

Egypt and Beyond

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The Ancient Egyptian “Books of Breathing,” the Mormon “Book of Abraham,” and the Development of Egyptology in America

Lanny Bell

I FIRST GOT TO KNOW LEONARD LESKO when we studied hieroglyphics together at the University of Chicago in 1961–63. The participants in these small classes, taught by John A. Wilson, also included Len’s future wife Barbara Switalski.¹ In addition to the introductory year of Middle Egyptian, we read Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, and Book of the Dead. These experiences determined the future course of Len’s studies, and it is in celebration of his career-long dedication to the explication of ancient Egyptian funerary literature that I am pleased to dedicate this small piece to my long-time friend and colleague.

Len was among the first professional Egyptologists to be consulted in 1967,² when the press reported the rediscovery of some lost Egyptian papyri once owned by the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44). Several diverse publications have chronicled the history of these papyri and their role in the development of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since they came into Smith’s possession (in Kirtland, Ohio) in 1835.³ Smith immediately undertook the translation of the documents; and in 1842 “The Book of Abraham,” including Facsimiles 1–3, was published along with his commentary.⁴ Figure 1 reproduces Facsimile No. 1 as it appeared in *Times and Seasons* for 1 March 1842.⁵ In 1968, Facsimile No. 1 was identified as the opening vignette and text of a late Theban funerary composition known most precisely as “The Breathing Permit which Isis Made (for her Brother Osiris).”⁶ In 2001, after discussing the matter with Len, