and devotion to

the dead," which was actually suppressed by Moses and the prophets, but has emerged whenever Israel was in particularly close contact with Egypt, for "they felt an emotional and mental affinity with the Egyptians."[241] That Moses withheld many teachings from the Jews is well-known, but it was not because those teachings were Egyptian, but because they were not ready to receive them.

Thus Abraham remains throughout eternity preeminently the friend of man, the kind father, husband, and host, the earnest and self-effacing advocate, the rescue worker, the zealous missionary, and finally the devoted worker for the dead. In this last capacity he is concerned as ever that the weak and helpless shall not be neglected; for as he checks the signs and tokens of those Israelites who come to him at the gate, he will take away those which the wicked and unworthy have received and give them to those poor souls, especially children, who died without receiving them.[242] Plainly we have to do here with a tradition dealing with what the Latter-day Saints call "work for the dead." This leads us to consideration of the broader subject of Abraham and the ordinances, in which the history of Abraham on the altar, which figures so prominently in the Book of Abraham, takes on a new and startling significance.

Abraham and the Ordinance

The New Abraham: Today, with the study of newly found documents that give a wholly new perspective on the early Jewish and Christian religions, the importance of Abraham has suddenly become enormously enhanced. Whereas the conventional Jewish view has been that "of only one mortal being, Moses, does Holy Scripture state that God spoke to him face to face . . . with all other prophets . . . the Deity speaks in dreams, in visions, in riddles,"[243] today we are told that the covenant made with Moses on Sinai was "but the fulfilment of the covenant made with Abraham," which is the true "foundation of the life of Israel ever since."[244] Whereas it has hitherto been taken for granted that "everyone knows that it was Moses who first knew the Eternal One,"[245] we now learn that "Abraham and not Moses was the founder of Israel's monotheism. . . . God is always described as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," not of Moses.[246] The covenant of the B'nai B'rith is today considered to be "the covenant that God made with Abraham, the first Jew, and afterwards renewed with Moses . . . the central and deathless theme and constitution of Judaism."[247]

Abraham seems to be regaining the matchless esteem in which he was once held by the Jewish doctors, who called him "Arba, the greatest of the faithful,"[248] *saddiq tamim*, "the perfect one,"[249] the first proselyte, first of his generation to follow God, who brought man near to God, the eye of the world,[250] "the saintly man [who] . . . justifies the creation of man. Because of him, man is vindicated."[251] He is the first and greatest of those "whose coinage is current in the entire world,"[252] who colonized the world for God, so that whereas "before Abraham the Lord was the king of heaven only, with Abraham he became the king of Heaven and Earth."[253] "Abraham entered into the covenant on which the world is based," says the Zohar (Lech Lecha 91b), "and thus the world was firmly established for his sake." There was a Hasidic teaching that "man is possessed of a ghost, a spirit, and a soul in this order of importance" and that "Abraham is the ghost of Israel; Moses his spirit, and the Messiah, his soul."[254] When at the Council in Heaven serious doubts were expressed as to the wisdom of creating the world, because of all the wickedness that would fill it, the view of Abraham and his few righteous descendants determined the deciding vote: ". . . forthwith the world was established for his sake."[255] Through his progeny and his missionary work "Abraham united the whole world for us, like a person who sews a torn garment together." (Midr. Rab. Gen. 39:3.) Abraham, Adam, Noah, i.e., the fathers of the great dispensations and their faithful descendants, are the real "kernel" of the human race; all the others are merely the "shell" of mankind.[256]

"The figure of Abraham today is enjoying great favor," writes E. Jacob. "History and faith, returning to their sources, regard him as their father. Scholars are searching for the real Abraham as never before."[257] The great appeal of Abraham, he points out, is the way in which he unites all men in a religion of love.[258] The motto of the new Institutum Judaicum for the combining of Jewish, Christian, and Moslem studies and interests at Tuebingen is "Abraham Our Father."[259] If Abraham is now being hailed as "the most pivotal and strategic man in the course of world history,"[260] the vindication for such an apparently extravagant claim is found in the Book of Abraham: ". . . for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after *thy* name, and shall be accounted *thy* seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father . . . and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood) . . . and in thy seed

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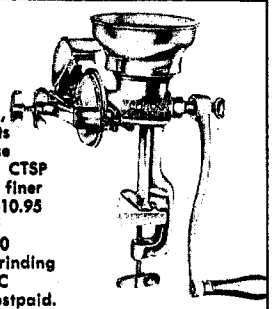

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after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel . . . even of life eternal." (Abr. 2:10-11. Italics added.)

Most surprising is the way in which certain Roman Catholic writers are now giving Abraham priority over Peter himself as "the Rock." This goes back to an old Jewish tradition that "when God sought to create the world . . . when he saw Abraham who was to arise, he said, 'Now I have a rock (petra) on which to build and establish the world. For this reason he called Abraham a rock."[261] And just as Abraham the fugitive became nothing less than the Rock on which the entire House of Israel was founded, "just so the outcast Peter became the foundation of the New House of Israel."[262] Today Roman Catholics not only write about "Thou art Abraham, and upon this rock,"[263] but see in Abraham a figure of the Messiah who comes "to establish the Kingdom of God on earth,"[264] who is more than a mere anticipation of the Kingdom, as other prophets are, but actually "recapitulates" all of Israel's history in himself, focusing all the past and future in his person, being a restorer as well as a founder—such a figure, S. Cavalletti concludes, can only be a messiah.[265]

Along with the mounting prestige of Abraham goes the growing feeling that there was something very special, something most strange and wonderful, in his relationship with God. The face-to-face conversation in Genesis 18 is "as magnificent as it is strange," writes A. Parrot.[266] The strangest thing of all is the way in which God seems to talk to Abraham on an equal footing, as one man to another. (Midr. Ps. 18:22.) This suggests to Sol Schechter what he calls "a sort of *Imitatio hominis* on the part of God. He acts as best man at the wedding of Adam. . . . He visits Abraham on his sickbed."[267] "To Abraham God appeared in the form of men," says Maimonides, "but to Lot, whose faculties were feeble, they appeared in the form of angels."[268] No one was more opposed to any form of anthropomorphism than Maimonides, and one cannot help asking, to which of the two men, Abraham or Lot, would God be more likely to appear as he *really* is? It would be hard to find a clearer, more unequivocal statement than Genesis 18:8: ". . . and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat"; yet the doctors have always declared in a single voice that they did *not* eat, since heavenly beings are immaterial.[269] "When we read of intercourse between God and Abraham," a modern scholar tells us, ". . . we must not think [in spite of the form of the words] of verbal speech, but rather of such intercourse as with men now."[270] Against this spiritual uniformitarianism, students are now realizing that the whole value of the Abraham story is that it does *not* deal with ordinary occurrences—it is completely removed from the world of everyday experiences. Learned rabbis now confess that they "cannot imagine the divine nature of the whole . . . in any other sense than of Rabbi Nobel's powerful . . . sermon of God's appearing before Abraham's tent: 'And God appeared to Abraham . . . and he lifted his eyes . . . and behold: *three men.*' "[271] However distasteful such literalism may be to the schoolmen, E. L. Cherbonnier points out, the Old Testament allows us no way out of it, for there man is seen to "share the same kind of existence which God himself enjoys. To learn this is like learning that one has won the sweepstakes. It made the Israelite cry, 'Hallelujah!' "[272]

Abraham's epithet, "the friend of God," suggests both intimacy and equality. When he pleads for his fellow sinners, Abraham almost seems to defy God, as when he asks him, "If you put evil into the heart of men, why are you angry with them when they do evil?"[273] These strange dialogues with God that still reverberate in Jewish tradition form an important part of the Pearl of Great Price, in which Abraham, Moses, and especially Enoch discuss with the Lord the state of man and God's dealings with him. It is interesting, since J. M. Ford suggests that Matthew 16:16-19 "may have an Aramaic background" and go back to "Biblical and non-Biblical material concerning Abraham,"[274] that the Lord tells Enoch in the Pearl of Great Price: "I am Messiah, the King of Zion, the *Rock* of Heaven, which is broad as eternity; whoso cometh in at the *gate* and climbeth up by me shall never fall." (Moses 7:53. Italics added.) Another significant parallel is when Abraham, faced with a hard assignment, *said in his heart*: "Thou didst send thine angel to deliver me from the gods of Elkenah, and I will do well to hearken to thy voice" (Abr. 2:13); for in the newly discovered Genesis Apocryphon, when Abraham is being confronted with the same task, "God reminds Abraham of all the favors which He has granted him since the departure from Haran, and then promises him His protection in the future."[275] And when he was in doubt about undertaking the unpleasant business of circumcision, his friend Mamre said to him, "When did He not stand by you—in the fiery

furnace, in famine, and in your war against the kings? Will you not obey him then in this matter?"[276] Here we have a single tradition that is also reported in the Book of Abraham, though Joseph Smith could have known nothing of it. Though intimate meetings occur, in the Book of Abraham as in the legends, God reveals himself to the Patriarch in many different ways and at many different levels, even as he did to Father Lehi.[277]

God was not offended by Abraham's boldness in defending his children; he was pleased with it, for "he came to the Lord with a sound heart." (Koran 37:84.) He was one of those "of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness," to whom the angels administer directly, according to Moroni 7:30. And so God treats him as an equal: "My name was not known among my creatures, and thou hast made it known among them: I will regard thee as though thou was associated with me in the creation of the world." (Midr. Rab. Gen. 43:7.) The boldness of this statement is supported by others: "Rabbi Nehemiah taught that God turned over the bestowal of blessings to Abraham, saying to him: 'Until now it was my responsibility to bless my world. From now on, the bestowal of blessings is turned over to thee. Whom it pleases thee to bless, thou shalt bless!"[278] Another version has it, "From the Creation of the world I planned to bless my creatures. I blessed Adam and Eve and Noah and his sons; from now on it is you who shall impart blessings!"[279] One is strongly reminded of the promise to Peter, for here God is endowing a man with his own powers. The Midrash goes even further: "If Abraham had not sought to rival God, he would not have become possessor of heaven and earth."[280] It even asks us, "Why should not the world have been created solely because of the merit of Abraham?"[281] and claims that God "could not have created His heaven and His earth had it not been for Abraham."[281] Nay, Abraham appears well on the way to becoming a creator in his own right, for to bring people into the Covenant is the equivalent of giving them a new life—"it is as though he had created them" (Midr. Rab. 39:14); and though "not all the inhabitants of the world together can create even a single gnat . . . yet God accounted it to Abraham as though they had made them."[282]

Altar and Temple: Today Abraham is being described as the *restorer* rather than the initiator of the knowledge of God and his holy rites and ordinances. He both "recapitulates" all that went before and anticipates all that is to come.[283] This is in perfect agreement with the declaration at the opening of the Book of Abraham that Abraham's immediate ancestors had fallen away from "the order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign." (Abr. 1:26.) According to Maimonides, "it was Abraham who found his way back from idolatry to monotheism."[284] This return to the old faith is symbolized by his rebuilding of the ancient altar of the first fathers, especially Noah. According to the Samaritan tradition, in Abraham the covenant of Noah is renewed,[285] just as the covenant of Adam was renewed by Noah when he built his altar after the Flood.[285] In the Book of Abraham, that patriarch is also represented as resuming the work of Noah. (Abr. 1:19; cf. 26-27.) Like Noah, Abraham's work represents the "restoration of the harmony that was broken" when men fell away in the preceding dispensation.[286]

"According to Jewish theology, Mt. Zion," on which Abraham built an altar to offer up Isaac, "is the cosmic rock uniting heaven and earth, and all the great sacrifices of the past were offered there" on an altar which was "demolished by the generation of the Division" but restored by Abraham.[287] This was supposed to be the very spot "whereon Adam had brought the first sacrifice, and Cain and Abel offered their gifts to God—the same whereon Noah raised an altar to God after he left the Ark; and Abraham . . . knew it was the place appointed for the Temple."[288] There were seven who built altars before the temple existed—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron.[289] The most important of these was Abraham: It was he, according to Maimonides, who recommended that Mt. Moriah be consecrated as the place of the ordinances forever after, and who dedicated the spot for the future temple (as did Moroni at Manti, Utah).[290] For when Abraham was shown all the dispensations of the future in a vision, "God also showed him the future Temple service and the Law."[291] "Before he went down into Egypt," wrote Baring-Gould, "Abraham was shown the entire 'temple-worship' by God. After which he returned to Haran and instructed people in the true religion: he erected three altars and gave thanks to God."[292]

On this theme the Zohar (Sperling and Simon's translation) is full of remarkable hints and suggestions. It tells us that Abraham in building his altars "proceeded from grade (or step) to grade until he reached his own rightful grade (Lech Lecha 80a)." Thus "when Abraham entered Canaan, God

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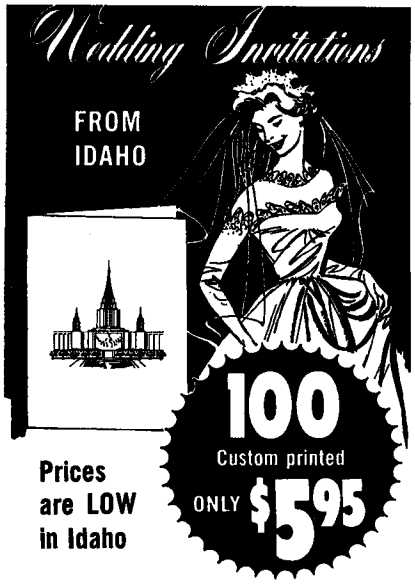

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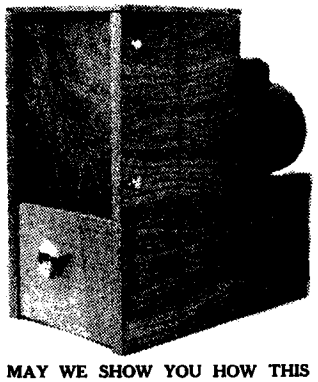

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appeared to him and he received a *nefesh* (became a living body), and built an altar to the corresponding grade of divinity." Then he went on southward and received a *ruach* (spirit); then he rose to the medium of the *neshamah* which is the highest degree." After this it was necessary for him to recapitulate all three steps "to test himself," and this was represented by his journey into Egypt (83b). It was only after his returning from Egypt and reviewing all the rites over again "so as to fix all in its proper place" and "keep the whole system united . . . that Abraham was fully endowed, and he became the lot and portion of God in real truth" (84a), the whole thing culminating in the assurance "the perfect faith which he had acquired on his first passage through the land would not depart from him and his descendants forever" (85a). An indication of the antiquity of this teaching is given in the Genesis Apocryphon, the twenty-first column of which begins: "In each place I pitched until I reached even to Beth-el, unto the place where I had built the altar, and I built it again." Thus the Zohar recounts that he reversed his course "to revisit his place and his grades, until he reached the first grade where his first revelation had taken place, back to Bethel, 'the perfect stone.'" (83b end.) The parallel to the Hopi system of *pasos* is quite astonishing.

Modern scholars tell us that Abraham's altars "had no use or significance except as a means of sacrifice," and that "nothing is known of the motive prompting these sacrifices, nor of the sacrifices themselves. . . . the type of sacrifice is not stated."[293] But the claim of the Pearl of Great Price is that "the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost. And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam, a holy ordinance, and the Gospel preached, and a decree sent forth, that it should be in the world until the end thereof. . . ." (Moses 5:58-59.) This teaching is certainly borne out by the Jewish traditions, which taught that "Abraham knew the entire Thora" and even the Halacha, which "God gave to the heavenly Sanhedrin," i.e., the council in heaven, though the Jewish Doctors confess themselves at a loss to explain how he came to know it all before the revelation on Sinai.[294] Thus "it is certain that Abraham was baptized,"[295] for anyone entering the covenant of Abraham "when he has immersed himself and ascended from the water [he] is an Israelite in every respect."[296] It was only to discredit Christian baptism, according to S. B. Hoenig, that the rabbis finally came to insist that circumcision alone was the "Covenant of Abraham," though actually it never was the Covenant but only "a token or sign marking the Covenant."[297] Likewise, though the locating of all the ancient altars on the site of the later altar of the temple at Jerusalem led to all sorts of geographical complications and speculation, its purpose was plainly to emphasize the continuity of the religion of Abraham and the other patriarchs down to Christ. Thus the tradition that Adam was made of the soil of Mt. Moriah binds all mankind "to the mountain on which Abraham would expiate our forefathers' sins."[298]

Expiation is atonement, and it was the Christians who made the most of the unbroken ritual line from Adam to Christ: "In that very place where Melchizedek administered as priest, where Abraham offered up his son Isaac, the wood of the cross was set up; at the place where the four quarters of the earth meet."[299] No concept was more appealing to the Christians than that which identified Isaac carrying the wood for his sacrifice with the Lord bearing the cross—to the very same spot, so it was held, and still is.[300] As Abraham stood on that spot, "he saw the cross of the Messiah, and the redemption of our father Adam."[301] There is no better known Christian legend than that which describes the cross of Calvary as resting squarely on the skull of Adam to represent the beginning and the ending of the process of redemption.[302] And Abraham stands exactly between them. There are five things, according to the Pirke Aboth (VI, 10), that God himself acquired in this world—the Torah, heaven and earth, Abraham, Israel, and the temple; these make up the main ingredients of the Plan of Eternity, and Abraham stands squarely in the middle: "Everything he does, Israel does later!" (Midr. Rab. 40:6.)

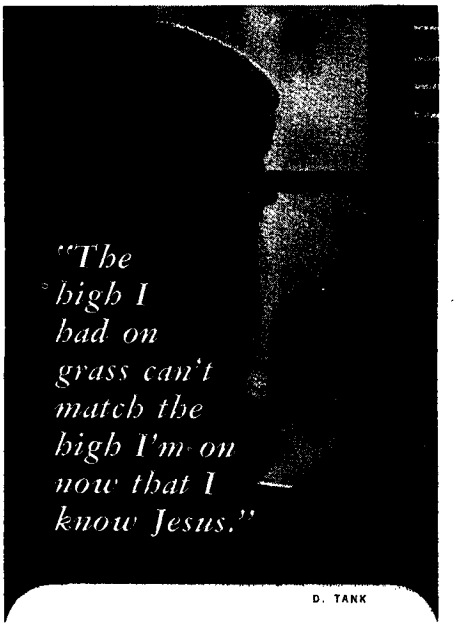
Abraham and Adam: Everything that Abraham does Adam did before him. As Adam left his Father's heavenly home for an earthly paradise, so also did Abraham. (Gen. 13:10.) "Get thee out" meant for Abraham a new opportunity for advancement, says the Zohar, "for thine own advantage, to prepare thyself, to perfect thy degree." (Lech Lecha 77b, end.) Finding himself in the new land, Abraham was instructed by the Lord, "Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee" (Gen. 13:17; Gen. Apocr. XXI, 8 ff), just as Adam was given the same order, to go forth and inspect the garden, possess it, and take

care of it. And as Adam was given charge of the animals to see to it that every form of life should flourish in its proper sphere and element and have joy therein, so "God said to Abraham: As I put *Adam* and then Noah in charge of all my creatures, I now put you in charge of them, and order you to give my blessing to them."[303] So Abraham like Adam has his Eden, his "Mystic Garden," where he protects all creatures from the withering blight of the empty spaces without.[304]

Both Adam and Abraham, when forced to go forth into a lone and dismal world, are designated by the code name of Jared, which Eisler points out means "fallen from high estate."[305] They become the ancestors and the type of "the Remnant saved and saving . . . the chosen tribe of Levi and . . . the suffering Jewish people,"[306] dramatically embodied in the sectaries of the desert, who in their way of life considered themselves "the free seed of Abraham" preserving their integrity in a real wilderness.[307] One remarkable episode in the Apocalypse of Abraham (10:2ff) shows us the hero lying unconscious on the earth while a voice says, "Go Jaoel [a sectarian name for Jehovah] in the power of my unutterable name, and raise that man up for me!" Then, says Abraham, speaking in the first person, "the angel whom He sent to me came to me in the likeness of a man, took me by the right hand, and raised me to my feet saying, 'Abraham, arise! . . . I have been sent to thee to strengthen thee and bless thee in the name of the Lord . . . the Creator of Heaven and earth.'" (10:5-7.) "Jaoel" tells Abraham, "I have been commissioned to visit you and your posterity, and *along with Michael* to give you our blessing eternally. Be of good cheer and go to!" (10:16.) As G. H. Box explains the passage, "The archangel Jaoel . . . here seems to play the part of Metatron-Michael. . . . The archangel Jaoel was specifically sent by God to instruct him [Abraham] and to initiate him into the knowledge of the heavenly mysteries."[308] The fact that the confusion of the names Jehovah, El, Michael, and Metatron is permitted to stand by the rabbis, who do not pretend to understand their relationships, is an indictation of the high authority and antiquity of the text.

These words of cheer to Abraham follow immediately upon instructions that he is to build an altar and offer sacrifices. (10:16.) In the very old Pseudo-Jonathan, the Lord says to Abraham: "This is the spot where Adam, when he was driven out of Paradise, built an altar, and offered up the first sacrifices to me. . . . It is now thy duty, Abraham, to build it again!"[309] Having built his altar as instructed, "Abraham opened his mouth and spoke in the Adamic language, which had ceased from the earth since the time of Babel," calling upon the Lord.[310] This, it is claimed, was the beginning of Jewish liturgy,[311] and the sacrifice offered by Abraham was identical with that offered by Adam and Noah before him.[312] It was up to Abraham to make the first move, since "there is no stirring above till there is a stirring below. . . . we do not say grace over an empty table." (Zohar, L.L., 88a-b.) But the prayer did not go unanswered; again Abraham was visited and received yet more light and knowledge, thereafter building three altars for the specific purpose of instructing his children and warning them against apostasy.[313] The last time Michael called upon Abraham, the Patriarch, in washing his guest's feet, recognized them as the feet of one of the three men who had visited him in Mamre long before (Gen. 18), whereupon he said, "Now I know that thou art an angel [lit., messenger] of the Lord, and wast sent to take my soul," but he hesitates to go with him save on certain conditions; "Michael returned to heaven" and reported to God, who told him, "Go and take up Abraham in the body and show him all things, and . . . do to him as to My friend."[314]

In these accounts "Abraham is the prototype of the novice who is initiated into the mysteries, just as in the Sefer Yetzira into the mysteries of its cosmological speculation,"[315] in which the Book of Abraham is so rich. The Talmud explains that in choosing Abraham rather than Adam to transmit the teachings, he reasoned, ". . . should Adam become corrupt, then Abraham will come and restore order."[316] It goes even further than that: "The Jews even attributed a Messianic character to Abraham, as completing or correcting the work of Adam," so that in Genesis 14:6, Abraham restores what Adam had lost.[317] If many studies have appeared in recent years discussing the early Christian equation of Adam and Christ, it must also be admitted that Abraham too partakes of the nature of both. There is no doubt that Christ and Abraham in the historical and doctrinal records alike (*geschichtlich und überlieferungsgeschichtlich*) present striking parallels, J. Soggin admits, though he is reluctant to admit any significant resemblance.[318] When Satan says to Abraham, "Why are you on the top of this dangerous mountain? You will be consumed!" trying to intimidate and coerce him;[319] or when Abraham is



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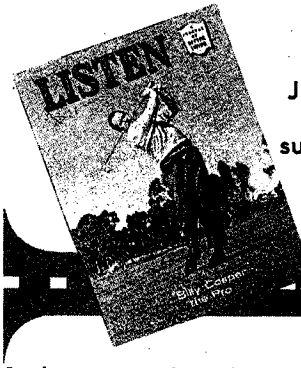

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described as "one despised and smitten;"[320] or when the jailer calls in a loud voice at the mouth of the pit: "Abraham, are you living or dead?"[321] or when we are told that "the act of Abraham [the covenant and circumcision] remains a never-ceasing atonement for Israel,"[322] we naturally think in terms of Jesus Christ, as the New Testament bids us. One of the earliest Christian writings insists that it was Christ, "the True Prophet," who "appeared to Abraham and taught him the knowledge of godhead; showed him the origin of the world and its end; revealed to him the immortality of the soul and the manner of life which was pleasing to God; declared also to him the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, of the future judgments, and of rewards and punishments to come. And then He departed again to the invisible abodes."[323] This agrees with the report of IV Ezra 3:13f, that Abraham alone was favored by God with a full revelation of "the end of the times, secretly by night."

To make the story complete, Satan deals with Abraham exactly as he does with Adam. He was waiting for Abraham in the land of Canaan just as he was waiting for Adam in the Garden: "The wicked serpent that was cursed held sway over the land of Canaan," though "it was in that land that Abram drew near to God." (Zohar, L.L., 79b.) It is significant that Satan in this particular context should be designated as the serpent. When Michael comes to make Abraham "acquainted with the higher wisdom which he had not known previously," i.e., to give him further light and knowledge (*ibid.*, 80a), he recognizes Satan as the old enemy whom he had cast out of heaven and rebukes him.[324] In the Apocalypse of Abraham it is Jaoel who rebukes the devil, telling him, "God will not permit you to possess the bodies of the righteous. . . . Depart from this man! For there is enmity between him and all that follow thee. . . . For behold, thy garment which was thine in heaven, is now reserved for him, and the perishable corruption that was his has gone over to thee!"[325] This, incidentally, offers a significant parallel to the story of the *two garments* of Moroni (Al. 46:23-26) and Tha'labi. After dismissing Satan, the Lord commands Abraham not to consort with him anymore, "lest he fall under the influence of his powerful mind."[326]

The Satan of the Abraham traditions is no fantastic monster with claws and horns; he is a handsome, well-dressed man and a persuasive speaker. As such he appears to the troubled king to instruct him on how to deal with Abraham; as such he appears to Abraham on the altar, advising him to yield sensibly to the monarch; as a venerable sage he argues with Abraham and Isaac and, approaching Sarah when she is alone, tries by convincing arguments to weaken her faith in the religion of her husband. He can be recognized not by frightful deformities but, according to the Pirke Aboth (V, 22), by (1) a disturbing eye, (2) a haughty spirit, and (3) a proud mind, whereas a disciple of Abraham has a good eye, a lowly spirit, and a humble mind. Such signs of recognition were considered important. Thus we are told that when Joseph revealed his identity to his brethren in Egypt, it was by showing them "the sign of the covenant, and he said to them: 'It is through this that I have attained to this estate, through keeping this intact.'" (Zohar, Lech Lecha 93b.) The Zohar explains that "this" is a sign imprinted in the flesh, and that "whenever a man is stamped [sealed] with this holy imprint, through it he sees God. . . . So if he does not guard it, 'they lose the nehamah given by God.'" (94a.) We are told that Jacob recognized the garment of Joseph when it was brought to him by "three marks or tokens that were on the garment," which showed it to be "the very one that had belonged to *Abraham*, having already had a long history," going clear back to the Garden of Eden.[327]

That Abraham had the priesthood is perfectly clear from the Book of Abraham and the Jewish traditions alike. The only problem for the learned Rabbis is just how and when he could have obtained it. One account tells us that Isaac asked his father as they climbed the mountain together, "Are you a priest, to make a sacrifice?" to which Abraham replied, "Shem the High Priest will make the sacrifice."[328] In another version Abraham asks himself, "Am I fit to perform the sacrifice, am I a priest? Ought not rather the high priest Shem to do it?" and God replies, "When thou wilt arrive at that place, I will consecrate thee and make thee a priest."[329] Still another has it that when Abraham asked, "Where is the priest to officiate?" the voice of God answered: "Henceforth thou art clothed with that dignity, as was formerly Shem, Noah's son."[330] According to the Midrash (Mid. Rab., 44) Melchizedek himself instructed Abraham in all the functions of the high priest, and we can easily surmise from this how Shem and Melchizedek came to be identified as one, though living centuries apart: It was indeed the priesthood of Shem that Abraham inherited (Abr. 1:19, 28), but since the practices of the priesthood had fallen into disuse in his family (Abr. 1:5), it was Melchizedek who gave him the necessary instructions.

It is common to trace the priesthood of Abraham back to Adam: "The Lord said to Abraham: 'Follow me, and I will make thee a High Priest after the order of Adam, the first man.'"[331] The Zohar reports that "Elihu was a descendant of Abraham and also as a priest" by his "exemplary behavior earned . . . the honorable title of 'The Man Adam,'" Adam being the archtype of the high priest.[332] The garment of Abraham just referred to was nothing less than "the garment of skin which God gave Adam," which was handed down as "a High-priestly robe" in a direct line to Seth, Methuselah, Noah, Japheth, Shem, and Abraham, and so on to Moses.[333] What has been called the "peculiar emphasis on covenants" in Abraham's career,[334] is closely connected both with Abraham's priesthood and with his celebrated hospitality. For hospitality is the receiving into one's own tent or family (the Hebrew word for tent is the Arabic word for family) of a stranger and outsider, that being the express purpose of the covenant. It was as a guest in Abraham's tent that the Lord covenanted with him. (Gen. 18:10, 14.) When by circumcision 318 strangers became members of Abraham's family, they were simply repeating Abraham's own covenant with the Lord, following his example as the type *convert*. (Midr. Ps. 17:12.) The circumcision itself was not the covenant, as many have falsely assumed, but only "a token or sign marking the covenant,"[335] and as such subject to being supplanted in time by other signs and tokens.[336] But whatever the signs or tokens may be, the important thing about them, as about the covenant itself, is that no one is born to them; they cannot be acquired unconsciously or automatically; everyone, including Abraham himself, is a convert; he inherits the kingdom not by birth but by willingly and knowingly entering a covenant. As far as birth is concerned, as Lehi told his haughty sons, "the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one; he that is righteous is favored of God." (1 Ne. 17:35.)

FOOTNOTES

216 Bez, cited by Beer, p. 90.

217 Midrash Rabbah, Gen. 39:14; D. M. Eichhorn, ed., *Conversion to Judaism* (New York: Ktar, 1966), p. 14.

218 Vermes, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

219 Ginzberg, *L. J.*, I, 219.

220 *Ibid.*, I, 263. "Abraham our father used to bend men to and lead them under the wings of the Shekinah. And not Abraham alone did this, but Sarah as well . . . ," J. Goldin, *R. Nathan*, p. 68.

221 Ka'ab al-Akbar, cit. B. Chapira, in *Revue Etudes Juives*, Vol. 69, p. 104; also in Mishna Torah, Aboda Zara I, 3.

222 R. J. Loewe, in A. Altmann, *Biblical*

Motifs, p. 179, n. 91.
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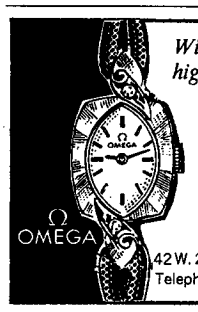
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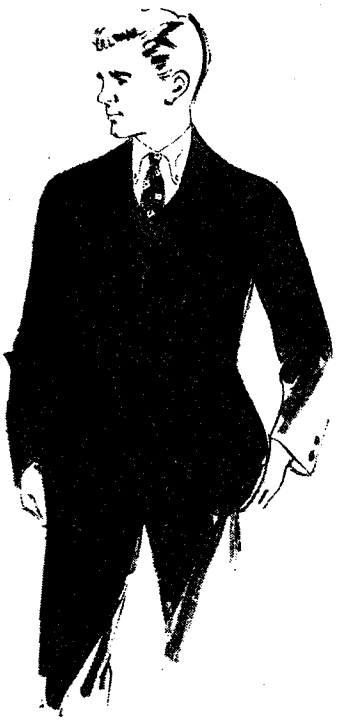

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The Sacrifice of Isaac

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

● *Types and Shadows*: While it is the unique and different in human experience that most engages the modern fancy, the Egyptian, as we have seen, was intrigued by the repeated and characteristic events of life. The most important of these events were ritualized, just as we ritualize the inauguration of a President or the Rose Bowl game, repeating the same plot year after year with different actors. Hence, if Abraham and Sarah went through the same routine with King Abimelech as with Pharaoh, it is not because either or both stories are fabrications, as scholars have so readily assumed, but because both kings were observing an accepted pattern of behavior in dealing with eminent strangers. Likewise, if Abraham was put on an altar-bed like dozens of others, it was because such treatment of important guests had become standard procedure for combating the drought prevailing in the world at that time.

Repeating patterns of history suggest ritual as a means of dramatizing and controlling events, but they exist in their own right—they are not invented by men. In the exodus of the Saints from Nauvoo, thousands of people suddenly found themselves moving west in the dead of winter amid scenes of some confusion. But within three days the entire host was organized into 12 main groups—one under each of the apostles—and companies of 50 and 100. Instantly and quite unintentionally the order of Israel in the wilderness and the Sons of Light in the Judean desert was faithfully duplicated. A student of history 3,000 years from now might well reject the whole account as mythical since it so obviously reduplicated an established pattern.

To one who is aware of the interplay of pattern and accident in history the stories of the sacrifice of Isaac and of Sarah are perfect companion pieces to the drama of Abraham on the altar. Take first the case of Isaac, who is just another Abraham: a well-known tradition has it that he was in the exact image of his father,[1] so exact, in fact, that until Abraham's hair turned white there was absolutely no way of distinguishing between the two men fo

spite of their difference of age.[2] "Abraham and Isaac are bound to each other with extraordinary intimacy," writes a recent commentator; ". . . the traditions regarding the one are not to be distinguished from those concerning the other," e.g., both men leave home to wander, both go to Egypt, both are promised endless posterity and certain lands as an inheritance.[3] What has been overlooked is the truly remarkable resemblance between Isaac on the altar and Abraham on the altar.

First, in both stories there is much made of the preparatory gathering of wood for a "holocaust" that never takes place. Abraham is commanded, "Take now thy son . . . and offer him . . . for a *burnt* offering." (Gen. 22:2. Italics added.) "Behold, I offer thee now as a holocaust," he cries in the Pseudo-Philo.[4] Accordingly, he "bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar on the wood,"[5] sometimes described as a veritable tower, just like the structure that "Nimrod" had built for Abraham.[6] And while the Midrash has Isaac carrying the wood of the sacrifice "as one carries a cross on his shoulder,"[7] so Abraham before him "took the wood for the burnt offering and carried it, just as a man carries his cross on his shoulder."[8] According to one tradition, the sacrifice was actually completed and Isaac turned to ashes.[9] On the other hand, when the princes announced their intention of putting Abraham in a fiery furnace, he is said to have submitted willingly: "If there is any sin of mine so that I be burned, the will of God be done."[10] Indeed, the Hasidic version has it that "Abraham our father offered up his life for the sanctification of the Name of God and threw himself into the fiery furnace. . . ."[11] The famous play on the words "Ur of the Chaldees" and "Fire [ur] of the Chaldees" was probably suggested by these traditions—not the other way around, since Isaac escapes from the flames in the same way that Abraham does; i.e., the original motif requires a fire, not a city called Ur.

For all the emphasis on sacrificial fire, it is the knife that is the instrument of execution in the attempted offerings of Abraham and Isaac: "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." (Gen. 22:10.) It was always the custom to slaughter (*zabakh*) the victim and then burn the remains to ashes; the blood must be shed and the offering never struggles in the flames. Many stories tell how the knife was miraculously turned aside as it touched the neck of the victim, whether Abraham or Isaac: suddenly the throat is protected by a collar of copper, as it turns to marble, or the knife becomes soft lead.[12] But in the usual account it is dashed from the hand of the officiant by an angel who is visible to the victim on the altar but not to the priest.[13] If the wood under Abraham and Isaac was never ignited, neither did the knife ever cut.

Being bound on the altar, Abraham, as the Book of Abraham and the legends report, prayed fervently for deliverance. Exactly such a prayer was offered as Isaac lay on the altar, but though in this case it was Isaac who was in mortal peril, it was again Abraham who uttered the prayer for deliverance: "May He who answered *Abraham* on Mt. Moriah, answer you, and may He listen to the voice of your cry this day."[14] And just as the angels appealed to God when they saw Abraham on the altar, so later when they saw Isaac in the same situation they cried out in alarm: "What will happen to the covenant with Abraham to 'Establish my covenant with Isaac,' for the slaughtering knife is set upon his throat. The tears of the angels fell upon the knife, so that it could not cut Isaac's throat. . . ."[15] It is still

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Abraham for whom the angels are concerned, even though it is the life of Isaac that is in intimate danger. Everything seems to hark back to the original sacrifice—that of Abraham. Thus, at the moment that Isaac was freed from the altar, "God renewed his promises to *Abraham*,"[16] the very promises that had been given at the moment of Abraham's own deliverance (Abr. 1:16, 19); while he in turn prayed to God "that when the children of Isaac come to a time of distress, thou mayest remember on their behalf the binding of Isaac their father, and loose and forgive their sins and deliver them from all distress."[17] Thus Abraham's prayer for deliverance is handed down to all his progeny.

In both sacrifice stories an angel comes to the rescue in immediate response to the prayer, while at the same time the voice of God is heard from heaven. This goes back to Genesis 22:11f, 15-18, where "the angel of the Lord" conveys to Abraham the words of God speaking in the first person: "And the angel of the Lord . . . said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord. . . ." As the Rabbis explained it, "God makes a sign to the Metatron, who in turn calls out to Abraham. . ."[18] or "the Almighty hastened to send his voice from above, saying: Do not slay thy son."[19] That this complication is ancient and not invented by the doctors, whom it puzzled, is indicated in the "lion-couch" situation in which, as we have seen, the appearance of the heavenly messenger is accompanied by the voice of the Lord of all, which is heard descending from above. It is Abraham who establishes the standard situation: how many times in his career did he find himself in mortal danger only to pray and be delivered by an angel? An angel came to rescue the infant in the cave when his mother had given him up for dead; the same angel came to rescue the child Abraham from the soldiers, saying, "Do not fear, for the Mighty One will deliver thee from the hand of thine enemies!"[20] The same angel delivered him first from starvation in prison and then from death in the flames. So it is not surprising that the angel who comes to rescue Isaac puts a stop to the proceedings by calling out "Abraham, Abraham" (Gen. 22:11f), while Isaac remains passive throughout.[21]

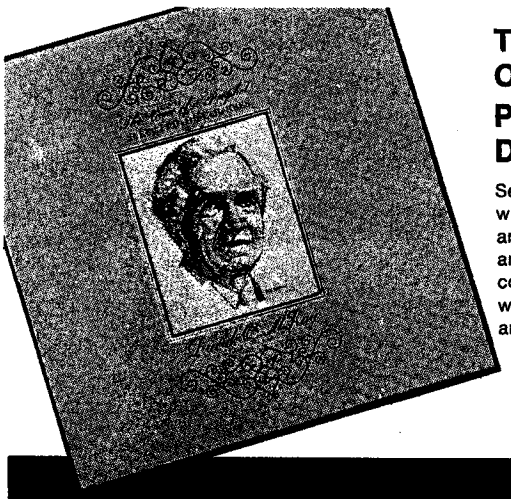
One of the strangest turns of the Abraham story was surely Abraham's refusal to be helped by the angel, with its striking Egyptian parallel.[22] Surprisingly enough, the same motif occurs in the sacrifice of Isaac. For according to the Midrash, God ordered Michael, "Delay not, hasten to Abraham and tell him not to do the deed!" And Michael obeyed: "Abraham! Abraham! What art thou doing?" To this the Patriarch replied, "Who tells me to stop?" "A messenger sent from the Lord!" says Michael. But Abraham answers, "The Almighty Himself commanded me to offer my son to Him —only He can countermand the order; I will not hearken to any messenger!" So God must personally intervene to save Isaac.[23] Such a very peculiar twist to the story—the refusal of angelic assistance in the moment of supreme danger—is introduced by way of explaining that it is God and not the angel who delivers; so in the Book of Abraham: ". . . and the angel of his presence stood by me, and immediately unloosed my bands; and his voice was unto me: Abraham, Abraham, behold, my name is Jehovah, and I have heard thee, and have come down to deliver thee. . . ." (Abr. 1:15-16.) Everything indicates that this is the old authentic version.

In both sacrifices the role of Satan is the same, as he does his best at every step to frustrate the whole business. As the man in black silk pleaded with Abraham on the altar to be sensible, yield to the king, and so save his own life, even so he addresses him at the second sacrifice: "Are you crazy—killing your own son!" To which Abraham replied, "For that purpose he was born." Satan then addressed Isaac: "Are you going to allow this?" And the young man answered, "I know what is going on, and I submit to it."[24] First Satan had done everything in his power to block their progress on the road to the mountain,[25] and then as a venerable and kindly old man he had walked along with them, piously and reasonably pointing out that a *just* God would not demand the sacrifice of a son.[26] It was even Satan, according to some, who dashed the knife from Abraham's hand in the last moment.[27] In both stories it is Satan who suggests the sacrifice in the first place,[28] and then does everything in his power to keep it from being carried out. Why is that? The explanation is given both times: Mastema suggests the supreme sacrifice in order to discredit Abraham with the angels, for he is sure that the prophet will back out in the end. As soon as it becomes perfectly clear, therefore, that Abraham is *not* backing out, Satan becomes alarmed, and to keep from losing his bet he wants to call the whole thing off.

In a recent and important study, A. R. Rosenberg has pointed out that the sacrifice of Isaac has its background in the Canaanitish rite of the substitute king, which rite was "celebrated in

both Persia and Babylonia in connection with the acronical rising of Sirius . . . [as Saturn] the god who demanded human sacrifices."[29] We have already noted that the worship of Sirius played a conspicuous part, according to the Book of Abraham 1:9, in the rites involving the sacrifice of Abraham. In connection with the offering of Isaac, Rosenberg lays great emphasis on a passage from the Book of Enoch: ". . . the Righteous One shall arise from sleep and walk in the paths of righteousness," the figure on the altar being the Righteous One.[30] At once we think of "the weary one" or "the sleeping one" who arises from the lion-couch. What confirms the association is the report that "as Isaac was about to be sacrificed, the *Arelim* began to roar in heaven."[31] For the Arelim are "the divine lions,"[31] whose role in Egyptian sacrifical rites we have already explained. Thus, even the lion motif is not missing from our two sacrifice stories.

The close resemblance between the sacrifices of Abraham and Isaac, far from impugning the authenticity of either story, may well be viewed as a confirmation of both. J. Finkel points out that there are many close parallels to the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in ancient literature, and that these are "overwhelmingly ritualistic,"[32] that is, they belong to a category of events that follow a set pattern and yet *really do happen*. "On the mountain of the Temple Abraham offered Isaac his son," according to a Targum, "and on this mountain—of the Temple—the glory of the Shekhinah of the Lord was revealed to him."[33] What happened there was the type and shadow of the temple ordinances to come, which were in turn the type and shadow of a greater sacrifice. The one sacrifice prefigures the other, being, in the words of St. Ambrose, "less perfect, but still of the same order."[34] Isaac is a type: "Any man," says the Midrash, "who acknowledges that there are two worlds, is *an* Isaac," and further explains, "Not *Isaac* but *in Isaac*—that is, a portion of the seed of Isaac, not all of it. . . ."[35] In exactly the same sense Abraham too is a type: ". . . and *in* thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and *in* thy seed . . . shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Abr. 2:11. Italics added.) Far from being disturbed by resemblances, we should find them most reassuring. Is it surprising that the sacrifice of Isaac looked both forward and back, as "Isaac thought of himself as the type of offerings to come, while Abraham thought of himself as atoning for the guilt of Adam," or that "as Isaac was being bound on the altar, the spirit of Adam,



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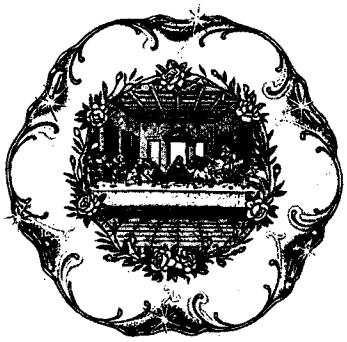

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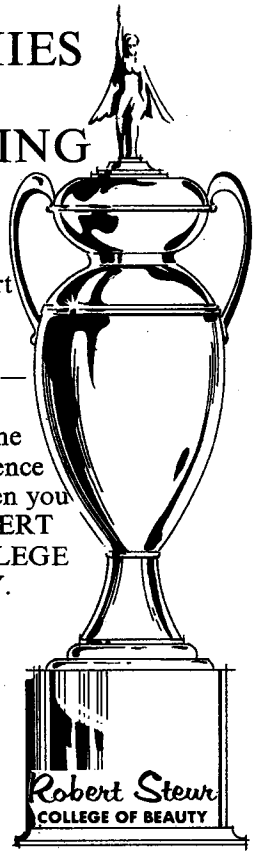

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the first man, was being bound with him"?[36] It was natural for Christians to view the sacrifice of Isaac as a type of the Crucifixion, yet it is the Jewish sources that comment most impressively on the sacrifice of the Son. When at the creation of the world the angels asked, "What is man that Thou shouldest remember him?" God replied: "You shall see the father slay his son, and the son consenting to be slain, to sanctify my name."[37] When Abraham performed "the various sacrifices that should once be brought in the Temple, to atone for the sins of Israel," he was shown the whole history of the world, and the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection, and how in the end his own father would be saved by ministrations on behalf of the dead.[38] So, as Joseph Smith has told us, Abraham was perfectly aware of the entire plan of salvation and of his place in it.[39]

The importance of the sacrifice of Isaac as a type of atonement is brought out in many references to the cosmic significance of the ram which took Isaac's place. From its horn was made the *shofar* which was to be blown on New Year's Day forever after to remind the people "of the offering of Isaac as an atonement for Israel."[40] According to Rabbi Eliezer, its left horn announces the redemption of Israel at the New Year, while its right horn will be the trumpet that announces the millennium.[41] Every part of the ram figures in the history of Israel's salvation: Its ashes form the foundation of the inner altar, its sinews make the ten strings of David's harp, its skin is Elijah's girdle, one of its horns is blown on Sinai and the other for the final gathering of all Israel.[42] Like the altar of Isaac, which is supposed to have been the same one on which Adam, Cain, Abel, and Noah sacrificed before and on which David and Solomon were to make offering thereafter,[43] the ram is one of those symbols that binds all times, places, and dispensations together in a single unified plan.

But if Isaac is a type of the Messiah as "the Suffering Servant," Abraham is no less so. Even while he labors to minimize any spiritual resemblance between Christ and Abraham, M. Soggin reluctantly confesses that the historical and literary parallels between the two are most conspicuous.[44] R. Graves has called attention to the various signs and characteristics that show that Abraham himself was a type of the sacred victim as a substitute offering for a king, just as Isaac was.[45] An important point of resemblance between the two sacrifices is the complete freedom of will with which the victim submits. "I know what is going on," says Isaac on the altar, "and I submit to it!"[46] In time the main significance of the Akedah, the binding of Isaac, was on the free-will offering of the victim for the atonement of Israel; we are even told that Isaac at the age of 37 actually "asked to be bound on the Day of Atonement and Abraham functioned as the High Priest at the altar."[47] In the same way, a great deal is made of Abraham's willingness: "I was with thee," says God in the Midrash, "when thou didst willingly offer for my name's sake to enter the fiery furnace."[48] When Abraham refused to escape though Prince Jectan opened the way for him, the Prince told him, "Your blood will be upon your own head," to which the hero cheerfully agreed.[49] According to one tradition, Abraham had the choice of handing over to the king some sort of token or seal (a brick with his name on it?) or giving up his life, and he deliberately chose the latter.[50] The Hasidic teaching was that "Abraham our father offered up his life . . . and threw himself into the fiery furnace."[51] There need be no sense of competition between the merits of father and son here—others too have made the supreme sacrifice—but the significance of Abraham's test on the altar, as R. J. Loewe points out, "is that Abraham in Nimrod's furnace is the *first* of those who willingly gave up his life for the sanctification of the divine Name."[52] This assigns a very important place in the history of the atonement to the drama depicted in the Book of Abraham and strongly attests its authenticity.

The Resurrection Motif: In the Egyptian versions of the "lion-couch" drama, the resurrection motif was paramount. The sacrifices of Isaac and Abraham, apart from typifying the atonement, were also foreshadowings of the resurrection. There are persistent traditions in each case that the victim actually was put to death, only to be resurrected on the spot. We have seen in the Abraham stories how, when no knife could cut his throat, he was catapulted into the fire, which thereupon was instantly transformed into a blooming bower of delicious flowers and fruits amid which Abraham sat enjoying himself in angelic company.[53] This at once calls to mind the image found in numerous (and very early) Oriental seals and murals of the revived or resurrected king sitting beneath an arbor amid the delights of the feast at the New Year.[54] St. Jerome cites a Jewish belief that Abraham's rescue from the altar was the equivalent of a rebirth or resurrection.[55] It is Abraham who leads out in the resurrection:

"After these things," says the Testament of Judah (25:1), "shall Abraham and Isaac and Jacob arise unto life, and I (Judah) and my brethren shall be chiefs of the tribes of Israel."

The stories of the resurrection of Isaac are quite explicit. As Rabbi Eliezer puts it, "When the blade touched his neck, the soul of Isaac fled and departed . . . but at the words 'lay not thy hand . . .' his soul returned to his body and he stood upon his feet and knew that in this manner the dead in the future would be quickened. And he said: Blessed art thou, O Lord, who quickeneth the dead."[56] Another tradition is that "the tears of the angels fell upon the knife, so that it could not cut Isaac's throat, but for terror his soul escaped from him"—he died on the altar.[57] Another has it that as the knife touched his throat "his life's spirit departed—his body became like ashes," i.e., he actually became a burnt offering;[58] or, as G. Vermes puts it, "though he did not die, scripture credits Isaac with having died and his ashes having lain upon the altar."[59] But he only dies in order to prefigure the resurrection, for immediately God sent the dew of life "and Isaac received his spirit again, while the angels joined in a chorus of praise: Praised be the Eternal, thou who hast given life to the dead!"[60] In another account God orders Michael to rush to the rescue: "Why standest thou here? Let him not be slaughtered! Without delay Michael, anguish in his voice, cried out: 'Abraham! Abraham! Lay not thy hand upon the lad. . . . At once Abraham left off from Isaac, who returned to life, revived by the heavenly voice."[61] Isaac is a symbol of revival and renewal—"Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14.) At his birth, we are told, both Abraham and Sarah regained their youth.[62] And "just as God gave a child to Abraham and Sarah when they had lost all hope, so he can restore Jerusalem."[63] When R. Graves surmises that "Abraham according to the custom would renew his youth by the sacrifice of his first-born son," he is referring to a custom which Abraham fervidly denounced but which was nonetheless observed in his own family, according to the Book of Abraham (1:30), which reports that his own father "had determined against me, to take away my life." The famous Strassburg Bestiary begins with a vivid scene of the sacrifice of Isaac followed by the drama of the sacrificial death and resurrection of the fabulous Phoenix-bird, the Egyptian and early Christian symbol of the resurrection.[64]

Why the insistence on the death and resurrection of Israel? Because a perfect sacrifice must be a *complete* sacrifice, and the rabbinical tradition, especially when it was directed against the claims of the Christians, insisted that the sacrifice of Isaac was the perfect sacrifice, thus obviating the need for the atoning death of Christ. "Though the idea of the death and resurrection of Isaac was generally rejected by rabbinic Judaism," writes R. A. Rosenberg, still the proposition was accepted "that Isaac was 'the perfect sacrifice,' the atonement offering that brings forgiveness of sins through the ages."[65] Accordingly, the blood of the Paschal lamb is considered to be the blood of *Isaac*,[65] and according to some Jewish sectaries the real purpose of the Passover is to celebrate the offering of Isaac rather than the deliverance from Egypt.[66] It wasn't only the sectaries, however: "In Rabbinical writings all sacrifice is a memorial of Isaac's self-oblation."[67]

The Uncompleted Sacrifice: But the stories of Isaac's "resurrection" are scattered, conflicting, and poorly attested, however persistent, and this leads to serious difficulty: "The main problem was, of course," writes Vermes, "the obvious fact that Isaac did not actually die on the altar."[68] The whole biblical account, in fact, focuses on the dramatic *arrest* of the action at its climax—"Lay *not* thine hand upon the lad." (Gen. 22:12. Italics added.) It has often been claimed, in fact, that the story of Isaac's sacrifice really records the abolition of human sacrifice, when Abraham decides it will not be necessary.[69] But the validity of the sacrifice, according to the Rabbis, lay in Isaac's complete *willingness* to be offered, which has been called "the most profound and anomalous religious concept ever known to the human mind," being nothing less than "the cornerstone of the whole Jewish theology of the love of God."[70] Abraham may have known that Isaac was in no real danger when he said, with perfect confidence, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:8), and when without equivocation he told the two young men who escorted them to the mountain: ". . . I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (Gen. 22:5); Isaac did not know it—it was he who was being tested. But Abraham had already been tested in the same way; if "Isaac . . . offered himself at the Binding," so before his day the youthful "Abraham . . . threw himself into the fiery furnace. . . . If we follow in their footsteps they will stand and intercede for us on the holy and awesome day."[71] Isaac was being tested even as other saints are tested, since, as Rabbi Eliezer puts it, "the testing of the righteous here below . . .

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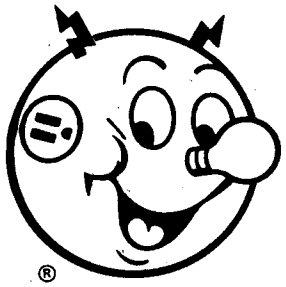

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is essential to the *plan* of the universe."[72] The Midrash, in fact, "strongly emphasized the parallelism between the sacrifice of Isaac and the willing martyrdom of *other* heroes and heroines," including many who suffered terribly painful deaths.[73] Isaac, in short, belongs to the honorable category of those who were willing to be "Partakers of Christ's sufferings," as all the saints and martyrs have been. (1 Pet. 4:13, etc.)

The second problem raised by the claim that Isaac's sacrifice was the ultimate atonement is that the shedding of blood did *not* cease with it: "If Isaac's sacrifice atones," asks Vermes, "why was further daily sacrifice in the Temple necessary?"[74] Circumcision no less than the Akedah "remains a never-ceasing atonement for Israel, being performed by Abraham himself and 'on the Date of Atonement,' and upon the spot on which the altar was later to be erected in the Temple,"[75] but for all that, no one claims that all the Law is fulfilled in it. "Students of Christian origins have come increasingly to realize," writes Rosenberg, a Jew, ". . . that the sacrifice of Isaac was to be reenacted by the 'new Isaac,' who, like the old, was a 'son of God.'"[76] The early Christian teaching was that, as he was about to sacrifice his son on the mountain, Abraham "saw Christ's day and yearned for it. There he saw the Redemption of Adam and rejoiced, and it was revealed to him, that the Messiah would suffer in the place of Adam."[77] But the old Isaac, called in the Targum "the Lamb of Abraham,"[78] neither suffered sacrificial death nor put an end to the shedding of blood. His act was an earnest of things to come, and that puts it on the same level as the sacrifice of Abraham.

This explains, we believe, the absence of the story of Abraham on the altar from the pages of the Old Testament. G. Vermes points out that whereas in the biblical version of the sacrifice of Abraham "the principal actors were Abraham and God," other versions, even in very early times, "somewhat surprisingly shift the emphasis and focus their interest on the person of Isaac."[79] Whatever the reason for this shift, it was a very emphatic one: ". . . the Binding of Isaac was thought to have played a unique role in the whole economy of the salvation of Israel, and to have a permanent redemptive effect on behalf of its people."[80] It completely supplanted the earlier episode of the sacrifice of Abraham on the ancient principle that "the later repetition of an event . . . causes the earlier occurrence to be forgotten."[81] The principle is nowhere better illustrated than in the story of Abraham himself: the names Abram and Sarai are unknown to most Christians, because of the explicit command, "Do *not* call Sarah Sarai" anymore; "do *not* call Abraham Abram"—those were once their names, but no more![81] When Israel finally returns to God and goes to Abraham for instruction, we are told, instead of teaching them himself, he will refer them to Isaac, who will in turn pass them on to Jacob and so on down to Moses—it is from the *latest* prophet of the latest dispensation that the people receive instruction.[82] On this principle, the only words of the Father in the New Testament are those which introduce his Son and turn all the offices of the dispensation over to him. (Matt. 3:17, 17:5, etc.)

It was necessary to overshadow and even supplant the story of Abraham's sacrifice by that of Isaac if Isaac were to have any stature at all with posterity. Scholars long declared both Isaac and Jacob, imitating Abraham in everything, to be mere shadow figures, mythical creatures without any real personalities of their own. Jacob, to be sure, has some interesting if not altogether creditable experiences, but what is left for Isaac? The three stand before us as a trio: "Abraham instituted the morning prayer, Isaac the noon prayer, and Jacob the evening prayer," i.e., they all share in establishing a single body of rites and ordinances.[83] One does not steal the glory of the other. Great emphasis is laid by the Rabbis on the necessary equality of merit and glory between Abraham and Isaac,[84] while each emphasizes some special aspect of the divine economy: Abraham was the Great One, Jacob the Little One, and Isaac who came in between was "the servant of Jehovah who was delivered from the bonds of his Master."[85] The special emphasis on Isaac is as the sacrificial victim. If his sacrifice was "an imperfect type," it was still more perfect than the earlier sacrifice of Abraham on a pagan altar, and in every way it qualified to supersede it. Though it was an equal test for both men, "purged and idealized by the *trial* motivation,"[86] the second sacrifice was the true type of the atonement. In the long and detailed history of Abraham the story of the sacrifice in Canaan could safely be omitted in deference to the nobler repetition, which, while it added no less to the glory of Abraham, preserves a sense of proportion among the Patriarchs.

Abraham gets as much credit out of the sacrifice of Isaac as he does from his own adventure on the altar—he had already risked his own life countless times; how much dearer to him in his

old age was the life of his only son and heir! And since the two sacrifices typify the same thing, nothing is lost to Abraham and much is gained for Isaac by omitting the earlier episode from the Bible. But that episode left an indelible mark in the record. The learned Egyptologist who in 1912 charged Joseph Smith with reading the sacrifice of *Isaac* into Facsimile No. 1 and the story of Abraham was apparently quite unaware that ancient Jewish writers of whom Joseph Smith knew nothing told the same story that he did about Abraham on the altar. The important thing for the student of the Book of Abraham is that the sacrifice of Abraham was remembered—and vividly recalled in nonbiblical sources—as a historical event. This makes it almost certain that it *was* a real event, for nothing is less probable than that the Jews would at a very early time *invent* a story which, while adding little or nothing to the supreme glory of Abraham, would do definite damage to Isaac's one claim to fame. If the binding on the altar—the *Akedah*—was to be the "unique glory of Isaac," it was entirely in order to quietly drop the earlier episode of Abraham that anticipates and overshadows it, just as it is right and proper to forget that the hero was once called Abram.

Back to the Lion-Couch: Recent studies of the sacrifice of Isaac emphasize as its most important aspect the principle of substitution, which is also basic in the sacrifice of Abraham. As J. Finkel expressed it, "evidently the primary aim of the story (of Isaac) was to give divine sanction to the law of substitution."[87] Isaac was not only saved *by* a substitute, but he himself was substituting for another. "A ram by the name of Isaac went at the head of Abraham's herd. Gabriel took him and brought him to Abraham, and he sacrificed him instead of his son."[88] As he did so, Abraham said, "Since I brought my son to you as a sacrificial animal be in thine eye as if it were my son lying on the altar."[89] Accordingly, "whatsoever Abraham did by the altar, he exclaimed, and said, 'This is instead of my son, and may it be considered before the Lord in place of my son.' And God accepted the sacrifice of the ram, and it was accounted as though it had been Isaac."[90] Himself noble, Isaac was saved by the substitution of "a noble victim."[91]

But, more important, he himself was a substitute. "In Jewish tradition," writes A. R. Rosenberg, "Isaac is the prototype of the 'Suffering Servant,' bound on the altar as a sacrifice."[92] Rosenberg has shown that the title of Suffering Servant was used in the An-

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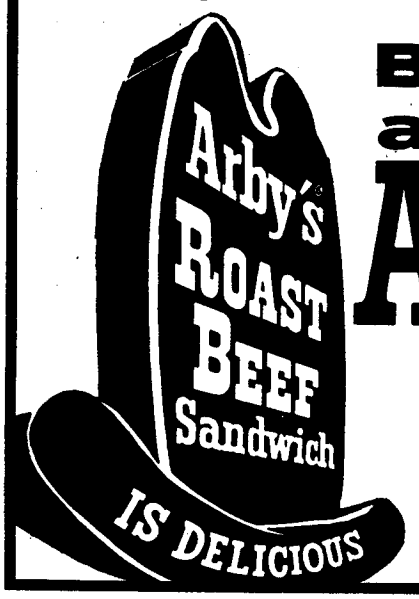

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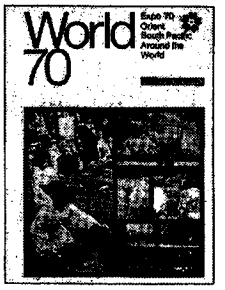

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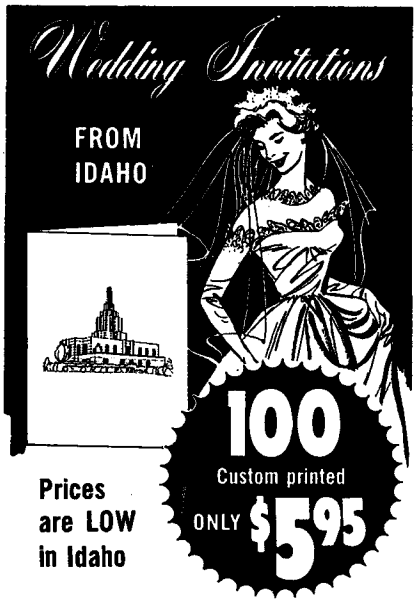

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cient East to designate "the substitute *king*"—the noble victim. Accordingly, the "new Isaac" mentioned in Maccabees 13:12 must be "a 'substitute king' who dies that the people might live."[93] The starting point in Rosenberg's investigation is Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12, which "seems to constitute a portion of a ritual drama centering about a similar humiliation, culminating in death, of a 'substitute' for the figure of the king of the Jews." If we examine these passages, we find that they fit the story of Abraham's sacrifice even better than that of Isaac.

Thus beginning with Isaiah 52:13 we see the Suffering Servant raised up on high, reminding us of the scene from the Midrash (Midr. Rab. 43:5): ". . . they cut cedar and made a great altar (*bemah*) and placed him on it on high and they bowed down in mockery before him and said to him, 'Hear us, Lord!' and the like. They said to him, 'Thou art King over us! Thou art exalted above us! Thou art a god over us!' But he said to them, 'The world does not lack its king, nor does it lack its God!' " (Midr. Rab. 43:5.) Here Abraham both rejects the office and denounces the rites. The Midrash also indicates that the rites of Isaac were matched by heathen practices, his Akedah resembling the binding of the princes of the heathen, since every nation possesses at its own level "a 'prince' as its guardian angel and patron." (Midr. Rab. 56:5.)

The next verse (52:14), the picture of the Suffering Servant with "visage . . . marred," recalls Abraham led out to sacrifice after his long suffering in prison while the princes and the wise men mock. Verse 15, telling of the kings who shut their mouths in amazement, recalls the 365 kings who were astounded to behold Abraham's delivery from the altar. In 53:1 the arm of the Lord is revealed, as it is unbeknownst to the others in the delivery of Abraham. (Cf. Abr. 1:17.) Isaiah 53:2 emphasizes the drought motif, which, as we have seen, is never missing from the rites of the substitute king. In verses 3 to 8 the Suffering Servant is beaten that *we* may be healed—a substitute for all of us. In verse 8 he is "taken from prison and from judgment" to be "cut off out of the land of the living," exactly as Abraham was according to the traditions. Verse 9 reminds us of Abraham in wicked Canaan, and verse 10—"it pleased the Lord to bruise him . . ."—recalls the description of Abraham as a son being mercilessly beaten by a loving father but never complaining. Finally the reward: Because his soul was placed as an offering, he shall see his progeny, his days shall be lengthened, and he shall prosper greatly (see verses 10-12)—all "because he hath poured out his soul unto death . . ." (verse 12). Such was the reward of Abraham, with the assurance also that by the knowledge gained he would be able to sanctify others. (See verse 11.) In the end the Suffering Servant becomes the great intercessor: "he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (53:12), just as Abraham does, as the great advocate for sinners living and dead. Thus Isaiah 52:13-53:12, while vividly recalling the suffering of Isaac, is an even better description of Abraham on the altar.

The sacrifice of the substitute king is found all over the ancient world. According to Rosenberg, the rite was "celebrated in both Persia and Babylonia in connection with the acronical rising of Sirius," sometimes identified in this connection with Saturn, "the god who demanded human sacrifice."[94] The Book of Abraham has already apprised us of the importance of Sirius (Shagre-el) in the sacrificial rites of the Plain of Olishem, and it even labors the point that human sacrifice was the normal order of things in Canaan in Abraham's day. We have taken the position from the first that Abraham was put on the altar as a substitute for the king, an idea first suggested by the intense rivalry between the two, as indicated both in the legends and in the Book of Abraham. Since the series in the *Era* began, Rosenberg's study of the sacrifice of Isaac has appeared, with the final conclusion that in the earliest accounts of that event "both the Jewish and Christian traditions stem ultimately from the ancient Canaanite cult of Jerusalem, in which periodically the King, or a substitute for the King, had to be offered for a sacrifice."[95] It was to just such a cult—in Canaan—that we traced the sacrifice of Abraham, and that is why we have been at such pains to point out the close and thorough-going resemblances between the two: they are essentially the same rite and have the same background. If the one reflects "the ancient Canaanite cult" in which "a substitute for the King had to be offered," so does the other. Rosenberg says the sacrifice of Isaac most certainly goes back to that cult, and the Book of Abraham tells us flatly that the sacrifice of Abraham does. Certainly the Abraham story in its pagan setting is much nearer to the original substitute-king rite in all its details than is the Isaac story, which is a sizable step removed from it. The substitute sacrifice is a red thread that runs through the early career of the Prophet: The life of the infant Abra-

ham when his brother Haran substituted a slave child to be killed in his place;[96] then Haran himself died for Abraham in the flames;[96] and then Abraham was saved from the lion-couch when the priest was smitten in his stead (Abr. 1:17, 29); finally his life was saved by his wife Sarah, who was willing to face death to rescue him again from the lion-couch. This last much-misunderstood episode deserves closer attention.

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

1 B. Beer, *Leben Abraham's*, p. 47; L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 262; for Rashi's explanation, G. Abrahams, *The Jewish Mind*, p. 51, n. 1.
2 M. J. bin Gorion, *Die Sagen der Juden*, I, 325.
3 H. Seebass, *Erzvater Israels*, p. 105.
4 G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), pp. 199f for text.
5 *Ibid.*, p. 209.
6 Beer, *op. cit.*, pp. 66, 182.
7 I. Levi, in *Rev. des Etudes Juives*, Vol. 59 (1912), p. 169.
8 Bin Gorion, II, 300.
9 Beer, p. 67.
10 Pseudo-Philo, VI, 11. Cf. Isaac's speeches in Beer, p. 65.
11 N. N. Glatzer, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 178.
12 Bin Gorion, II, 303.
13 Beer, p. 67: Sometimes Abraham lets the knife fall, and sometimes it is not the angel but Satan who dashes it from his hand. Cf. bin Gorion, II, p. 287.
14 Vermes, p. 195.
15 Ginzberg, *L. J.*, Vol. 1, p. 281.
16 Pseudo-Philo, 32:2-4; complete Latin text in Vermes, pp. 199-200.
17 Ginzberg, *loc. cit.*; see next note.
18 Targums cited at length in Vermes, pp. 149-50.
19 Pseudo-Philo, *loc. cit.*
20 Maase Abraham, in Jellineck, *Beth ha-Midrasch* I, 28.
21 Bin Gorion, II, 287.
22 Discussed in the *Era*, Vol. 72 (August 1969), p. 76. In all the apocryphal accounts of Abraham on the altar he refuses the assistance proffered by the angel, saying that God alone will deliver him. Maase Abraham, in Jellinck, *Beth ha-Midrasch* I, 34, and Midrash de Abraham Abinu, *ibid.*, p. 41; Ka'b el-Ahbar, text in *Rev. des Etudes*, Vol. 70 (1920), p. 37.
23 Beer, p. 68.
24 I. Levi, in *Rev. des Etudes Juives*, Vol. 59, p. 169.
25 Ginzberg, *L. J.*, Vol. 1, pp. 276-77.
26 Beer, p. 62, citing S. ha-Yashar, 77-79, and Midrash.
27 Bin Gorion, II, 287.
28 Levi, *op. cit.*, pp. 166f.
29 R. A. Rosenberg, in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 84 (1965), p. 382.
30 *Ibid.*, p. 385, quoting the Book of Enoch 92:3, which Rosenberg calls "the most important text yet discovered of the Jewish apocalyptic literature."
31 *Ibid.*, p. 382.
32 J. Finkel, in *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*, Vol. 3 (1930), p. 15.
33 Vermes, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
34 J. Danielou, in *Biblica*, Vol. 28 (1947), pp. 392-93.
35 M. Braude, *Midr. Ps.*, 105:1.
36 Bin Gorion, II, 307-8.
37 Vermes, p. 201; Beer, p. 68.
38 Ginzberg, *L. J.*, Vol. 1, pp. 235-37.
39 *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 59-60, 181; cf. *Apocalypse of Abraham*, chapters 11 and 12.
40 I. Levi in *R.E.J.*, Vol. 59, pp. 169-71; Beer, p. 186.
41 Pirqe R. Eliezer, Ch. 31, pp. 229f.
42 Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 283. So also the donkey was likewise the same beast that would later be ridden by Balaam, Moses, and the Messiah; Beer, p. 61.



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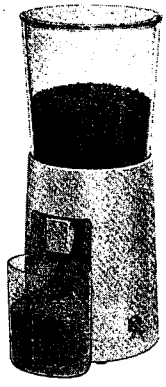

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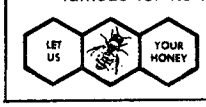

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44 J. Soggin, in *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 89 (1964), pp. 732f.
45 R. Graves, *The White Goddess* (New York: Vintage, 1958), p. 355.
46 D. S. Shapiro, in *Tradition*, Vol. 4 (1962), p. 218, discusses this.
47 P. R. Eliezer, Ch. 31, p. 227.
48 Midrash Rab. Gen., 39:8; Ps. 110:3.
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50 Bin Gorion, *loc. cit.*
51 N. N. Glatzer, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 178.
52 R. J. Loewe, in A. Altmann, *Biblical Motifs*, p. 166, with Tanhuma text supplied in note 35.
53 So in the *Maase Abraham*, in Beth ha-Midrasch, I, 34. According to the Sefer ha-Yashar, 8, "Abram walked in the midst of the fire for three days and three nights," cit. Vermes, p. 73. Ka'b el-Ahbar, Qissat Ibrahim Abinu, in *Rev. Et. Juives*, Vol. 70 (1920), p. 42; cf. *Midrash de-Abraham Avinu*, in Beth ha-Midrash, I, 40-41. According to Tha'labi (Qissas, p. 55), it was the "Angel of the Shadow" who sat with Abraham in the fire, i.e., he was sacrificed.
54 A. Moortgat, *Tammuz* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1949), pp. 63, 114, 139-142.
55 In Beer, p. 113.
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57 Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 281.
58 Beer, p. 67.
59 G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, p. 205.
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61 Ginzberg, Vol. 1, pp. 281-82; in another version Isaac's spirit went to paradise for three years before returning, *ibid.*, pp. 285-87.
62 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 208.
63 Cavalletti, in *Studii e Materiali*, 35: 263.
64 *Cahier des Curiosites Mystiques*, Vol. 1 (1874), pp. 152-55.
65 R. A. Rosenberg, in *J.B.L.*, Vol. 84, p. 388.
66 *Ibid.*, p. 386, citing Jubilees 18:18.
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70 Vermes, pp. 193, 221.
71 N. N. Glatzer, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 178.
72 Beer, p. 57.
73 Vermes, p. 204.
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77 Cave of Treasures 29:13-14.
78 Rosenberg, *loc. cit.*, citing Targ. Levi 22:27.
79 Vermes, p. 193.
80 *Ibid.*, p. 208.
81 Holtzmann, Tosephtakraktat Berakot, in *Ztschr. f. Alttest. Wiss.*, Vol. 23 (1912), pp. 12f.
82 Beer, p. 206.
83 M. Braude, *Midr. Ps.* 55:2.
84 See above, notes 37, 46-48, 70, 71, for examples.
85 Vermes, p. 203, cit. Targ. Job 3:18.
86 J. Finkel, in *Proc. Am. Acad. Jew. Research*, Vol. 3 (1930), p. 14.
87 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
88 Bin Gorion, II, 295.
89 Beer, p. 70.
90 Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 283.
91 Finkel, p. 12.
92 Rosenberg, in *J.B.L.*, Vol. 84, p. 385.
93 *Ibid.*, pp. 383, 385.
94 *Ibid.*, p. 382.
95 *Ibid.*, p. 388.
96 Beer, p. 15; M. Sprengling (ed.), *Barhebraeus' Scholia on the Old Testament* (Univ. of Chicago, 1931), p. 49, comments on Gen. 11:28. That Haran died as a substitute for Abraham is clearly indicated in Midr. in *Beth ha-Midrasch* I, 40; S. ha-Yashar (text in Vermes, p. 72); Ginzberg, *L.J.*, Vol. 1, p. 216; bin Gorion, II, 96f; Beer, pp. 15-17; cf. Bar Hebrews, *Scholion* to Gen. 11:2; Midr. Rab., Noah 38:13.

The true purpose of life is the perfection of humanity through individual effort, under the guidance of God's inspiration.
—President David O. McKay

A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price | Part 11

The Sacrifice of Sarah

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

A Fateful Journey: The history of Palestine has been to a remarkable degree a story of "boom and bust," from prehistoric times down to the present; and that happy and unhappy land has never had a greater boom or a more spectacular bust than occurred in the days of Abraham. Hebron was a brand new city, bustling with activity, when Abraham and his family settled there.[97] Just to the east were the even more thriving Cities of the Valley, to which Lot migrated to improve his fortune. Preliminary rumblings and prophetic warnings of things to come went unheeded by a populace enjoying unprecedented prosperity (today this is called "nuclear incredulity"), but nonetheless, the area was hit hard by a famine that forced Abraham to move out of Hebron after he had lived there only two years. Everybody was moving to Egypt and settling in the area nearest to Canaan and most closely resembling the geography and economy of the Jordan depression, namely, "the land of Egypt, as thou comest to Zoar," in the eastern Delta, where there had always been camps and villages of Canaanites sojourning in the land. Abraham settled in Zoan, the local capital, a city of Asiatic immigrants that was even newer, by seven years, than Hebron—practically a tent city. There the family lived for five years before they attracted the dangerous interest of Pharaoh.[97]

The story of how Sarah ended up in the royal palace is now available in the recently discovered Genesis Apocryphon, and the account is a thoroughly plausible one. Pharaoh's regular title in this document, "Pharaoh-Zoan, King of Egypt," shows him to be one of those many Asiatics who ruled in the Delta from time to time while claiming, and sometimes holding, the legitimate crown of all Egypt. The short journey from Canaan into his Egyptian domain is described in significant terms: ". . . now we passed through our land and entered into the land of the sons of Ham, the land of Egypt," as if the family was definitely moving from one spiritual and cultural domain to another.[98] This is interesting because the Book of Abraham lays peculiar emphasis on the Hamitic blood of this particular Pharaoh as well as his anxious concern to establish his authority—always a touchy point with the Delta-Pharaohs, whose right to rule was often challenged by the priests and the people of Upper Egypt. In his new home, Abraham, an international figure in the caravan business, entertained local officials both as a matter of policy and from his own celebrated love of hospitality and of people.

One day he was entertaining "three men," courtiers of "Pharaoh-Zoan," at dinner (G.A. XIX, 24, 27). Abraham would host such special delegations again, in Canaan: there would be the three heavenly visitors whom he would feast "in the plains of Mamre" (Gen. 18:1ff), and the "three Amorite brothers" whom he would have as guests (G.A. XXI, 19-22; Gen. 14:13). The names of these last three were Mamre, 'irmn, and Eshkol. Mamre and Eshkol are well-known place-names, and if we look for 'irmn it is a place-name too, for in the Ugaritic ritual-epic tale of Aqhat, it is "the man of Hrnmy" who hosts "the Lords of Hkpt" who come from afar.[99] If this seems to put Abraham's party in a ritual setting, its historicity is vindicated by the name of the leader of the palace delegation, who is called HRQNWSh. B. Z. Whacholder explains this as "an early transliteration of *archones*," designating its bearer as "the archon, the head of the household," and obviously indicating Hellenistic influence.[100] But *Archones* is neither a name nor a title, and the "early transliteration" leaves much to be desired. On the other hand, we find in Pharaonic times, in the employ of *Sshmt.t*, the divine lady of the Eastern Delta, the very district where our little drama is taking place, a busy official and agent bearing the title of Hr-hknw, "the Lord of Protection," whose business was to police the area and keep an eye on foreigners, with whom he was Pharaoh's contact man; he is, in fact, according to H. Kees, none other than our old friend Nefertem, the immemorial frontier guard of the northeastern boundary, the official host, border inspector, and watchdog (or rather watch-lion) of the foreigners coming to Egypt—especially from Canaan.[101] Nothing could be more natural than to have this conscientious border official checking up on Abraham from time to time and enjoying his hospitality. And since it was his duty to report to Pharaoh whatever he considered of interest or significance on his beat, it is not surprising that a report of HRQNWSh and his aides to the king contained a glowing account of Abraham's dazzling wife. Her beauty had already caused a sensation at the customs house, according to a famous legend.[102] If nothing else, her blondness would have attracted attention among the dark Egyptians: the Midrash reports, in fact, that Abraham had warned her against this very thing: "We are now about to enter a country whose inhabitants are dark-complexioned—say that you are my sister wherever we go!"[103] This admonition was given as the family passed from Abraham's homeland in northern Mesopotamia (Aram Naharaim and Aram Nahor) into Canaan —clearly indicating that the people of Abraham's own country were light-complexioned.[103]

In reporting to Pharaoh, his three agents, while singing the praises of Sarah's beauty in the set terms of the most sensuous Oriental love-poetry (G.A. XX, 2-8), make a special point

of mentioning that "with all her beauty there is much wisdom in her" (XX, 7), lauding her "goodness, wisdom, and truth" even above her other qualities (XIX, 25). They went all out in their description not only because the subject was worthy of their best efforts, but because they hoped to put themselves in good with the king by both whetting and satisfying his desire.[104] The royal reaction was immediate. Asiatic Pharaohs were polygamous and aggressive: "Sarah was taken from me by force . . ." (XII, 14; XX, 11); without further ado the king "took her to him to wife and sought to slay me" (XX, 9). Josephus says that this Pharaoh deserved the punishment he got "because of his high-handed manner towards the wife of a stranger" (Ant. I, 8, 1). But as we all know, Abraham was saved when Pharaoh was assured by Sarah herself that he was her brother and would thus not stand in the way of their marriage; instead of being liquidated, he was therefore, as the brother of the favorite wife, "entreated . . . well for her sake." (Gen. 12:16.)

Sarah on the Lion-couch: Abraham was saved and Pharaoh was pleased and everything was all right except for poor Sarah. It was now her turn to face the test of the lion-couch! As we have seen, not only the royal altar but also the royal bed was a lion-couch. And this was to be more than a test of Sarah's virtue, for should she refuse, the king would be mortally offended—with predictable results for the lady. His unhesitating move to put Abraham out of the way had made it clear enough that His Majesty was playing for keeps. After all, three princesses of the royal line had already been put to death on the lion-altar for refusing to compromise their virtue (Abr. 1:11), and there was no indication that Sarah would be an exception.

The story of Sarah's delivery from her plight follows the same order as the stories of Abraham and Isaac. First of all, being brought to the royal bed "by force," she weeps and calls upon the Lord to save her, at which time Abraham also "prayed and entreated and begged . . . as my tears fell." (XX, 12.) As he had prayed for himself, so the Patriarch "prayed the Lord to save her from the hands of Pharaoh."[105]

And though experience may have rendered *him* perfectly confident in the results, it was the less experienced Sarah who was being tested.[106] The prayer for deliverance closely matches that on the first lion-couch: "Blessed art thou, Most High God, Lord of all the worlds, because Thou art Lord and Master of all and ruler of all the kings of the earth, and of whom thou judgest. Behold now I cry before Thee, my Lord, against Pharaoh-Zoan, King of Egypt, because my wife has been taken from me by force. Judge him for me and let me behold Thy mighty hand descend upon him. . . ." (XX, 12-15.) Even so Abraham had prayed for deliverance from the altar of "Nimrod": "O God, Thou seest what this wicked man is doing to me . . ." with the whole emphasis on the king's blasphemous claims to possess the ultimate power in the world: in both cases Abraham is helpless against the authority and might of Pharaoh, but still he will recognize only one king, and he calls for a showdown: ". . . that night I prayed and begged and said in sorrow . . . let thy mighty hand descend upon him . . . and men shall know, my Lord, that *Thou* art the Lord of all the kings of the earth!" (XX, 14f.) This is exactly the point of Abraham's prayer in the *Maase Abraham* and Abraham 1:17, where God says, "I have come

The Spoken Word

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"When your heart tells you things your mind does not know"

By Richard L. Evans

There is this phrase, cited by a thoughtful friend: ". . . when your heart tells you things your mind does not know."[1] All of us have impressions, promptings, a sense of warning sometimes; an intuition, an awareness, the source of which we do not always know; and we often have to trust our hearts, along with the facts we face. Life isn't merely a mechanical calculator or a slide rule situation. There is the spirit; the feelings; conscience, convictions; things we know are there; things we know are real; things we can't put in a test tube. Love is one of them. Faith is another; a sense of right and wrong; sometimes a sense of urgency; sometimes a sense of assurance. There is so much that can't be physically touched, so much that can't be mechanically calculated. Parents often have impressions pertaining to their children. And children often tease parents to let them do things that had better not be done: "Why can't I do this? Why can't I go there? Why? Why?" —questions that parents often cannot answer with full satisfaction, except that they feel it, they know it, with an inner sense of certainty. As we live for it, wisdom comes from many sources, both within and outside ourselves. And children often have to trust parents, and know that their hearts tell them things their minds do not know. Parents are not perfect, not infallible, but overall, the inspiration, the guidance that comes with prayerful pleading, brings warnings, promptings, impressions from beyond our sight and sound, which no one should stubbornly ignore. Beyond books, beyond all that we can weigh and measure, beyond all the tangibles that we can touch, there are influences and forces within and outside ourselves that we well would pay attention to. As Shakespeare said it: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."[2] And so, beloved young people, be patient with parents when they counsel, when they are concerned—when the heart tells them things the mind does not know.

[1]Harold B. Lee.
[2]Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act i.

down . . . to destroy him who hath lifted up his hand against thee, Abraham, my son. . . ."

So while "all that night Sarah lay upon her face calling upon God, Abraham "without the prison" also prayed[106] "that he may not this night defile my wife." (G.A. XX, 11-14.) It was, as one might by now expect, just at the moment that Pharaoh assayed to seize Sarah that an angel came to the rescue, whip in hand: "As Pharaoh was about to possess Sarah, she turned to the angel who stood at her side (visible only to her) and immediately Pharaoh fell to the ground; all his house was then smitten with plague, with leprosy on the walls, the pillars, and furniture. . . ."[107] Whenever Pharaoh would make a move toward Sarah, the invisible angel would strike him down.[108] To justify such rough treatment of the poor unsuspecting Pharaoh, the Midrash explains that he was not unsuspecting at all: ". . . an angel stood by with a whip to defend her, because she told Pharaoh that she was a married woman, and he still would not leave her alone." (Gen. Rab. 41:2.) According to all other accounts, however, that is exactly what she did not tell him, having her husband's safety in mind. The almost comical humiliation of the mighty king in the very moment of his triumph is an exact counterpart of the crushing overthrow of "Nimrod" at the instant of his supreme triumph over Abraham. "His illicit lust was checked," says Josephus, "by disease and *stasis*—revolution" (Ant. I, 8, 1), suggesting that his kingly authority was overthrown along with his royal dignity and prowess.

What saved Sarah, according to the Genesis Apocryphon (XX, 16), was the sending by El Elyon, the Most High God, of a *ruach mkdsh* or *ruach bisha,* which Avigad and Yadin render "a pestilential wind" and "a wind that was evil," respectively. Other scholars, however, prefer "spirit" to "wind,"[109] and while *mkdsh* is not found in the dictionary, *miqdash,* which sounds exactly the same, is a very common word indicating the dwelling place of God, so that *ruach makdash* suggests to the ear "the angel of the presence," such as came to rescue both Abraham and Isaac on the altar. *Ruach b-isha* in turn suggests to the ear "the spirit in the fire," reminding us of a number of accounts of a mysterious being who stood with Abraham in the flames when he rescued him from the altar. The confusion of the rescuing angel with the wind is readily explained if our Aramaic text was written from dictation, as many ancient documents were.

The smiting of all of Pharaoh's house simultaneously with his own affliction is insisted on by all sources and recalls the "great mourning in Chaldea, and also at the court of Pharaoh" in Abraham 1:20. And just as the king in the Abraham story, when he is faced with the undeniable evidence of a power greater than his own, admits the superiority of Abraham's God and even offers to worship him, so he tells the woman Hagar when Sarah is saved, "It is better to be a maid in Sarah's house than to be Queen in my house!"[110] The showdown between the two religions is staged in both stories by the king himself when he pits his own priests and diviners against the wisdom of the stranger and his God, the test being which of the two is able to cure him and his house. An early writer quoted by Eusebius says, "Abraham went to Egypt with all his household and lived there, his wife being married to the king of Egypt who, however, could not approach her. And when it came about that his people and his house were being destroyed he called for the diviners (*manteis*), who told him that Sarah was not a widow, and so he knew that she was Abraham's wife and gave her back to him."[111] The first part of the statement is supported by the Gen. Apocr. XX, 17-18, which says that Sarah lived two years in Pharaoh's house, during which time he was unable to approach her. During that time she was in no danger of his wrath, however, since as far as Pharaoh was concerned it was not her reluctance but only his illness that kept them apart.

Though Pharaoh's doctors and soothsayers gave him useful advice, as they do "Nimrod" in his dealings with Abraham, it is the healing that is the real test: "And he sent and called of all the wise men of Egypt and all the wizards and all the physicians of Egypt, if perchance they might heal him from that pestilence, him and his house. And all the physicians and wizards and wise men could not heal him, for the wind [spirit, angel] smote them all and they fled." (G.A. XX, 18-20.) Just so the host of wise men summoned by Nimrod to advise him on how to get rid of Abraham were forced to flee ignominiously in all directions by the miraculous fire which left Abraham unscathed. All the wisdom and divinity of Egypt having failed, Pharaoh's agent HRQNWSh went straight to Abraham "and besought me to come and to pray for the king and to lay my hands upon him that he might live." (XX, 20f.) To this request Abraham magnanimously complied: ". . . I laid my hand upon his head and the plague departed from



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him and the evil [wind-spirit] was gone and he lived." (XX, 29.) When the healing power of Abraham's God, in contrast to the weakness of his own, became apparent, Pharaoh forthwith recognized Abraham by the bestowal of royal honors—even as "Nimrod" had done when Abraham stepped before him unscathed.[112]

That these stories are more than belated inventions of the rabbinic imagination is apparent from the significant parallels with which Egyptian literature fairly swarms. A veritable library of familiar motifs is contained in the late Ptolemaic Tales of Khamuas. They begin with "Ahure's Story," telling how an aging Pharaoh, in order to assure the royal succession, forces the princess Ahure to renounce marriage with her beloved brother Neneferkaptah and wed the son of a general, contrary to "the law of Egypt" but consistent with the practice of the Asiatic Pharaohs.[113] The damsel goes weeping to her wedding (III, 3), but at the last moment the old king changes his mind, the princess marries her true love, and the couple is showered with royal gifts and honors (III, 5-6). They have a child, but Neneferkaptah in his zeal for knowledge steals a heavenly book from Thoth and, as a result, first the child, then the mother, and finally the father pay for the guilt of Neneferkaptah by falling into the Nile, all duly ending up "in the necropolis-hill of Coptos."[114] Years later the scribe Setne-Khamuas comes to the tomb of the lady Ahure to get the book for himself, but Neneferkaptah, rising from his couch, says he shall not have it unless he wins it in a game of "Fifty-two."[115] Setne wins the book but is undone by another Lady of the Underworld and can only save himself by finally returning the book to Neneferkaptah.[116] This Setne has a young son, Si-Osiris, whom he told of his marvelous visit to the other world—an adventure astonishingly like that of Abraham in the Apocalypse of Abraham.[117] When an Ethiopian ambassador arrived in Memphis and challenged Pharaoh to read a letter he brought with him, without opening the seal, all the wise men of Pharaoh were abashed and Setne immediately went to fetch his 12-year-old son Si-Osiris to the palace, even as the wonder-child Abraham was taken by his father to the palace of "Nimrod." The boy read the letter with ease: It told of a time long ago when three lords of Ethiopia by magic brought three years of blight on the land of Egypt, for which Pharaoh was punished nightly by being beaten with 500 lashes. The king's wise men were at a loss to help him, and the beating was administered by Hor, the Son of the Lady of Ethiopia. At Pharaoh's court, however, was another Hor, the son of the librarian Pa-neshe. He turned the tables and forced the Viceroy of Ethiopia to receive the 500 blows each night instead of Pharaoh.[118] In desperation the false Hor, "the son of the Sow" (the pig being the Seth animal), undertook a mission to Egypt, being warned by his mother beforehand that he would never be able to match the magic of the Egyptians, though she promised to come personally to his aid if it was necessary to save his life. So the two Horuses confronted each other in a duel of magic at the court of Pharaoh, opening with the cry of the Egyptian Hor: "Ho thou impious Ethiopian, art thou not Hor . . . whom I saved . . . when ye were drowning in the water, being cast down from upon the hill east of On?"—recalling an earlier ritual contest at a "Potiphar's Hill" in Heliopolis.[119] The contest begins when Pharaoh in great distress calls upon the good Horus to save him (63)—a reminder that Horus is always a hawk and that the rivalry of the two hawks goes back to very early dramatic texts. (Coffin Text, Spell 312.) Finally the Lady of Ethiopia has to come and rescue her son, who in return for his life swears an oath to Pharaoh that he will not return to Egypt for 1500 years.[120] Such was the contest of the sealed letter, and having read it Si-Osiris announced that the 1500 years was now up and that he himself was the good Horus, son of Pa-neshes, while the ambassador who brought the letter was none other than the evil Ethiopian Horus returning for vengeance: "I prayed before Osiris in Amenti (the underworld) to let me come forth to the world again, to prevent his taking the humiliation of Egypt to the land of Nehes (Ethiopia)"; his mission accomplished, he returns to the other world.[121]

In these episodes one can hardly fail to recognize the legends of Abraham in Egypt: the true lovers separated by Pharaoh only to be reunited; father, mother, and son as sacrificial victims; the king paying for the blight on the land until a foreign substitute can be found; the humiliation of Pharaoh, whipped all night by an unseen hand; the rival kings and the final overthrow of the impostor; the two Horuses; the super-boy putting the king's diviners to shame, etc. Most significant, perhaps, is that these are consciously recurring motifs, with the same characters turning up in a succession of episodes centuries apart. And the fictitious situations are not without historical parallels. Thus when the luxurious and much-married Amenophis III took to wife the beautiful Nefertiti, a princess of one of the tribes bordering on Abraham's homeland, she brought with her to Egypt the image of her patron goddess Ishtar of Nineveh to heal the old king of an ailment that had baffled the best Egyptian doctors. When the king's health actually improved (albeit for a very short time), the report of the miraculous healing powers of the foreign lady's goddess quickly spread throughout Egypt, opening the way for the successful propagation of her religion throughout the whole land.[122] Here we have a well-attested historical account of a Pharaoh who married a fabulously beautiful princess from the north who thought of herself as a missionary, and to whose religion the king was converted by a miraculous healing, showing us at the very least the sort of thing that *could* have happened in Sarah's time. The healing of Pharaoh by the laying on of hands described in the Genesis Apocryphon is a thing which appears absolutely nowhere else in any of the known records dealing with Abraham and should be studied with great care. Without the evidence of the New Testament, we should never suspect that there was any ancient and established tradition behind it: "The healing of the sick by expelling with the laying on of hand the evil spirits," writes Vermes, ". . . is unknown in the Old Testament, but a familiar rite in the Gospels. . . . the nearest Old Testament parallel is 2 Kings VI, 11."[123]

That we are dealing here with ritually conditioned events rather than unique historical occurrences is apparent from the complete repetition of Sarah's Egyptian experience with *another* king many years later. Abimelech, the king of Gerar, a small state lying between Canaan and Egypt, also took Sarah to wife and would have put Abraham to death had she not again announced that he was her brother.[124] Again Sarah prayed and again an angel appeared, this time with a sword, to save her.[125] At the same time, according to one tradition, "the voice of a great crying was heard in the whole land of the Philistines, for they saw the figure of a man walking about, with a sword in his hand, slaying all that came in his way. . . ."[126] This was "on the fatal night of the Paschal feast," i.e., at the time of the drama of the Suffering Servant, and the king became so ill that the doctors despaired of his life.[127] Just as Pharaoh had done, the king summoned all his wise counselors and again they were helpless and abashed (Gen. 20:8); again Abraham's wife was restored to him (14), and again "Abraham prayed

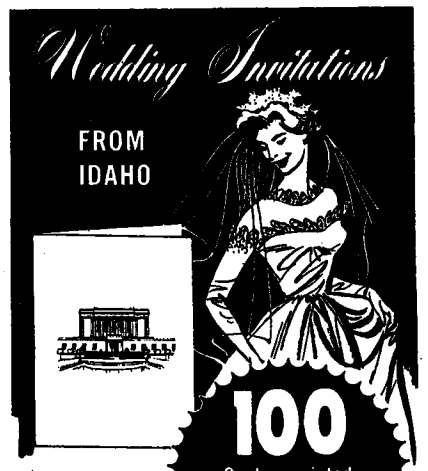
unto God: and God healed Abimelech." (Gen. 20:17.)

What is behind all this is indicated in the nature of the illness that afflicted the houses of both Abimelech and Pharaoh. As to the first, "the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife." (Gen. 20:18.) The legends elaborate on this: ". . . in men and beast alike all the apertures of the body closed up, and the land was seized with indescribable excitement."[128] In short, every creature was rendered sterile until Abraham administered to Abimelech, whereupon "all his house were healed, and the women could bear children with no pain, and they could have male children"; at the same moment, Sarah, barren until then, became fruitful, "the blind, deaf, lame, etc., were healed, and the sun shone out 48 times brighter than usual, even as on the first day of creation."[129] To celebrate the birth of Isaac, all the kings of the earth were invited to Abraham's house, and during the festivities Sarah gave milk to all the Gentile babies whose mothers had none, and "all the proselytes and pious heathen are the descendants of these infants."[130] As for Pharaoh, the common tradition is that the plague which smote his house, whether leprosy or some other disease, rendered all the people impotent and sterile.[131]

That this was the nature of the complaint is implied in the tradition that Abraham's powers of healing the sick by prayer were especially devoted to the healing of barren women. (Midr. Rab. 39:11.) By emerging victorious from the contests with Pharaoh and Abimelech, both Sarah and Abraham by their mutual faithfulness reversed the blows of death, so that they became new again and had children in their old age.[132] As the Zohar puts it, Abraham received a new grade of knowledge and henceforth "begat children on a higher plane."[133]

Here Sarah appears as the central figure in that ritual complex that marks the New Year all over the ancient world, and has been noticed in these studies in its form of the Egyptian Sed-festival. The theme of Sarah's royal marriages is not lust but the desire of Pharaoh and Abimelech to establish a kingly line. Sarah was at least 61 when she left the house of Pharaoh and 89 when she visited Abimelech. Pharaoh's only interest in Sarah, Josephus insists, was to establish a royal line; or, as B. Beer puts it, "his object was rather to become related to Abraham by marriage," i.e., he wanted Abraham's glory, and that was the only way he could get it.[134] Abimelech's interest is completely dominated by the fertility motif, for he contests with Abraham over "a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away" (Gen. 21:25), even as Sarah had been violently taken away; and just as Abimelech surrendered and pleaded his innocence in the case of Sarah (20:9), so he pleads ignorance also in the case of the well and even chides Abraham again for not enlightening him: "I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day." (Gen. 21:26.) To complete the scene, Abraham concludes the episode by planting one of his groves in the land of the Philistines. (Gen. 21:33.) If Sarah is the bounteous and child-giving mother, Abraham no less presides over the life-giving waters.

That this is the ritual setting of the Abimelech episode is confirmed by documents probably as old as Abraham that describe the goings-on among the Canaanites on the coast to the north of Gerar. These are the famous Ugaritic texts from Ras Shamra, and the best-known of them is the story of Krt. The latest critical study of the Krt drama maintains that it is both a ritual and a historical document, "the subject of the first tablet" being "the rehabilitation of the royal house after disaster, with the wooing of Krt," while the second tablet describes the royal wedding and in the third we have "the illness and threatened eclipse of Krt (the ritual king), when his eldest son Ysb seeks to supplant him."[135] The drama has a definite moral and social object, according to Gray, "such as the securing of a legitimate queen and the establishment of a royal line."[136] In the Krt story the powers of the old king are failing, and he is told by his youthful would-be successor: "In the sepulchral thou wilt abide. . . . Sickness is as thy bedfellow, Disease as thy concubine. . . ."[137] Just so Abimelech is told that if he takes Sarah to wife, "thou art a dead man!" (Gen. 20:3-4.) After three months of sickness (Abraham spent three months in the palace of Pharaoh, according to R. Eliezer), "Krt is passing away, yea . . . in the sepulchral chamber, like a treasure with a gate"—it is so much like the lion-couch scene in the Sed-festival that we are not surprised to learn that Krt is first frantically mourned and then revived by two ladies.[138] The cure is effected by the lady Qudshu, whom we have already learned to know as the common hierodule of Egypt and Canaan.[139] First she arrives weeping at the house of Krt, "shrieking she enters the inmost chambers"; but then she starts to revive the king, who is not completely dead yet,[140] and finally "she returns, she washes him. She has given him a new appetite for meat,



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a desire for food."[141] The king rises from his bier, victorious: "As for Death, he is confounded; as for Sh'tqt, she has prevailed!" So of course there is a great feast as the king "returns to sitting upon his throne, even on the dais, the seat of government."[141] It is the lion-couch drama all over again, but the Abimelech elements are prominent too, as when the king's wise men and counselors all are summoned and asked, "Who among the gods will abolish the disease, driving out all the sickness?" Seven times the challenge is put, but "there is none among the gods who answers him"—the doctors are abashed; they must yield to the true god, El the Merciful, who says, "I myself will do it"—and he does.[142] Of course, it rains and everything grows at last (Mot, the name of the adversary, means both death and drought); Krt on his bier is even called "Sprouts"—a vivid reminder of the Egyptian "Osiris beds."[143]

The Ugaritic Krt Text gives strong indication that the adventures of Sarah with Egyptian and Palestinian kings follow the common ritual pattern of Palestine and Egypt; indeed, the point of both stories is that Sarah and Abraham resist and overcome powerful and insidious attempts to involve them in the very practices of the idolatrous nations which Abraham had been denouncing since his youth. It would be impossible to avoid coming face to face with such practices in any comprehensive account of either Abraham or Sarah, and one of the best and most vivid descriptions of the rites is contained in the Book of Abraham. We are dealing here with a worldwide ritual complex of whose existence no one dreamed in 1912 and which is still largely ignored by Egyptologists.[143a] It is not only the idea of romantic love that is one of the special marks of the Patriarchal narratives, as Gordon points out; even more conspicuous is the repeated recurrence of a ritual love triangle in which a third party threatens to break up a devoted couple. Such is the story of Hagar, who sought to supplant Sarah in Abraham's household and was turned out into the desert to perish of thirst—always the water motif! Being in imminent danger of death, Hagar prays, "Look upon my misery"—which happens to be the opening line of Abraham's prayer on the altar—[144] whereupon an angel appears and tells her, ". . . God has heard your prayer," promising her a son. (Gen. 16:6-11.) So here, to cut it short, we have Hagar praying for deliverance from a heat death, visited by an angel, and promised the same blessing in her hour of crisis as was given to Sarah and Abraham in theirs. There is a difference, of course: by "despising" and taunting her afflicted mistress and then by deserting her, Hagar had *not* been true and faithful, and the angel sternly ordered her back to the path of duty, while the promises given to her offspring are heavy with qualifications and limitations. The issue is as ever one of authority, for as Josephus puts it, Hagar sought precedence over Sarah, and the angel told her to return to her "rulers" (*despotas*) or else she would perish, but if she obeyed she would bear a son who would rule in that desert land.[145] She too founded a royal line.

In maintaining that "Abraham's marriage with Keturah (Gen. 25:1-6) can have no historical foundation,"[146] scholars have overlooked the *ritual* foundation of the story, clearly indicated by the name of Keturah, which enjoys a prominent place in the Adonis ritual cycles of Phoenicia and Syria.[147] As Gray points out in his study of Krt, these ritual events could very well become history as well when the sacrifices and marriages were repeated "at the accession of each new king" and "at royal weddings."[148] The ritual content of the thing, far from discrediting it as history, is the best possible evidence for some sort of historical reality behind it. The ritual triangle is repeated when Bethuel the King of Haran tries to take the beautiful Rebecca (who, we are told, was the exact image of Sarah) away from Isaac's agent, Eliezer (who, we are told, was the exact image of Abraham); the wicked king was slain by his own treachery and the noble couple departed laden with royal gifts.[149]

The Humiliation of the King: In this last story the real hero is Eliezer, while the bridegroom-to-be, Isaac, lurks ignobly in the background. Abraham likewise in the affairs with Pharaoh and Abimelech not only takes a back seat but appears in a rather uncomplimentary if not actually degrading position. This is an indispensable element of the year-drama everywhere: the temporary humiliation of the true king while a rival and substitute displaces him on the throne and in the queen's favor. We have seen both Abraham and Isaac in the roles of substitute kings or "Suffering Servants," and now we must make room for Sarah on the stage, for the play cannot take place without her. The "Suffering Servant" is the true king during the period of his ritual humiliation, representing his death; at that time his place is taken by a pretender, an interrex, tanist, Lord of Misrule, etc., who turns out to be the *real* substitute when the time for his death arrives. Both are substitutes but in different capacities: the one king sits on a real throne but suffers a make-believe burial; the other sits on a make-believe throne but suffers a real burial. As we saw in the Sed-festival, the main purpose of all this shuffling is to spare the real king the discomfort of a premature demise: the true king is always vindicated in the end. If Abraham was rudely thrust aside by his royal rivals in Egypt and Palestine, and if Sarah was made the unwilling victim of their kingly arrogance, it was only to show who the real king was—*they*, as it turned out, were for all their pride and power the pretenders, claiming the divine honors that really belonged to Abraham. Abraham is the rival of Pharaoh and Abimelech, both of whom are ready to put him to death in order to raise up a royal line by Sarah.[150] That he is the real king, restored to his rightful queen in the end, is made perfectly clear in the almost comical complaints of the two kings that they, who had contemptuously thrust the helpless Abraham aside, were actually the victims of his power: "And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is that that *thou* hast done unto *me?*" (Gen. 12:18; italics added), while Abimelech echoes his words: "Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? . . . thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done." (Gen. 20:9.) The roles of victim and victor are almost ludicrously reversed. And just as Pharaoh-Nimrod complained that Abraham had escaped the altar by a trick, so does Pharaoh-Zoan complain that Sarah has escaped his couch by a ruse: ". . . why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? . . . now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way." (Gen. 12:18-19.)

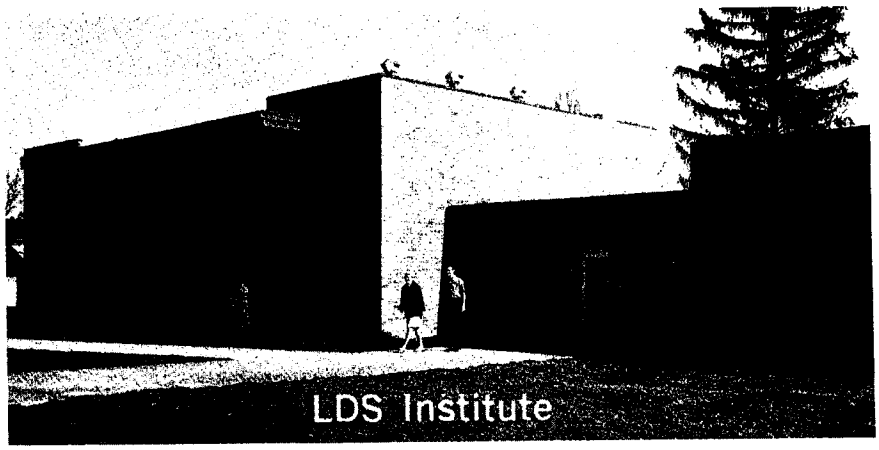
The Sarah story starts out with Abraham and Sarah alike at the mercy of the triumphant and irresistible king, and it ends up with the king humiliated by pain and impotence, humbly suing Abraham for succor and then acknowledging that superior power and priesthood of his rival. There is no injustice here: Abraham does not invade their kingdoms or seek their thrones, but the other way around—they coveted his rightful domain and were properly rebuked.

While the humiliation of the rightful king before his return to the throne is a central episode of the great Year-Rites throughout the Ancient East,[151] the queen plays quite a different role: she is ageless and immortal, the Mother Earth itself, taking a new spouse at each cycle of renewal and disposing of the old one.[152] This makes her the dominant figure of the rites, which have a distinctly matriarchal back-

ground—as is clearly indicated in the Book of Abraham, where, moreover, the tension between the old matriarchal and rival patriarchal orders is vividly set forth: While Abraham is completely devoted to the authority of "the fathers . . . even the right of the firstborn . . ." (Abr. 1:3), Pharaoh was put on the throne by his mother (1:23-25), so that though he "would fain claim" patriarchal authority (1:27), "seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers" (1:26), the importance of the female line still outweighed that of the fathers, as it always did in Egypt. The conflict between Pharaoh's would-be patriarchal rule and the claims of the matriarchy is further reflected in the putting to death of three princesses of royal blood who refused to play the game Pharaoh's way and compromise their virtue. (Abr. 1:11-12.) Abraham opposed the royal claims that his father ardently supported, in secure possession of "the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood," which records "God preserved in mine own hands. . . ." (Abr. 1:31.) And in return Terah volunteered his own son as a victim in the sacrificial rites. (Abr. 1:30.) This should be enough to explain how Sarah and Abraham get involved in all these very pagan goings-on.

Recently Cyrus Gordon has demonstrated the singularly close parallelism between the stories of Sarah and Helen of Troy, the main theme of both being the winning back of the captive queen by her rightful husband: In turn each of the rival husbands is made to look rather ridiculous as the lady leaves first one and then the other.[153] In the earliest Babylonian depictions of the year-motif we see the bridegroom hiding ingloriously in the mountain from which the bride must rescue and revive him,[154] even as Isis rescues and revives her husband and brother Osiris in the Egyptian versions. And so we have Abraham in an oddly unheroic role, gratefully accepting the presents and favors that Pharaoh bestows upon him as the *brother* of Sarah, the king's favorite wife![155]

Brother and Sister: Still less heroic is the supposed subterfuge by which Abraham got himself into that undignified position. The best biblical scholars in Joseph Smith's day as well as our own have found nothing to condone in what is generally considered an unedifying maneuver on the part of Abraham to save his skin at the expense of both Sarah and Pharaoh. "Abram appears to have labored under a temporary suspension of faith," wrote the most learned commentator of Joseph Smith's time, "and to have



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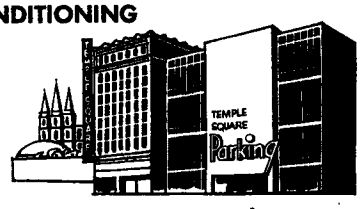

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stooped to the mean and foolish prevarication of denying his wife . . . and had not the Lord miraculously interposed . . . Abram must have sunk under his timidity, and forfeited his title to the covenant."[156] How they all missed the point! Far from denoting a suspension of faith, the turning over of his wife to another required the greatest faith yet, and that is where the Book of Abraham puts the whole story on a meaningful and edifying footing. For it was God who commanded Abraham: ". . . see that ye do on this wise: Let her say unto the Egyptians, she is thy sister, and thy soul shall live." (Abr. 2:23-24.) As to the "lie" about the family relationship of Abraham and Sarah, a number of factors must be considered. Technically, the Bible explains, Sarah was indeed Abraham's half-sister on his father's side. (Gen. 20:12.) To this physical relationship, the Zohar adds a spiritual, reporting that "Abraham always called her 'sister' because he was attached to her inseparably. . . . For the marital bond can be dissolved, but not that between brother and sister"—so by an eternal marriage that the world did not understand they were brother and sister.[157] More to the point, in Syria, Canaan, and Egypt at the time it was the common custom to refer to one's wife as one's "sister," and "Abraham's life reflects both the Semitic and the Hurrian cultural and legal patterns," so that "Sarah was . . . a 'sister-wife,' an official Hurrian term signifying the highest social rating."[158] On the other hand, everyone knows that it was the custom for Pharaohs of Egypt to marry their sisters, and in the Egyptian love songs the non-royal lovers regularly address each other as "my sister" and "my brother." The same custom appears in Canaan and even in the Genesis Apocryphon, the opening fragments of which show us the mother of Noah berating her husband Lamech for suspecting her virtue, but addressing him throughout the scene as "my Brother and my Lord." Indeed, in Abraham's day "both in Egypt and Canaan," according to Albright, "the notion of incest scarcely existed. In fact, Phoenicia and Egypt shared a general tendency to use 'sister' and 'wife' simultaneously."[159]

But whatever the *reservation mentale* behind the statement that Abraham and Sarah were brother and sister, the point of the story is that it was meant to convey to the kings that the two were *not* married—the sophistry of the thing would only render it more unsavory did we not have the real explanation in the Pearl of Great Price.

Sarah on Her Own: By telling Pharaoh and Abimelech that Abraham really was her brother, Sarah put the two kings in the clear. From then on *they*, at least, were acting in good faith. The Bible makes this very clear: the moment Pharaoh learns the truth, he lets Sarah go, saying to Abraham, ". . . why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife. . . ." (Gen. 12:18-19.) "I did what I did," says Abimelech, "with perfect heart and pure hand," to which the Lord replies in a dream, "I knew that, and I forgave thee." (See Gen. 20:5-6.) So it is made perfectly explicit that it is not the kings who are being tested—God honors and rewards them both for their behavior, which is strictly correct according to the customs of the times.

It must be Abraham and Sarah who are being tested then. But Abraham too is out of it, for, as we have seen, the Lord *commands* him to ask Sarah to say he is her brother, and he obeys. But no one commands Sarah—the whole thing is left up to her as a matter of free choice. It is she and she alone who is being tested on the lion-couch this time. It is incorrect to say with Graves that "Abraham gave Sarah to Pharaoh,"[160] for he was in no position to do so: he was completely in Pharaoh's power—he had already taken Sarah by force—and Pharaoh was listening only to Sarah! The Rabbis who knew the ancient law say that only unmarried women were taken into the harem of Pharaoh, and that these could not be approached by the king without their own consent.[161] It might mean death to her if she refused, but still to refuse was within her power, while Abraham was helpless to save her and Pharaoh was acting in good faith—throughout the story every crucial decision rests with Sarah and Sarah alone.

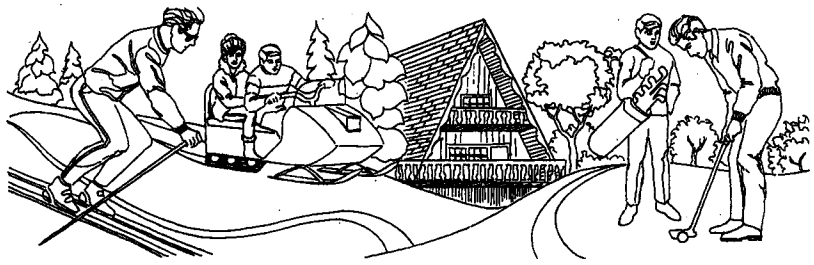
Why do we say that no one commands Sarah? God commanded Abraham to propose a course of action to Sarah, but Abraham did not command Sarah—he asked her humbly for a personal favor: "Therefore say unto them, *I pray thee*, thou art my sister, that it may be well with *me* for *thy* sake, and *my* soul shall live because of thee." (Abr. 2:25; Gen. 12:13. Italics added.) He explained the situation to her—"I, Abraham, told Sarai, my wife, all that the Lord had said unto me"—but the decision was entirely up to her. According to the Midrash, on this occasion "Abraham made himself of secondary importance . . . he really became subordinate to Sarah." (Midr. Rab. 40:4.) Everything was done for her sake: ". . . the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great

plagues because of [Sarah]" (Gen. 12:17; Gen. Apoc. XX, 24f); Abraham was given both life and property "for Sarah's sake," and the king "entreated Abraham well for her sake" (Gen. 12:16). Sarah was legally and lawfully married to both kings and was thus the legitimate recipient of their bounty. Pharaoh, according to Rabbi Eliezer, "wrote for Sarah a marriage deed, giving her all his wealth including the land of Goshen. . . ."[162] He "took her to him to wife and sought to slay me," says Abraham in the Genesis Apocryphon (XX, 9), ". . . and I, Abraham, was saved because of her and not slain" (10). From this Vermes concludes that "Abraham is indebted to Sarah for his life but not for his prosperity," having received riches in return for healing Pharaoh.[163] But the verses on which he bases this view may be more easily interpreted as meaning that it was to Sarah rather than Abraham that the Pharaoh gave the treasures, the badly damaged lines reading:

31. . . . And the King gave him a large . . . . the gift (?) much and much raiment of fine linen and purple [several words missing]

32. before her, and also Hagar [several words obscured] . . . and appointed men for me who would escort out [several words missing].

Now the Jewish traditions are quite explicit that it was to Sarah that Pharaoh gave the royal raiment and the maid Hagar. Since Abraham is writing in the first person, it is not absolutely certain who the "him" is in line 31, but the "her" in the next line is certainly Sarah, and there is no indication that the gifts and Hagar were not for her. The Bible clearly states that Abraham came into possession of Hagar only later when Sarah "gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife" (Gen. 16:3), i.e., Sarah gave more than permission to marry—she actually handed over her property to him, for Hagar was her personal maid (Gen. 16:1). And when Hagar behaved badly, Abraham, to keep peace, gave her back to Sarah again: "Behold, thy maid is in thine hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee." (Gen. 16:6.) When Sarah sent Isaac forth to school (as she thought) or to the rites on Mt. Moriah, "she dressed him in the royal garments and crown that Abimelech had given her."[164] Everything indicates that she was a princess in her own right—the gifts of her royal husbands did not so much bestow as recognize her royalty, for which they eagerly sought her hand in the first place, hoping to raise up kingly lines by her. Before her name was changed to Sarah, "Princess of all people," it



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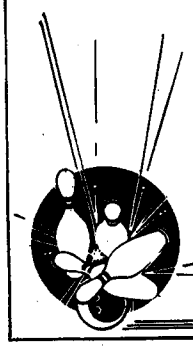

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had already been Sarai, "Princess of her own people," according to the Midrash; and before she ever married Abraham she was well-known by the name of Jiska, "the Seeress," either because she had the gift of prophecy or because of her shining beauty, or both.[165]

The Rabbis have resented the superior rating of Sarah with its matriarchal implications, and attempted to cover it up. Granted that everything that Pharaoh gave to Abraham was for Sarah's sake (Gen. Rab. 45:1), the doctors must conclude that Pharaoh acted unwisely, and they hold up as a proper example the case of Abimelech, who, according to them, gave his gifts to Abraham rather than Sarah. Yet these same authorities report that this same Abimelech "gave to Sarah a costly robe that covered her whole person . . . a reproach to Abraham that he had not fitted Sarah out with the splendor due his wife"—it would seem that Sarah has her royal claims after all.[166*]

Actually the idea of rivalry between Abraham and Sarah is as baseless as that between Abraham and Isaac when we understand the true situation, in which neither party can fulfill his or her proper function without the other. Having been commanded of the Lord, Abraham explained the situation to his wife and asked her whether she would be willing to go along. (Abr. 2:25.) According to the Genesis Apocryphon, he did not like the idea at all—it was a terrible sacrifice for him: "And I wept, I Abram, with grievous weeping." (G.A. XX, 9-10.) Would he have wept so for his own life, which he had so often been willing to risk? Why, then, did he ask Sarah to risk her person to save him: ". . . say unto them, I pray thee, thou art my sister . . . and my soul shall live because of thee"? Plainly because nothing else would move Sarah to take such a step. There was nothing in the world to keep her from exchanging her hard life with Abraham for a life of unlimited ease and influence as Pharaoh's favorite except her loyalty to her husband. By a special order from heaven Abraham had stepped out of the picture and Pharaoh had been placed in a legally and ethically flawless position, and Sarah knew it: "I Abraham, told Sarai, my wife, all that the Lord had said to me." Why is the brilliant prospect of being Queen of Egypt never mentioned as an inducement or even a lightening of Sarah's burden? Sarah apparently never thinks of that, for she was as upset as Abraham: "Sarai wept at my words that night." (G.A. XIX, 21.) Still, the proposition was never put to her as a command, but only as a personal request from Abraham: "Please say you

are my sister for the sake of my well-being, so that through your ministration I shall be saved, and owe my life to you!" (see Gen. 12:13); and so with Abimelech: "This will be a special favor which I am asking of you in my behalf. . . ." (See Gen. 20:13.) Abraham is abiding by the law of God; the whole question now is, *Will Sarah abide by the law of her husband?* And she proved that she would, even if necessary at the risk of her life. It was as great a sacrifice as Abraham's and Isaac's, and of the same type.

The Cedar and the Palm, a Romantic Interlude: Some famous episodes are associated with the crossing of the border into Egypt, such as Abraham's beholding Sarah's beauty for the first time as they wade the stream—"a beauty in comparison with which all other beauties are like apes. . . ."[169] It was under like circumstances that King Solomon is said to have first beheld the beauty of the Queen of Sheba.[170] Again, Abraham concealed his wife's beauty by trying to smuggle her across the border in a trunk, on which he was willing to pay any amount of duty provided the officials would not open it; of course, they could not resist the temptation and were quite overpowered by this Pandora's box in reverse.[171]

But the story of the cedar and the palm has the most interesting parallels of all: "And I Abram dreamed a dream in the night of our going up into the land of Egypt, and what I beheld in my dream was a cedar tree and a palm-tree . . . [words missing] and men came and tried to cut down and uproot the cedar while leaving the palm standing alone. And the palm tree called out and said, 'Do not cut the cedar! Cursed and shamed whoever [words missing]. So the cedar was spared in the shelter of the palm." (G.A. XIX, 14-16.) We have seen that Abraham was often compared with a cedar, and that the palm could be either Sarah or the hospitable Pharaoh.[172] But when we read in the Genesis Apocryphon that "for the sake of the palm the cedar was saved" (XIX, 16), we recall the unforgetable image of the mighty Odysseus, clad only in evergreen branches, facing the lovely princess Nausicaa, as in an exquisitely diplomatic speech he compares her with the tall sacred palm standing in the courtyard of the temple at Delos. In return for the compliment, the princess dresses the hero in royal garments and conducts him to the palace. Later, when the two meet for the last time, the damsel makes good-natured fun of the way she had saved the mightiest man alive, but in return Odysseus solemnly tells her that it was no joke: "For you really did save

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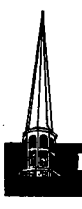

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my life, lady, and I shall never forget it!"[173] Here, then, the palm again saved the cedar. If scholars are now inclined to compare Sarah with Helen of Troy, it is pleasanter and even more appropriate to compare her with the chaste and clever Nausicaa, the most delightful of ancient heroines.

The humiliation of Odysseus, who appears first supplicating the princess while covered with dirt and leaves and then trails after her wagon publicly dressed in women's clothes, is a moment of matriarchal victory, as is the humiliation of Abraham. The meeting ground of the two stories is appropriately Egypt, for in the Tale of the Two Brothers, in which scholars have discerned the background of a wealth of biblical motifs, especially those of the Patriarchal stories, we meet the same strange combination of elements: the hero as a cedar tree threatened with destruction, the royal laundry ladies by the river, the trip to the palace, the humiliation of the king and his ultimate restoration, and all the rest.[174] The felling of the cedar is also the fall of Adonis in the Attis-Adonis cult, related in turn to the Osiris mysteries and the cult of Sirius, according to C. Autran.[175] Already in the Pyramid Texts Osiris is the king "who takes men's wives from them"—why should not Pharaoh be an Osiris in this as in other dramatic situations?[176] What might be called "the palace scandal" occurs repeatedly in the Patriarchal traditions. Rebecca, like Sarah, was rescued from the clutches of a king, leaving the palace laden with treasure while her true spouse lurks ingloriously in the background.[177] Abimelech, who tried to take Sarah for wife, later attempted to take Rebecca in the same way.[178] When Sarah died "hospitality ceased; but when Rebecca came the gates were again opened."[179] In all these operations Rebecca, we are assured, "was the counterpart of Sarah in person and spirit," the living image of Sarah.[180] Sarah is thus the ageless mother and perennial bride: the whole point of the birth of Isaac is that she becomes young again—"Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:11-15.) Firmicus Materus informs us that the early Christians saw in the Egyptian cult of Serapis, the last stage of the Osiris mysteries, the celebration of the Sarra-pais, "the son of Sarah," with Sarah as the mother of the new king.[181] Which may not be so farfetched, since that was exactly Pharaoh's intention in taking her to wife, according to Josephus. The story of the testing of the bride's moral fiber and the humiliation of the arrogant bridegroom is carried on down through the line of Abraham's female descendants: There was Tamar and her strange affair with her two half-brothers, ending with the death of both and her marriage with her father Judah;[182] and then another Tamar, daughter of David, who carried on with her half-brother (2 Sam. 13:13)—a reminder that Abraham and Sarah were half-brother and -sister.

Here it is in order to note that the legends of Abraham's birth and childhood are dominated by the conflict between matriarchy and patriarchy, with Abraham's mortal foe and rival, Nimrod, as the arch-defender of the matriarchy. To forestall the birth of Abraham, foretold by the stars, he first attempts to bar all contact between men and women; then he orders all expectant mothers shut up in a great castle: when a girl baby is born, she and her mother are sent far from the castle showered with gifts and crowned like queens, while all boy babies are immediately put to death.[183] And while Abraham's father supports Nimrod and tries to destroy the infant, his mother saves him by hiding him in a cave: her name, Emtelai, is a reminder that this is the age-old Amalthea motif.

Breaking the Mold: Facsimile No. 1 and the explanation thereof admonish the student not to be too surprised to find Father Abraham deeply involved in the abominable rites of the heathen. This, admittedly, is not a healthy situation, but then the point of the whole thing is that Abraham is fighting the system, and his is a life-long struggle. In the process of meeting the foe on his own ground he finds himself in one unpleasant situation after another—unpleasant and strangely familiar. The familiarity of the setting, as we have insisted all along, vouches for the authenticity of the tradition. The Abraham stories are poured into an ancient mold—but Abraham cracks the mold. One of the most striking examples of the shattered mold is the famous romance of Joseph and Asenath, a reediting of the story of Abraham and Sarah in an authentic Egyptian setting.

Everything in this romantic tale reverses the order of the conventional Near-Eastern Romance. True, it begins with the maiden locked up in her tower, the proud heiress of the matriarchy disdaining all men and rejecting all lovers, according to the standard fairy-tale formula going back as far as the Egyptian romances of the Doomed Prince and the Two Brothers. But presently she falls desperately in love with Joseph, of whose love she feels abjectly unworthy. G. von Rad insists that the Joseph stories are the purest fiction, "*durch und durch novellistisch*," and have no place in the Patriarchal histories.[184] But he overlooks the all-important ritual element

that places Joseph and Asenath in the long line of holy couples: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel, Moses and Zippora, Aaron and Elisheba, etc.[185] The undeniable link between the Abraham and the Joseph romances is the key name of Potiphar; for just as the testing of Abraham takes place at Potiphar's Hill, so the triumph of Joseph over the practices of the heathen and the wicked Prince of Egypt takes place at Potiphar's castle, Potiphar being none other than the father of Asenath. While the Prince of Egypt attempts to seize and marry Asenath against her will (the Sarah motif), Joseph is so moved by her tears that he refuses even to kiss her and instead puts his hand on her head and gives her a blessing, telling her that in spite of her Egyptian parentage she is of the true blood of Abraham, "for whom she was chosen before the world was." (Joseph & Aseneth 8:8-9.) So here then is the basic issue of the rival dynasties.

Weeping all night on her royal couch in the depths of humiliation amid sackcloth and ashes, the damsel prays for death, since she feels utterly unworthy of marrying Joseph. Just as she is at the point of death an angel appears and greets her as he had once greeted Abraham and Sarah in a like situation (14:11)—it is the old delivery-by-an-angel motif. Instead of defending the lady's honor with sword or whip, the angel orders her to remove the veil from her head, because, he tells her, "thy name is written in the Book of Life; from this time on thou art created anew, formed anew, given a new life; thou shalt eat the bread of life and drink of immortality, and be anointed with the oil of incorruptibility, and then become the bride of Joseph for all eternity." (15:4-6.) As the lady prayed on the bed that was to be her funeral couch, "the Morning star rose in the East . . . a sign that God had heard her prayer" (14:1); it was the precursor of the sunrise and the resurrection, as well as the ruling luminary (the Shagreel) of the rites of the sacred marriage (the hieros gamos) throughout the ancient world. The angel instructed Asenath to change her black garment of death to a pure white wedding dress, "the most ancient, primal Wedding-garment," whereupon she kisses the feet of the heavenly visitor (who, incidentally, is in the exact image of Joseph!), who takes her by the hand and leads her "out of the darkness into the light." (15:10-11.) The two then sit upon her undefiled bed to partake of bread and wine supplied by the bride while the angel miraculously produces a honeycomb for a true love-feast in the manner of

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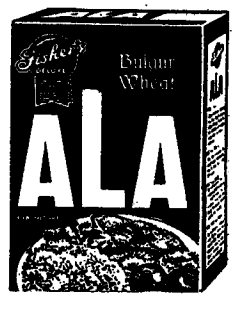

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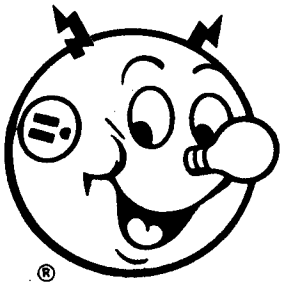

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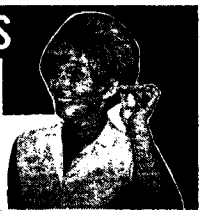

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the primitive Christians. (15:14, 16:1.)

If one compares this with the "*Setne*" romance or the Tales of the Two Brothers of Foredoomed Prince, or with the stories of Aqhat or Krt, or numerous Greek myths, one will recognize at every turn the same elements in the same combination—but what a difference! The heathen versions are full of violence and bestiality, with one brother murdering another and the lady deceiving and destroying her lovers: there is no better example of both the ritual and historical situation than the account in the eighth chapter of Ether where the throne is transmitted after the manner of "them of old" by a series of ritual murders supervised by the queen. In the Sed-festival, Moret points out, the king's wife represented the unfailing fecundity of the earth, while the Pharaoh was one whose failing powers were arrested by a sacrificial death, effected since the middle of the 4th Millennium B.C., by the use of a substitute.[186] This is the sort of thing in which Abraham and Sarah become unwillingly involved—a desperate perversion of the true order of things. The first Pharaoh, being a good man who "judged his people wisely and justly all his days," had tried hard to do things right, would "fain claim" the right of the priesthood, and was always "seeking to imitate that order established by the fathers." (Abr. 1:26-27.) But the best he could come up with was an *imitation,* being "cursed . . . as pertaining to the Priesthood." Abraham, possessed of the authentic records (1:28), knew Pharaoh's secret—that his authority was stolen and his glory simulated—and refused to cooperate, turning to God instead for the knowledge and the permission necessary to restore the ancient order (Abr. 1:2). For this he was rewarded and received the desire of his heart, but only after being put to the severest possible tests. Forced against his will to participate in the false ordinances, he resisted them at every step, even to the point of death. What breaks the mold is the sudden, unexpected, and violent intervention of a destroying angel, which puts an end to sacrificial rites and in their place restores an ordinance of token sacrifice only, looking forward to the great atonement. Neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Sarah had to pay the supreme price, though each confidently expected to, and was accordingly given full credit and forgiveness of sins through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord. In them the proper order and purpose of sacrifice was restored after the world had departed as far from the ancient plan as it was possible to get.

In their three sacrifices the classic rivalry and tension between father and son, patriarchy and matriarchy are resolved in a perfect equality. On Mt. Moriah, Isaac showed that he was willing to suffer on the altar as Abraham had been; in Egypt it was made perfectly clear that Sarah was Abraham's equal, and that he was as dependent on her for his eternal progress as she was on him. The two kings knew that without Sarah they could not attain to the glory of Abraham, but she knew that without Abraham her glory would be nothing, and she refused all substitutes. "Do this," says Abraham to his wife at the beginning of the story, "for the sake of benefitting me, [and] for your own advantage"—[*le-ma'an yitavli ba'avurekh*]. (See Gen. 12:13.) "Abraham and Sarah," says the Midrash, "kept the whole law from Alef to Taw, not by compulsion but with delight."[187] They kept the law fully and they kept it together. Why is it, asks the archaeologist A. Parrot, that we never read of the God of Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachael, but only of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? The answer is given in Abraham 2:22-25, where Abraham obeys a direct command from God, though he is free to reject it if he will, while Sarah receives it as the law of her husband, being likewise under no compulsion. It is indeed the God of Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel to whom they pray directly, but they covenant with him through their husbands. "If he guards the holy imprint," says the Zohar, speaking of the ordinances of Abraham, "then the Shekhinah does not depart from him"—but how can he be sure he has guarded it? "He cannot be sure of it until he is married. . . . When the man and wife are joined together and are called by one name, then the celestial favor rests upon them . . . which is embraced in the male, so that the female is also firmly established." (Lech lecha, 94a.) It was by their mutual faithfulness, according to rabbinic teaching, that Abraham and Sarah reversed the blows of death, so that they became new again and had children in their old age.[188] Just so, when Asenath was anointed with the oil of incorruptibility, and then became the bride of Joseph," she was told, "from this time on art thou created anew, formed anew, given a new life. . . ." (Jos. & Asen. 15:4-6.) When Sarah had passed through the valley of the shadow in order to save her husband's life, Abraham received "a new grade of knowledge," after which he "begat children on a higher plane." (Zohar, Veyerah, 103b.) This is that measure of exaltation promised in Abraham 2:10-11: ". . . for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and

shall be accounted thy seed . . . and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel . . . even of life eternal." It was this doctrine that led to the discussions among the Jewish doctors on whether Abraham and Sarah were actually given the power to create souls.[189] "Abraham obtained the possession of both worlds," says an ancient formula, "for his sake this world and the world to come were created."[190] Abraham's covenant, as J. Morgenstern observes with wonder, "appears to be outside of time and space."[191] Or as the Prophet Joseph Smith put it, "Let us seek the glory of Abraham, Noah, Adam, the Apostles," naming Abraham first of all.[192]

And Abraham earned his glory: "The sacrifice required of Abraham in the offering up of Isaac, shows that if a man would attain to the keys of the kingdom of an endless life, he must sacrifice all things."[193] But Isaac was in on it too—the stories of Isaac and Sarah teach us that salvation is a family affair, in which, however, each member acts as an individual and makes his own choice, for each must decide for himself when it is a matter of giving up "all things," including life itself, if necessary. But "when the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards," only then "the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him," as they were to Abraham, "and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God."[194] If Abraham knew that "God would provide a sacrifice," Isaac did not; if he was perfectly sure of his wife, she was not and prayed desperately for help—husband, wife, and son, each had to undergo the terrible test alone.

But every test is only a sampling: as a few drops of blood are enough for a blood test, so, as Morgenstern points out, the rite of circumcision demanded of Abraham expressed the idea that a token shedding of blood "redeems the remainder."[195] Circumcision, then, is an arrested sacrifice. When one reaches a critical point in an act of obedience at which it becomes apparent that one is willing to go all the way, it is not necessary to go any farther and make the costly sacrifice. Abraham called the spot where he sacrificed Isaac "Jehovahjireh," signifying that God was perfectly aware all the time of what was going on and knew exactly where Abraham stood: "For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son. . . ."[196]

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He knew that Abraham would certainly carry out the sacrifice, and he let him go as far as possible for the sake of his instruction, and then he had him complete the ordinance with a token sacrifice, which was to be repeated by his progeny in the temple.[197] For since it is an individual as well as a family thing, each of the descendants of Abraham is required to make the same token sacrifice as Isaac.[197] Cyril, the last "primitive" Christian bishop of Jerusalem, has left us a report on how the early Christians thought of this *token* sacrifice. The first step in becoming a Christian, he says, is to renounce all the idols (as Abraham did); next, one must escape the power of Satan, described as a ravening lion; then come baptism, anointing, and the receiving of a garment;[198] the candidate is then buried again three times in water, to signify Christ's three days in the tomb. "We do not really die," Cyril explains, "nor are we really buried, nor do we actually rise again after being crucified. It is a token following instructions (*en eiponi he mimesis*), though the salvation is real. Christ was really crucified and buried and literally rose again. And all these things are for our benefit, and we can share in his sufferings by imitating them while enjoying the rewards in reality. O how everflowing is God's love for man! Christ received the nails in blameless hands and feet, while I may share in the suffering and reward of salvation without the pain or suffering!"[199] He goes on to note that one then becomes "a Christ," an adopted but nonetheless a real son of God, "receiving the very form of the Christ of God."[200]

He describes the priesthood standing a circle around the altar ("leave the altar if thy brother hath aught against thee!"), the mutual embracing "which signifies a complete fusion of spirits," and then "that thrilling hour when one must enter spiritually into the presence of God."[201] Throughout this ancient and forgotten discourse the emphasis is on the token or mimetic nature of the ordinances along with the quite real and necessary part they play in achieving salvation. Julius Maternus, describing the same rites, says that they match the Osirian mysteries very closely and he accuses the Egyptians of stealing their ordinances from Israel back in the days of Moses.[202]

The important thing in the early Christian rites is that every individual *must* imitate the suffering and burial of Christ; this is the great essential of the ordinances, as it is the fundamental principle of all Jewish sacrifice as well. This we learn from the sacrifices of Abraham, Isaac, and Sarah; each was interrupted and by the providing of a substitute became a token sacrifice, acceptable to God because of the demonstrated intention of each of the three to offer his or her life if necessary. The perfect consistency of the three sacrifices is a powerful confirmation of the authenticity of the Book of Abraham.

(To be concluded)

FOOTNOTES

97 Jubilees, 13:10; Genesis Apocryphon 19:23.
98 Gen. Apocr., 19:13.
99 C. Gordon, *Common Background*, etc., pp. 159f.
100 B. Z. Wacholder, in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Vol. 34, pp. 110f.
101 H. Kees, cited in Orientalische Literaturzeitung, Vol. 53 (1958), p. 311, and in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 57, pp. 117-19.
102 The story of Sarah in the trunk, Midrash Rab., LL 40:6.
103 *Ibid.*, 40:4.
104 They held an auction, each trying to buy her in order to make a gift of her to Pharaoh, *ibid.*, 40:5.
105 S. ha-Yashar, 51-52; in Vermes, p. 113.
106 Midr. Rab., 41:2.
107 Beer, p. 25, discussing sources on p. 128.
108 P. R. Eliezer, Ch. 26; S. ha-Yashar, pp. 51f.
109 So E. Osswald, in *Ztschr. f. A. T. Wiss.*, Vol. 71 (1959), pp. 15, 19.
110 Bin Gorion, II, 158.
111 Eusebius, *Praeparatio evang.*, IX, 17.
112 Gen. Apocr. XX, 30-34, cf. Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 203; bin Gorion, II, 97; Maase Abraham in Beth ha-Midrasch, I, 35, 41; Tha'labi, *Qissas*, p. 55; S. ha-Yashar, in Vermes, p. 73; Beer, pp. 18, 113.
113 F. L. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis* (Oxford, 1900), pp. 16-19.
114 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
115 *Ibid.*, p. 31. The theme is the same as that of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. On the antiquity and importance of the Fifty-two game, H. Nibley, in *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 2 (1949), p. 337.
116 Griffith, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-40.
117 *Ibid.*, pp. 45-50; the moral tone of the Egyptian account is even higher than that of the Jewish version.
118 *Ibid.*, pp. 60ff.
119 *Era*, March 1969, pp. 80, 82.
120 Griffith, pp. 64f.
121 *Ibid.*, pp. 65f.
122 H. Ranke, in *Studies for F. L. Griffith* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 412ff.
123 Vermes, p. 115, n. 2.
124 N. Avigad and Y. Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1956), p. 26, note that the Genesis Apocryphon version of the affliction and healing of Pharaoh "is actually much closer to *Genesis* xx, dealing with Sarah and Abimelech."
125 Bin Gorion, II, 250.
126 Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 258.
127 Beer, p. 45.
128 Ginzberg, *loc. cit.*
129 Beer, pp. 46-47.
130 Ginzberg, Vol. 1, pp. 262-63.
131 Beer, p. 128; Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 224.
132 F. Weber, *System der altsynagog. Theologie*, p. 256.
133 Zohar, I, *Vayerah*, 103b.
134 Josephus, *Jew. Ant.*, I, 165. Sarah was ten years younger than Abraham. Cf. Beer, p. 25.
135 J. Gray, *The Krt Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), p. 2.
136 *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
137 Tab. 4, Col. 5, lines 25, 33.
138 Tab. 4, Col. 3, lines 83, 87.
139 *Era*, Sept. 1969, p. 92; see J. Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), p. 25, n. 5.
140 *Krt Text*, Tab. 4, Col. 5, lines 1-8, 10-13.
141 *Ibid.*, line 19.
142 *Ibid.*, line 21a. The word for "do" is here *ehtrsh*, meaning to perform an ordinance.

143 *Ibid.*, Col. 4, lines 4ff.
143a See C. J. Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), pp. 37-43.
144 Ginzberg, *L.J.*, Vol. 5, note 308; *Maase Abraham*,
145 Josephus, *Ant.*, I, 188-90.
146 So F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *Biblical History of the Hebrews*, p. 25, noting at the same time that Isaac "is not more than a tribe-name."
147 W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (University of London, 1968), p. 128.
148 J. Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
149 Bin Gorion, II, 330, 332.
150 Josephus, *Ant.*, I, 165; bin Gorion, II, 250.
151 J. Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
152 J. G. Frazer, *The New Golden Bough*, T. M. Gaster, ed., (New York: Anchor, 1961), pp. 172f; C. J. Bleeker, in *The Sacral Kingship* (Leiden: Brill, 1959), pp. 261-69.
153 H. Haag, in *Ex Oriente Lux*, Vol. 19, p. 517; C. H. Gordon, *Ugarit and Minoan Crete* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966).
154 E. D. Van Buren, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 13 (1944), p. 15.
155 Beer, p. 25.
156 William Hales, *A New Analysis of Chronology*, etc. (London: 1830), II, 111.
157 Zohar I, *Vayerah*, 112a.
158 E. Speiser, in A. Altmann, *Biblical Studies*, pp. 14-18; J. L. Kelso, in *Christianity Today*, Vol. 12, p. 918.
159 W. F. Albright, *Yahweh & the Gods of Canaan*, pp. 111-12.
160 R. Graves, *King Jesus* (London: Cassell, 1950), p. 59.
161 Discussed by B. Beer, *L. A.*, pp. 126-27.
162 P. R. Eliezer, Ch. 26, p. 190.
163 Vermes, p. 114.
164 Beer, p. 61.
165 Beer, p. 18; Barhebraeus, *Scholion* on Gen. 11:27. "Indeed, in prophetical power she ranked higher than her husband," Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 203.
166 Ginzberg, *L. J.*, Vol. 1, p. 260.
*Footnotes 167-168 omitted.
169 Ginzberg, Vol. 1, pp. 221f.
170 Tha'labi, *Qissas al-Anbiyah* (Cairo, A. H. 1340), p. 223.
171 Beer, pp. 24, 127.
172 *Era*, Vol. 72 (September 1969), p. 94, n. 162: In a number of cases the hospitable lotus is identified with the royal palm, suggesting the palm-branch as a symbol of honorable reception.
173 *Odyssey*, 8:461-68.
174 The story has recently been made available in paperback by W. K. Simpson (ed.), Ad. Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians* (Harper Torchbooks, 1966), pp. 150-61.
175 C. Autran, in *Melanges Maspero*, I, ii, 531-32.
176 A. Moret, *La Mise a Mort du Roi*, p. 13.
177 Bin Gorion, II, 330, 332.
178 Ginzberg, Vol. 1, p. 297.
179 Bin Gorion, II, 330.
180 Ginzberg, *loc. cit.*
181 F. Maternus, *De errore profan, relig.* 13:1-2, in Hopfner, *Fontes hist. relig. Aegypt.*, p. 520.
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185 L. Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology* (Yale University Press, 1952), p. 300.
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192 *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 162.
193 *Ibid.*, p. 322.
194 *Ibid.*, pp. 150-51.
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196 Gen. 22:14, 12; Beer, p. 71, on the meaning of the name.
197 Vermes, p. 195; bin Gorion, II, 307-8.
198 Cyril of Jerus., in *Migne Patrologiae Graecae*, Vol. 33, cols. 1068-1074.
199 *Ibid.*, col. 1081.
200 Col. 1088.
201 Col. 1112.
202 Julius Maternus, in Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, 12: 1031.



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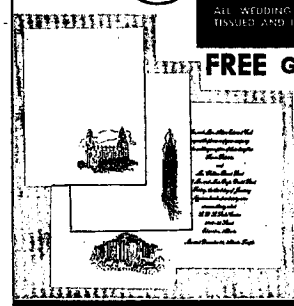

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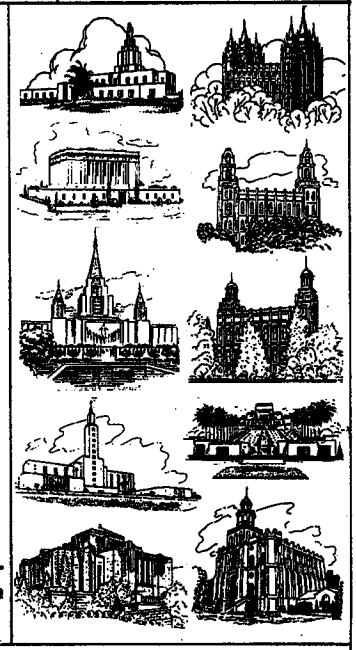

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By Dr. Hugh Nibley

● *"Look here upon this picture and on this"*: The long discussion of the Follies of 1912 with which this series opened has turned out to be no idle sparring for time or waste of paper. Who would have thought that the pattern of 1968 could follow that of 1912 as closely as it did? Let us briefly summarize the situation as we found it to be in 1912.

At that time it was claimed that the pronouncements of five of the greatest scholars of all time had "completely demolished" all grounds for belief in the divine inspiration or historic authenticity of the Book of Abraham and, through it, the Book of Mormon. It turned out, however, that Bishop F. S. Spalding in gathering and manipulating the necessary evidence for his determined and devious campaign had (a) disqualified the Mormons from all participation in the discussion on the grounds that they were not professional Egyptologists, (b) sent special warnings and instructions to his experts that made it impossible for any of them to decide for Joseph Smith, (c) concealed all correspondence that did not support the verdict he desired, (d) given the learned jury to understand that the original Egyptian manuscripts were available, which they were not, and (e) said that Mormons claimed them to be the unique autographic writing and sketching of Abraham—which they did not, (f) announced to the world that Joseph Smith was being tested on linguistic ground alone, specifically as a translator, though none of his experts ventured to translate a word of the documents submitted, and (g) rested his case on the "complete agreement" of the scholars, who agreed on nothing save that the Book of Abraham was a hoax.

The experts (a) did not agree among themselves at all when they spoke without collusion; (b) with the exception of Breasted, they wrote only brief and contemptuous notes, though it was claimed that they had given the documents "careful consideration"; (c) they admitted that they were hasty and ill-tempered, since they at no time considered anything of Joseph Smith's worth any serious attention at all; (d) they translated nothing and produced none of the "identical" documents, which, according to them, were available in countless numbers and proved Joseph Smith's interpretations a fraud. They should have done much better than they did, since they had everything their own way, being free to choose for interpretation and comment whatever was easiest and most obvious, and to pass by in complete silence the many formidable problems presented by the three facsimiles. Those Mormons who ventured a few polite and diffident questions about the consistency of the criticisms or the completeness of the evidence instantly called down upon their heads the Jovian bolts of the *New York Times*, accusing them of "reviling scholars and scholarship." A safer set-up for the critics of Joseph Smith could not be imagined. And yet it was they and not the Mormons who insisted on calling off the whole show just when it was getting interesting. It was not a very edifying performance.

The project of 1968 may have been carried out with more sophistication than that of 1912, but in the last analysis the demonstration rested more than ever before on an all-out appeal to authority. If anything, the public today is more prone than ever to accede to the pressure of official persuasion and more easily overawed by the mystique of sciences that have become specialized to the point of total incomprehensibility. This can be seen in the declaration of half a dozen intellectuals that after a lifetime of belief they have finally and suddenly become convinced by the authority of one Egyptologist that Joseph Smith was a fraud. The remarkable thing is that these people would be outraged at the suggestion that they accept any demonstration whatever against the Prophet by experts in their *own* fields without thoroughly examining the evidence for themselves. Yet it is with an audible sigh of relief that they commit their brains and their immortal souls into the hands of a young man recently out of graduate school, the lone practitioner of a discipline of which they know nothing. Rustics and adolescents might be excused for being bowled over by the sheer majesty of unassailable authority, but those thinking people must have been desperately determined to get something against Joseph Smith, who, while unable to accept the unanimous opinion of five of the greatest scholars of the past, rested the most important decision of their lives on the purely intuitive deduction of a single scholar whose credentials they made no effort to examine.

Since the basic charges against Joseph Smith emerging from the study of the newly found papyri have not been discussed in the pages of the *Era*, it may be well to review them briefly here. Two documents of the Joseph Smith Papyri were identified and translated in 1967/8, the one comprising sections from the Book of the Dead, the other being the much rarer but still not unknown "Sen-sen" Papyrus or "Book of Breathings." Neither of these texts contained the same reading matter as the Book of Abraham, but who said they should? A single scholar announced that the text of the Book of Abraham was *supposed* to be a translation of the "Sen-sen" Papyrus, and, since it was not, "Abraham" was a hoax. It is on this claim alone that announcements have gone forth to the press that the fraudulence of the Pearl of Great Price has at last been established.

What supports the idea that the Book of Abraham was thought by Joseph Smith to be a translation of the Breathing Certificate? Two things: first, that the "Breathing text" was originally adjoined to Facsimile 1 on the same strip of papyrus, and second, that the symbols from the "Breathing text" are interpreted bit by bit in a writing known as "the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar" in which the interpretation turns out to be the same as the text of the English Book of Abraham. It looks like an open-and-shut case, but only if one is determined

to look no further. The demonstration was simply a matter of matching up the edges of two pieces of papyrus and of matching up certain symbols (whether one could read them or not made no difference whatever) with passages from the English Book of Abraham. That the latter cannot possibly be a translation of the symbols has been brilliantly apparent to everyone who has ever bothered to compare them—and they are already compared for our convenience in the "Alphabet and Grammar." No slightest knowledge of Egyptian is necessary to convince anybody that when a symbol as brief as CAT is "translated" by an involved paragraph of over one hundred words, we are not dealing with a "translation" in any accepted sense of the word. If it isn't a translation, what is it? Looking closer we soon discover that the text of the Book of Abraham in the "Alphabet and Grammar" has simply been copied down without alteration or hesitation, making it perfectly clear that that translation was completed *before* it was ever set down beside the characters from the "Sen-sen" Papyrus, and that what we have before us in the "Alphabet and Grammar" does *not* represent an attempt at translation. We notice further that nothing in the "Alphabet and Grammar" is in the handwriting of Joseph Smith, and that strangely enough a number of different handwritings are involved—showing that something was going on which we do not understand today. We also learn that the "Alphabet and Grammar" was never given out as an official or inspired document, was never meant for publication, never placed before the Church for approval, never discussed for the record, never explained to the world as the facsimiles were. Did Joseph Smith *really* translate the Book of Abraham from those symbols? Of course not! Well then, what is wrong? What is wrong, according to one expert, is that he *thought* he was translating them. And how does the expert know that? Before going in for mind reading, it might be well to make a closer examination of the whole problem. Whenever scholars have a suspected ancient document to test, as Friedrich Blass says, the *first* thing to do is to examine the *content* of the document and see if it fits into the ancient setting to which it is ascribed. This is exactly what our experts have *not* done. The question that constantly comes to mind as one considers their determined assaults on the Pearl of Great Price is, *Why don't they ever pour their water on the fire?*

The Mormons are deeply concerned only with what they accept as scripture. Non-Mormons, raised in the tradition of the Infallible Bible, are unable to conceive of a man's being a prophet and at the same time a fallible mortal; they persist in thinking as they did in 1912 that the discovery of any slightest flaw in Joseph Smith's character or his work must necessarily bring the whole structure of Mormonism down in ruins. It isn't that way at all: all men are subject to vanity, said Joseph Smith, and all must be allowed a generous margin of error to be themselves. But there *are* points on which no such freedom is allowed; there are writings that the Mormons accept as inspired scriptures, and these include the explanations to the facsimiles in the Book of Abraham. Why have not the Egyptologists concentrated on them? Naturally in 1968 priority went to the newly found papyri, which had never been translated and about which many people were understandably curious and impatient. But when it soon became apparent that those documents did not contain any of the text of the Book of Abraham as we have it, it was time for the Egyptologists, having done their work and done it well, either to bow out of the scene or to go on to the more important and essential problems of the facsimiles. All but one wisely chose the former course, recognizing that it was not their business as Egyptologists to pass judgment on matters of divine inspiration or revelation. The one exception did not hesitate to convert his doctoral gown into the starry robe of the clairvoyant and announce that Joseph Smith *thought* the papyri on hand contained the text of the Book of Abraham, which makes him both deceived and a deceiver. On this highly intuitive conclusion rests the whole case against Joseph Smith.

Still, 1968 saw definite progress over 1912. For one thing, more is known now about the original documents, which display a measure of originality and oddity that the scholars of 1912 categorically refused to recognize, and for which the Mormons cannot be held wholly responsible. It is now generally conceded, as was not the case in 1912, that Egyptian documents can sometimes bear a number of different interpretations at once, all being valid, and that one and the same document can be at one and the same time both highly stylized and highly personalized, conventional and yet unique, to suit a particular purpose or occasion. It is also generally believed now, as it was not in 1912, that there really was an Abraham. On such points the authorities of 1912 were convinced that the final word had been spoken. But they were wrong—the door is still wide open.

The Open Door: The decision of the scholars to avoid the facsimiles and their explanation was dictated by caution and experience. By choosing their own fires to fight, they remain masters of the situation. Any attack on the facsimiles, on the other hand, promptly turns into a stunning demonstration of the limitations of Egyptology. The fact is, as we shall soon see, that nothing is known about documents of this type, to say nothing of these particular documents, each of which is unique in a number of essential points. Still worse are the disturbing number of instances in which Joseph Smith's supposedly wild guesses happen to have anticipated the best knowledge of the Egyptologists. This is strikingly brought home in the case of Facsimile No. 2.

In the mid-1880s Professor Samuel Birch of Oxford gathered together every example he could locate of those round "hypocephali" of which Facsimile No. 2 is a good example. His project called for the collaboration of all interested Egyptologists throughout the world in an attempt to come to some agreement as to what these peculiar objects represented. The Joseph Smith hypocephalus was not among those studied, and the work went forward happily uninhibited by any reference whatever to it or to the Prophet. So it came about that when certain eminent Egyptologists 28 years later found themselves confronted by Joseph Smith's interpretation of Facsimile No. 2 and were asked to give an opinion of it, they had their work already done for them. All any of them had to do was to point to the impressive study of 1884 and its well-publicized results, which were well known to all of them, and say, "Here, my friends, you have the answer. This is what a hypocephalus is really about!" How did it happen, then, that *none* of the experts of 1912 so much as mentioned Dr. Birch's model study and its enlightening results? Can it possibly be because the findings of 1884 were in surprising agreement on every main point with Joseph Smith's interpretation of *his* hypocephalus? We have yet to discuss Facsimile No. 2, and here we are getting ahead of the story; but also we may have here an explanation of why the experts do not choose to pour their water on the fire. It only burns more brightly when they do.

The last Egyptologist to leave the scene in 1968 banged the door resolutely behind him. But the catch did not hold; it was very weak. The conclusion that Joseph Smith was wrong because he thought that the "Sen-sen" Papyrus actually contained the full text of the Book of Abraham rests on

exceedingly indirect and dubious evidence. What the "Breathing Certificate" contains is one question, and it has been partially answered. What its contents have to do with the Book of Abraham is a very different question, which cannot be answered by a knowledge of Egyptian alone. The "Book of Breathings" has been studied for many years and by many scholars. To this day, the conclusions reached by de Horrak, Brugsch, de Rougé, Chabas, and others about a century ago still hold: (1) though the "Sen-Sen" Book is easy to translate, nobody can even begin to understand it; (2) it presents truly astonishing affinities to certain passages and teachings of both the Old and New Testaments; (3) its ideas and expressions cannot be confined to any one period of Egyptian history; (4) it remains a complete enigma.

It is imperative, even if it is somewhat embarrassing, to keep in mind that the scholars of 1968 are quite as human as those of 1912. They still cannot speak of Joseph Smith but what their voices shake with emotion, and they still change the subject with awkward haste whenever he is mentioned. More important, they are still constitutionally incapable of conceiving even for a moment and by the wildest stretch of the imagination that he might be right. The history of education makes it clear at every step that *all* scholarship has a religious orientation—the atheism of Eduard Meyer was just as charged with religious emotion as were the oddly varied but powerfully conditioned opinions of Mercer, Sayce, or von Bissing. It is sheer nonsense to pretend that one's scholarly opinions rest on an intellectual plane aloof from any religious influences. A sincere attempt to maintain such an impossible posture would require at the very least that one leave all questions of revelation and inspiration strictly out of the discussion of Joseph Smith's writings, which calls for a degree of detachment that none of the critics, in 1912 or 1968, was ever able to achieve.

The Big Picture and the Little Picture: It is important to specialize. It is sound professional policy to deal with something that nobody else understands. But there are natural limits to specialization: inevitably one reaches the point at which the study of a single star cannot be pursued further until one has found out about a lot of other stars. The little picture starts expanding into a big picture, and we soon discover that without the big picture the little one cannot be understood at all. In the study of the ancient world the big picture, long ignored by scholars, has been coming into its own in recent years. For generations students worked with meticulous care on their little specialized pictures in the confident hope that in the end each little piece would fit together with others to give a larger and clearer picture of the world and all that's in it. The idea worked: the separate studies did show a tendency to fit together and fall into patterns. Instead of gratifying the scholars, however, this alarmed most of them, fearful of the dissolution of sacred departmental bounds. Within the limits of his specialty the expert is lord and master; small wonder if he treasures and defends those limits.

As we see it, the main issue all along between the Latter-day Saints and the learned has been that of "the Big Picture" versus "the Little Picture." The best chance of catching Joseph Smith or anybody else off base is to detect him in some slip visible only to the eagle eye of the specialist with a microscope. That is perfectly legitimate, of course, provided the specialist lets the rest of us look through his microscope and provided he himself knows just what he is seeing. On both scores the Egyptologists have been deficient. The rest of us don't know how to operate the microscope—we will have to take their word for what they see; and as to their understanding and interpretation of it, well, who are we to judge what we can't even see? Professor Breasted was able to dismiss the whole Book of Abraham with devastating finality by simply observing that the Egyptians were polytheists and the Jews monotheists; within a limited framework this is so, and no picture was large enough to hold both systems in 1912—but today it is a different story, and the sweeping declaration of Breasted gives a completely distorted image which, ironically enough, the Book of Abraham corrects. Again, the idea of Abraham sitting on Pharaoh's throne (Facsimile No. 3) caused the experts to roar with laughter in 1912—since when does Pharaoh, of all people, allow others to sit on his very own throne? Ever since prehistoric times is the answer now. Up until this very writing the present author had never thought to connect the Book of Abraham with a lengthy study published by him in the *Classic Journal* 25 years ago, in which he cited a dozen instances in which nonroyal individuals were permitted to sit on kingly thrones during the observance of certain rites common to many ancient civilizations, including that of Egypt. Today the principal emphasis in studies of Egyptian and Canaanitish religion is on those very rites, with special attention to the honored (and usually doomed) guest on the king's throne. Here is a "Big Picture" of which no one dreamed in 1912.

How much Egyptology depends on the Big Picture, and how reluctant most Egyptologists are to recognize it, is strikingly illustrated in Professor de Buck's work on Egyptian dramatic texts. Of one such text he wrote, ". . . a large part of this interesting text is utterly unintelligible. The first complete lines tell a clear, coherent story, but after a few lines the drift of the narrative is completely lost." The meaningless text is quite intact, however—what is wrong? De Buck explains: "This text . . . belongs to a literary genre of which only a very few examples are known to us, viz., the so-called dramatic texts." With no master-plan to follow, the great de Buck can produce only such a translation as he describes as "in large part . . . little more than incoherent words and disjointed phrases."[1] Professor de Buck was able to spot this strange and puzzling text only because it fitted into a larger category of papyri first recognized by the learned and imaginative Sethe. It was also de Buck who while editing the Coffin Texts recognized Spell 312 as substantially the same writing as Chapter 78 of the Book of the Dead, both being derived from an older lost dramatic text of considerable importance. The foremost American authorities on the Book of the Dead have passed over Chapter 78 time and again without seeing anything more in it than Budge saw more than sixty years ago, and as far as they were concerned the melodrama of the Hawk to the Rescue might have gone undiscovered for centuries. For Egyptologists in general, as specialists' specialists, have always been suspicious of anything resembling a Big Picture, preferring the safe method of Professor Battiscombe Gunn, who insisted on treating every Egyptian text as a complete, self-contained, independent, isolated entity.

Of course there is something to be said for tending strictly to the day's assignment; one can overdo the Big Picture, as amateurs and cranks are liable to do. But the fact remains that the Great Egyptologists have all been those who were willing to venture farther than other men and risk the censure of their colleagues in a quest for wider vistas and associations. The safe conservative majority still prefer to explain the whole magnificent complex of Egyptian civilization as a fortuitous and haphazard accumulation of junk, and Egyptian religion as an amalgamation of cult objects thrown together from countless local shrines where their original primitive significance had

been forgotten long before the fusion. Even though the Egyptians were able to impose on the structure a wonderful consistency and uniformity of style while at the same time achieving a technical skill that fills us with awe, still, most Egyptologists insist on seeing in the whole stunning performance only a majestic facade with nothing behind it. Because of this attitude, according to Bleeker in his recent study of Egyptian festivals, Egyptologists "have not succeeded in presenting a satisfactory description of ancient religion. Evidently, they have not asked themselves what their approach to this religion ought to be. They have obviously studied this ancient religion from the viewpoint of a modern European"[2]—or worse still, of the modern American scientist with the evolutionary chip on his shoulder.

Blindness to larger contexts is a constitutional defect of human thinking imposed by the painful necessity of being able to concentrate on only one thing at a time. We forget as we virtuously concentrate on that one thing that hundreds of other things are going on at the same time and on every side of us, things that are just as important as the object of our study and that are all interconnected in ways that we cannot even guess. Sad to say, our picture of the world to the degree to which it has that neatness, precision, and finality so coveted by scholarship is a false one. I once studied with a famous professor who declared that he deliberately avoided the study of any literature east of Greece, lest the new vision destroy the architectonic perfection of his own celebrated construction of the Greek mind. His picture of that mind was immensely impressive but, I strongly suspect, completely misleading.

It is against the wider background of religious traditions and ceremonies common to most of the Ancient East that the facsimiles in the Book of Abraham begin to make real sense, and that Joseph Smith's explanation of them scores one bull's-eye after another. Interestingly enough, it was the jury of 1912 that insisted on forcing the Big Picture on the attention of the world. For there was just one thing on which they all agreed regarding the facsimiles, one thing alone on which none of them hesitated for a moment to speak with absolute certainty and finality: Whatever the facsimiles might be, or whatever they might mean, according to this verdict, they could not possibly have anything whatever to do with Abraham. By bringing Abraham into the picture so forcefully, they pushed out the walls to take in more territory than their specialties warranted. It was safe enough for them to do that then, for they all considered the biblical Abraham to be a mere myth and some of them had written books and articles to prove it. But now that Abraham has become a real person, we are obliged to test the facsimiles in the light of the extensive archaeological and literary materials that are today bringing to life the man and the world in which he lived.

This takes us beyond the range of the Egyptologists and breaks their monopoly. They take comfort in the proposition that if Joseph Smith can be debunked in any *one* area, it makes no difference what evidence might seem to support his position in another. That argument is valid, however, only if the disclosures in the one area have been complete and exhaustive, which has been anything but the case. Here the experience of 1912 should teach us a lesson. Never were men more confident that enough was known by them on one point at least to prove Joseph Smith hopelessly and irredeemably wrong; satisfied with that, they considered the problem solved. Yet it was precisely on that one point, the possibility of ties between Abraham and the facsimiles, that their position was weakest, since, as it turned out later, they knew virtually nothing at all either about Abraham *or* the facsimiles. The same tendency to settle for premature conclusions was apparent in 1968. For example, when the experts offer a possible or plausible explanation of some figure in the facsimiles, e.g., a crocodile or a bird, they invariably put forward their explanation as the *one* possible answer, excluding all others. Egyptologists of all people should be the first to acknowledge that one possible explanation of a bird, while perfectly acceptable, by no means excludes from the Egyptian mind other equally valid explanations of the same object.

To avoid looking seriously into the countless possible explanations of this or that figure, the Egyptologist today can shrug his shoulders and declare with some impatience that "of course, anybody who is determined to do so can make out a case for Joseph Smith or anything else." Whether this is true or not (and we seriously doubt it), the man who makes such a statement has painted himself into a corner; for as long as one can make out a case, no matter how flimsy, *for* Joseph Smith, the case *against* him cannot be considered closed. The writer's own purpose in snooping around in the stacks has been simply to throw out suggestions and hint at possibilities. Not for a moment does he insist that any of his own explanation, e.g., of the figures



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in Facsimile No. 1, is correct. It is enough that an explanation is conceivable, enough to show that many possibilities remain to be considered, to keep the door open. Until far more work has been done, the idea of discrediting Joseph Smith on the strength of one completely demonstrated point must yield to the opposite reasoning: Whenever any evidence *favors* the Book of Abraham, conflicting evidence may be discounted until further investigation, since the chances of such agreement are much rarer than the almost unlimited possibilities of disagreement.

We frankly prefer the Big Picture to the single-shot solution, having found it to be far more foolproof than any little picture. Composed as it is of thousands of little images, the big one can easily dispense with large numbers of them without suffering substantially. It is a huge overall sort of thing, supported by great masses of evidence, but nonetheless presenting a clear and distinct image. No one can be sure of a little picture, on the other hand; at any moment some new discovery from some unexpected direction may wipe it out. Let us take a brief distant view of the Big Picture of Abraham that is just beginning to emerge from the fog. Here is a long-forgotten body of apocryphal stories about the Patriarch, the oldest and most important being of very recent publication—and neither this author nor any of his colleagues had ever heard of them before 1968! We read of desperate people seeking security in a world of drought and famine by rushing to the supplication of idols. We read of their sordidly materialistic civilization, their greed, meanness, and inhospitality. We read of their horrible sacrificial rites, of the offering up of their children to idols. We read of their great ceremonial assemblies at huge ritual complexes, of the royal victims offered, of princesses compelled to compromise their virtue or suffer death. We read of kings insecure on their thrones and determined to establish and retain a royal line, seeing their worst enemy and opponent in Abraham. We read of constant tension between matriarchal and patriarchal traditions; of a king who coveted priestly authority above all things and tried to buy it from Abraham; of hungry migrants driven from place to place and crisis to crisis; of rites and ordinances all directed to combatting an all-pervading drought and assuring the fertility of the land and prestige of the king. We read of Egypt in Canaan and Canaan in Egypt, culturally, politically, and especially religiously. We read of a peculiar altar built for the sacrificing of Abraham, of how he prayed for deliverance and at the last moment was rescued by an angel, who accomplished his mission by smiting the assembly with a disastrous earthquake. We read of the strange humiliation and conversion of the king, and of Abraham's yet stranger refusal to let him share in his priestly functions. We read of kings and princes doing obeisance to Abraham, clad in royal insignia at the behest of the king, who shortly before had tried to put him to death. We also read of Isaac and Sarah going through much the same experience as did Abraham, placed upon the altar or the lion-couch, praying in a single voice with Abraham for deliverance, saved at the last moment by an angel.

The chorus of voices from the East is surprisingly joined by another from the West, a mass of classical lore all going back to Minoan and Mycenaean times. It depicts the same distracted world as that of the Abraham legends, the same desperate, famine-ridden people seeking to stem the all-pervading drought and make the waters flow by the same great public ceremonies; it tells us of that strange breed of kings who tried to put their noble guests to a ritual death on cunningly devised altars in order to save their own lives and restore fertility to their afflicted lands; it tells us how the scheme failed when a noble, suffering, godlike, traveling stranger turned the tables and was miraculously delivered from the altar at the last moment, while the officiating priest of the king himself paid the sacrificial price. Fittingly, these old stories all point to Egypt as the scene and Busiris and Heracles as the actors in the primal version of this strange drama, Heracles being the standard substitute for any suffering hero whose real name was forgotten. Vital to the understanding of such traditions is the now recognized interplay of ritual and history in the ancient world, where great ritual events were major historic milestones and typical historical events were duly ritualized. This means that there can be no objection to the picture of Abraham on the altar as an authentic stereotype; and indeed, the Book of Abraham beats us to the punch when it explains that Abraham was by no means the only noble victim to suffer ritual death on that peculiar lion-shaped altar. The legends that recall the same situation, therefore, offer powerful confirmation of the event.

Each of the vignettes that have just flashed by us—a very incomplete list indeed—has a double link, one with the historical and archaeological record indicating that there was something behind it, and the other with the Book of Abraham. What more do you want? Joseph Smith was certainly on the track of something. The newer studies of Abraham are much concerned with his Asiatic background and with the mysterious kings of Genesis 14. Most mysterious of all is his archrival, the enigmatic Nimrod whom the legends identify with Pharaoh or the father of a Pharaoh and with an Asiatic upstart king who seized the throne of Egypt. There were a number of such kings, and the name of Nimrod is closely tied with certain Asiatic or Libyan dynasties that ruled in Egypt, the most illustrious of the line being that Shishaq I, who reintroduced human sacrifice in Egypt and had particularly close family and other ties with Israel. He was the son and the father of a Nimrod, and both names occur frequently. The only time the name of Abraham has ever turned up in an Egyptian document was when Breasted and others spotted it on a stele of Shishaq I, found in Palestine. The identity of the name has been questioned, of course, but never disproven. In the light of such things one can only ask whether it is pure accident that the name of Shishaq (or Sheshonq) occurs on Facsimile No. 2; if there was ever an Egyptian family in which one would expect the name of Abraham to be remembered, it would surely be that of the Sheshonqids. The presence of writings attributed to Abraham in the hands of the Sheshonq family is in itself by no means an unlikely situation, but of course absolutely nothing has been proven as yet. That is just the point: wherever we look the Big Picture stretches out, a huge, dim patchwork sprawl of history and legend awaiting the explorer of future generations. Far beyond our scope or grasp, it is enough at the present moment to show that it is *there*.

There are those who deplore the study of such things as "esoteric" and "exotic." By very definition the unknown is always exotic and the little-known is always esoteric; the terms are relative—to the departmental philosopher even Latin may be esoteric and Greek positively exotic. Now the office and calling of scholarship and science is to investigate the unknown, and people who engage in such work are not ashamed of admitting that it intrigues them—it is exciting and even romantic stuff; the motion is always away from the commonplace and familiar to the strange and wonderful. The established academician with his tried-and-tested platitudes and truisms is welcomed to his world of preaching and posturing, but the greatest appeal of the gospel in every age has been that it is frankly wonderful—one glorious surprise after another.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the Book of Mormon and the Pearl of Great Price is the way they knocked the walls out of the narrow religious edifice of Western Man of the early nineteenth century. Without them Mormonism might well be charged, as it has been, with being nothing but a segment of a narrow isolated sub-section of Protestant Christianity. With them, it breaks into the Big Picture in the grand manner, for while one of these books takes us as far away in time and place as it is possible to get in human history, showing God's dealings as it were with men of another world, the other by choosing an Egyptian provenance cuts for us the largest possible slice of the religious experience of the race.

O, ye of little knowledge!—The trouble with the little picture is that one can never be sure of it. It is outlined by the areas that surround it, and if one ignores them, the lapidary perfection of the small picture is little more than a glorified doodling. "The case at issue," writes the most helpful of the critics of 1968, is "what *are* the facsimiles?" And indeed, until we know exactly what the facsimiles are, it makes no difference what we may think Joseph Smith *thought* they were. The question can be answered at various levels, and any number of *partial* answers are possible. That is typical of Egyptian questions, as Professor Bleeker shows at length in his new book on the festivals. Here are some points he makes:

(1) An understanding of Egyptian religion can best be achieved through the study of the festivals, since these supply us with the abundance of documents we need. (P. 141.)

(2) These documents, however, are only pictures, for which no written explanations are available, aside from very brief labels, for "the Egyptian . . . felt no need to explain them. . . ." (P. 142.)

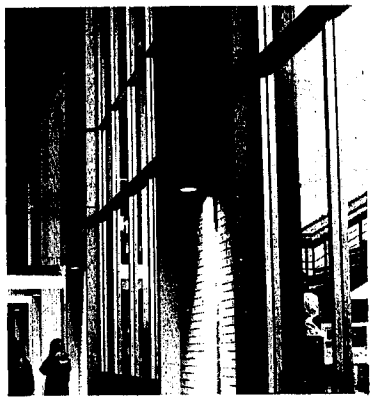
(3) Accordingly, in spite of our monumental compilations of pictures and texts, "extremely few facts are known about the festivals of even the well-known gods." (P. 33.) The Egyptologist must be reconciled to the fact that "there will always be gaps in his knowledge and that his insight will always prove inadequate. For the data with which he is working are scanty, uninformative, and sometimes extremely difficult to explain." (P. 1.)

(4) Hence the usual practice has been for the Egyptologist simply to describe what he sees and let it go at that: "There has yet to be written a critical analysis of the fragmentary data and a satisfactory interpretation of these ceremonies [including that baffling business on the lion-couch, incidentally!]. . . . As a rule, the authors . . . are content with a factual description bereft of any thoroughgoing explanation." (P. 94.) Most Egyptologists, in fact, pride themselves on sticking to purely descriptive observations and avoiding the pitfalls of speculation.

(5) But that gets them nowhere: "It is meaningless to collect data," says Bleeker, without asking "what did the Egyptians believe?" (P. 141.) There is no escaping it: "One must learn to think as an Egyptian in order to understand his religion [p. 142]. . . . One must learn to think Egyptian" (p. 1). But this leaves us all in a dilemma: How does one go about learning to think Egyptian, and how does one know when one has succeeded? Living teachers we have none; we can only learn to think Egyptian by a thorough understanding of the Egyptian books, which of course cannot be understood until we *first* know how to think Egyptian. Alexander M. Stephen spent long years among the Hopis and in the end admitted that he had never been able to so much as peep under the blanket of Hopi religious thought. Even if an Egyptologist were to fly through time and live among the ancient Egyptians, we would still have no guarantee of his capacity to "think Egyptian." It is impertinent to claim mastery of a mode of thought when no control exists to confirm or refute our claims.

Now there are great bodies of Egyptian religious texts, like the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts, and there are also huge albums of pictures, like the Medinet Habu reliefs or the vignettes from the Book of the Dead, and there can be no doubt that some of these texts go together. But since they are not *found* together, we can only guess which goes with which. We cannot prove, for example, that the texts we cited to illustrate the lion-couch scene really belong to it; but neither can anyone prove the opposite in the present state of our knowledge.

So the Egyptologists in confining themselves to purely descriptive activities are doing the safe thing. But no science is content with mere description, and the more descriptive sciences have hit upon a way of making up for their deficiencies. It is showmanship—what would any learned profession be without it? The scholars of 1912 played a shrewd game when they conducted the public as it were into the awesome recesses of the Egyptian Museum and there, pointing with mute eloquence to a lot of things that looked something like the facsimiles, let the world draw its own conclusions, that these things in some mysterious way



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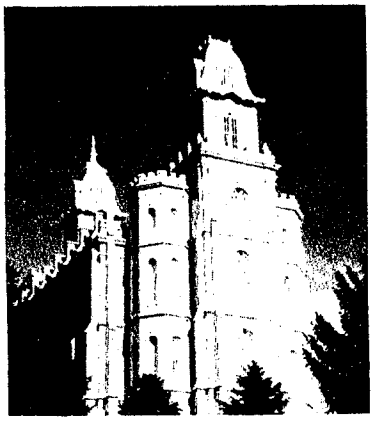

proved Joseph Smith a fraud. The main purpose of the expedition was to silence criticism: you must admit that the Egyptian Collection for sheer mass and charge is intimidating to a layman, an overpowering demonstration of the boundless accomplishments of science. The visitor is embarrassed by the riches that surround him and made crushingly aware of his own ignorance. And when a tall, dignified man bustles through the halls with a paper in his hand, he can only whisper with religious awe to whoever is with him, "There goes the Curator, the Man Who Knows!" And right here we have the crux of the matter, which is that the curator does *not* know. Let us refer again to the festival reliefs, the most numerous and impressive objects ever to come under the surveillance of a curator. Nothing is more familiar to the Egyptologist than these wonderful scenes of offering and presentation repeated over and over again hundreds of times. Yet Professor Bleeker assures us that no real explanation of them, ancient or modern, is available, that all we shall ever know about them is what we can guess by looking at the mute pictures themselves—"a lock without a key." (Pp. 16-18, 104, 144.)

It would appear that the experts of 1912 did not know enough to suspect the limitations that crowded them on every side. Knowing nothing, they thought they knew everything, and in a way they did. For how can a man be charged with ignorance who knows all that is known, and hence all that there is to be known, on a subject? The rock upon which scholarship builds its house is that maxim dear to the heart of A. E. Housman: "Among the blind a one-eyed man is king!" The Egyptologist is in the enviable position of being able to say with stately simplicity, when confronted by a word or sentence *he* cannot read, "*It cannot be* read," and retire from the scene with enhanced rather than damaged prestige.

As we pass through the hallowed halls of the museum, avidly reading the labels on everything, we begin to feel a vague sense of annoyance with the little tags and snippets of information that are being handed out to us. These prim little inscriptions rarely do more than describe what we can see for ourselves. As our feet become hotter and our enthusiasm cooler, we wonder if Bleeker was not right when he said that it is meaningless merely to collect data and describe things. Even the evolutionary rule doesn't explain very much in Egypt: "It is doubtful," wrote Bleeker, "whether there is any point in inquiring into the development of ancient Egyptian thought, as Breasted in particular has done" (p. 8), the trouble with that being that one simply reconstructs the past according to one's preordained pattern. The tags and labels in the museum, like those hypnotic—nay, stupefying—captions to the pictures in nature and travel magazines, impart an air of intimate knowledge (few suspect how often they are totally inaccurate!), and seem designed to indicate with a few modest words the boundless treasures that repose under the lid. But don't be fooled: the reason they tell us so little is simply that they have no more to tell. "The great voids and flaws in the tenuous fabric of our knowledge," writes Paul Weiss, are "now covered by illusive verbal wrappings, which insinuate knowledge when there is none."[3]

From the museum we turn to the "Sen-sen" Papyrus. What are we told about it? Again the familiar tags and

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snippets: The lady's name refers to the Theban moon-god, son of Amon and Nut; Amon-Re, king of the gods, is the chief deity of the great Temple of Karnak at Thebes; Min Bull-of-his-Mother is a common epithet of the fertility god Min; Khons the Governor is an epithet of Khons; "justified" is the usual epithet placed after the name of a deceased person; the title Osiris is given to the deceased in all mortuary texts after about 2200 B.C.; Re is the sun god. Osiris joins him in his daily circuit around the earth; Nut is the sky goddess, sister and wife of Geb; natron was used by the Egyptians instead of soap. . . . And so on and so on. It is all in the handbook, as routine and predictable as a knee jerk, the Approved School Solution that leaves us none the wiser, "factual description bereft of any thoroughgoing explanation," as Bleeker puts it. If we are not given anything of solid and arresting value, it is because there is nothing of that kind to give. If there is any reality behind the facsimiles, Egyptology has yet to discover it.

The last page of the latest and one of the best of Egyptian grammars (de Buck's) warns the student that Egyptian cultic texts are full of errors, due to the process of transmission, but what is worse, that "even where the translation is assured, the content remains for us a sealed book." At the same time, the latest studies of the best-known and best-documented Egyptian rites—the Opening of the Mouth (Otto), the Heb Sed (Bleeker), and the royal sacrifices (Derchain)—all insist with great emphasis that, contrary to what has always been assumed, virtually nothing is known about any of these rites or in all probability ever will be known. Since the matter of our three facsimiles is undeniably related to these rites, since the categories to which these scenes belong (lion-couch. hypocephalus, and presentation) have never been carefully studied, and since the specific place of each of the three scenes within its category has never been examined, it is nothing short of chicanery for anyone to pretend that he knows what the facsimiles are about. It is perfectly legitimate to speculate and guess about these things, but not to pontificate about them—not for anyone.

At all times the whole discussion of the facsimiles in the Book of Abraham and the papyri that go with them has hinged on one point and one alone: Who really knows? We will readily grant that Professor X can read Egyptian as well as anybody else can, but is that enough? Is it even relevant? Every eminent Egyptologist has commented with dismay on the circum-

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stance that one can read a text readily and even glibly without having the vaguest idea of what it is about. The only chance of progress in such a state is, as de Buck points out, to seek the widest possible associations—a procedure of which most Egyptologists are deeply suspicious.

Unexplained Territory: It is only the last step that counts, as the French say, and so far nobody has taken it. The hopes for a quick decision with the finding of the Joseph Smith Papyri were blasted when it became apparent on the one hand that those documents do not contain the Book of Abraham, and on the other that the connection between the so-called Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar and the Book of Abraham is anything but clear. The work has hardly begun, but people still seek the safe and easy solution of authority and ask with impatience, "Can't you spare us all that speculation and surmising and comparing and illustrating and simply give us the results?" The anti-Mormons have been only too glad to do just that, but we must never let them make us forget that proof is a process, not an answer, and that there is no such thing as total knowledge. A thing is proven when the individual is convinced, but no one can ever share just the thoughts and experiences that add up to proof in the mind of another. This writer cannot go very far along the road with the Egyptologists, to be sure, but he cannot escape the responsibility of going on his own *just as far as he possibly can.* The same obligation rests on every other person who would pass judgment on Joseph Smith. For centuries astronomers described the craters of the moon and the rings of Saturn, but their explanations of those phenomena were no better than the thoughtful guesses of anybody else. Today all that the experts can do with the facsimiles is to describe them—what they really say remains anybody's guess. Egyptologists would do well to heed the maxim of the most famous of Egyptian sages, the immortal Ptah-hotep: "Be not arrogant because of thy knowledge, and have no confidence in that thou art a learned man. Take counsel with the ignorant as with the wise, for the limits of art cannot be reached, and no artist fully possesseth his skill. . . ."[4]

Many Latter-day Saints have not been too happy with the Joseph Smith Papyri, which instead of giving them all the answers only set them to work on a lot of problems with which none of this generation is prepared to deal. But it was the Mormons who started this game, and it is their responsibility to keep it going. They can never again leave the field without forfeiting the game. The opposition have been only too glad to call a halt at any time; they were in an unseemly hurry to blow the whistle in 1912, and that should have tipped the Mormons off. But the Mormons did not realize the strength of their own position and relapsed into silence, not from any fear of controversy (they do not have to issue daily bulletins from the housetops, as their enemies have done), but out of preference for smoother and easier roads of knowledge.

In 1833 the School of the Prophets at Kirtland adopted a basic curriculum of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and for a time some of the brethren, following the example of the Prophet, seriously came to grips with those languages. The program was violently interrupted, but it was enough to serve notice that the Mormons intended to study the hard way and to take advantage of all the resources that are available for the study of the scriptures. God had told Oliver Cowdery in no uncertain terms that revelation follows study and may never be claimed as a substitute for it. (D&C 9:7-8.) The bringing forth of the papyrus fragments in 1967 was a reminder to the Saints that they are still expected to do their homework and may claim no special revelation or convenient handout solutions as long as they ignore the vast treasurehouse of materials that God has placed within their reach.

So far we have only taken a preliminary view of a few problems raised by Facsimile No. 1, and hardly even mentioned Facsimiles 2 and 3, which in their way are even more challenging and enlightening. We have dealt entirely in possibilities, never in certitudes, possibilities being all we need to keep the door open. "The method of critical discussion," says Karl Popper, "does not establish anything. Its verdict is always and invariably 'not proven.'" As long as a single aspect of any problem raised by the Book of Abraham remains unexamined, as long as there is the remotest possibility that any slight detail of any significance may have been overlooked, as long as a single possible relevant text remains unread, we must hold our final word in abeyance.

A few years ago a librarian in Salt Lake City revived the dormant issue of the facsimiles in the Book of Abraham by proclaiming with great force in a series of lectures that the one fatal mistake that Joseph Smith made in all his career of deception was to publish a commentary on Egyptian documents that would someday be an open book to science. The librarian had it backwards. It would be hard to find any

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document that Joseph Smith or anyone else could have selected, whose nature and purpose is more effectively locked up from the scrutiny of the learned. To the eye of the candid unbeliever the Prophet may be considered particularly lucky in having hit upon these singularly enigmatic objects as the subject of his discourses, and to have been thrice lucky in coming up with a history of Abraham that fits so nicely with the old Abraham legends and traditions about which he knew nothing. Whether it was luck or not, we cannot in all fairness deny him the advantage of our own very real ignorance by continuing to conceal it. It is on the absurd assumption of a whole and solid knowledge of the facsimiles and on that alone that the case against Joseph Smith rests at the moment.

Question Time: Ever since the services of professional Egyptologists were enlisted to contribute to the downfall of the Prophet, beginning in 1845, one stock question has been addressed to the Mormons with tireless persistence: "The scholars have spoken; why don't you do the honest thing and accept the verdict of the experts?" The answer should be clear by now: "Why don't *you* do the honest thing and find out how much the experts really know?" Both questions are perfectly legitimate. During the past hundred years the general public has known next to nothing about the moon, and yet when an intelligent and dedicated man who has spent his life gazing at the moon offers to tell us just how our satellite originated, the ignorant public hesitates to accept his opinion as binding or final. Why? How can we ignoramuses in all honesty question the learned specialist for a moment?

Well, for one thing, if we are honest we must admit that our knowledge is far too limited to permit us to judge of the man's competence—and that is exactly what he is asking us to do when he solicits our assent. Then too, we feel that our expert is going too far: we are willing enough to accept his purely descriptive statements about the size, specific gravity, motion, etc., of the moon, but when he presumes to tell us things bordering on ultimate origins, common sense admonishes caution. Science, as we are often told today in the scientific journals, only describes things—it does not explain them; an observation is not in itself an explanation. And so while we applaud the skill of the scholar who translates an Egyptian text, we draw the line when that same scholar almost overnight becomes an expert on Mormonism and the mind of Joseph Smith and hands down his ultimate decisions on Last Things purely by virtue of his command of a very limited, dubious, and tentative stock of rules of Egyptian grammar.

Also, while we must admit that an astronomer's ideas about lunar origins and an Egyptologist's idea about the facsimiles may be learned and plausible enough, the fact remains that the vital information necessary to prove their theories one way or another is simply not available—a limitation attested by the inability of the best astronomers and Egyptologists to agree on such matters. Gardiner recommended that Egyptologists set up their theories and their translations as targets to shoot at and then do their best to falsify them. That is the one fruitful scientific method, but where the Book of Abraham is concerned, the Egyptologists, though confronted by the most baffling examples of what their most speculative of sciences has to deal with, have chosen to declare their opinions sacrosanct and beyond question or discussion, even though the documents at hand go far beyond the domain of their competence in every direction. They have done a nice preliminary tidying-up job in one corner of the field—the sort of thing they are good at—and for that they have our sincere thanks. But they have not touched upon the main problems, except for a few purely personal and emotional outbursts; and as for really getting into the substance of the Book of Abraham, it would be as unfair to expect them to do that as it would be to credit them with having done it.

Who, then, is to decide these weighty matters? That is just the point: Is it necessary to decide here and now? The Mormons have always hesitated and asked for time, waiting (though rarely seeking) for further light and knowledge. Significantly, it has always been the Egyptologists, usually the very soul of caution, who have insisted on a once-for-all, here-and-now, before-we-leave-the-room decision and have been desperately determined not to prolong the discussion. That is still their policy, and it forces us to return upon their own heads the routine question that the world would confound and demolish us: You scholars have spoken; why don't you do the honest thing and admit that you don't know a blessed thing about the facsimiles, that you haven't made even a superficial study of them either to examine the categories to which they belong or the peculiarities of the individual documents? Why not admit that the relationship between the "Alphabet and Grammar" and the Book of Abraham is an enigma, full of odd contradictions and unexplained anomalies? Why not admit that you

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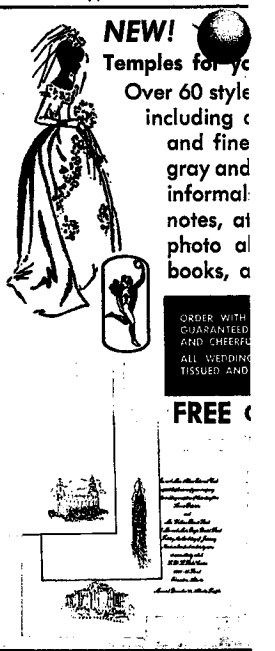

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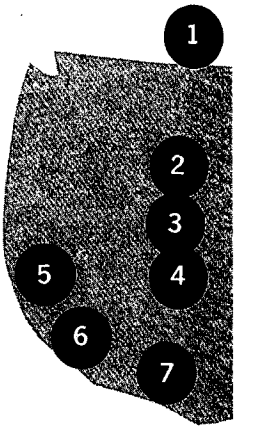

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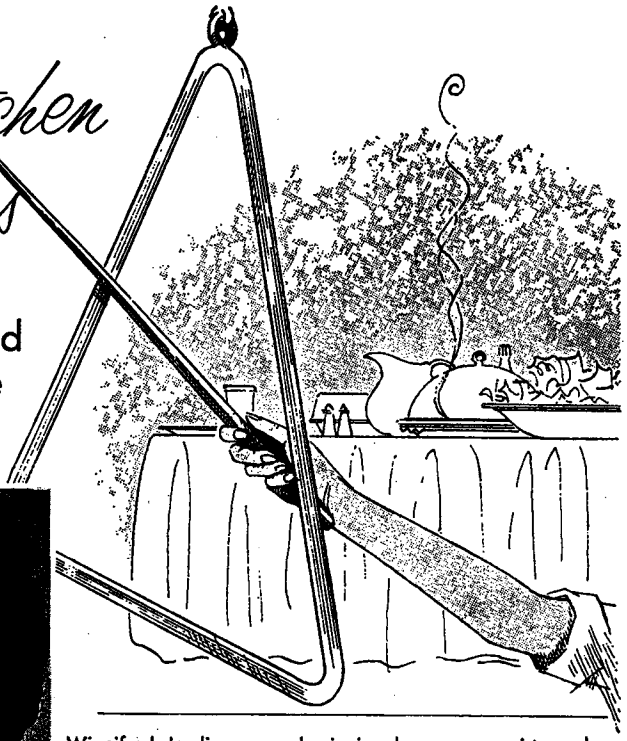



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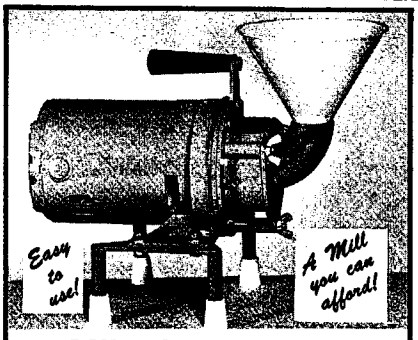

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are not privy to the mind of Joseph Smith? That the test of the Book of Abraham lies in what it says, not in the manner in which it may have been composed, and that a thorough test of its contents would require a scope of research that no scholar today has any intention of undertaking, a scope of knowledge that few if any scholars today possess? Why not recognize that there is a vast amount of literary material that presents remarkable parallels to the matter in the Book of Abraham, and that no scholar has made the slightest effort to look into the problems that these correspondences raise? Why not admit that the figure of Abraham is shrouded in mystery and that the search for the real Abraham has just begun? Why not admit, in Gardiner's words, that "what is proudly advertised as Egyptian history is merely a collection of rags and tatters," and, if one admits so much, that it is far too early in the game to convert those few rags and tatters into robes of academic omniscience?

Until now, no one has done much more than play around with the bedizening treasury of the Pearl of Great Price. "They" *would* not, we *could* not make of the Book of Abraham an object of serious study. The time has come to change all that. The book that concerns us was purposely called "The Pearl of Great Price," that term being both in scripture and apocrypha the designation of a treasure that is both hidden and inexhaustible. Being hidden, it must be searched out and dug up—brought out of the depths by the strenuous and determined efforts of whoever would possess it. Being inexhaustibly vast, it can never cease to be a source of new wonders to the inquiring mind. In the past this treasure has been treated more or less like a convenient bit of pocket money, a ready fund of occasional texts to be dipped into for self-serving commentaries. That is not the purpose of the scriptures, which is, to tell us what we do not know and often do not want to know. The Pearl of Great Price is unique among scriptures in that its message is available only to that extent to which God's children choose to make it so, but at the same time it is capable of conveying knowledge of undreamed of scope and significance. ○

(Conclusion)

FOOTNOTES

1 In H. Frankfort, *The Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos* (39th Memoir, Egypt. Exploration Soc., 1933), Vol. 1, p. 82.

2 C. J. Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals* (Leiden: Brill, 1967; Suppl. to *Numen* No. XIII), p. 1.

3 Paul A. Weiss, "Living Nature and the Knowledge Gap," in *Saturday Review*, Nov. 29, 1969, p. 21.

4 A. Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians* (Harper Torchbooks, 1966), p. 56.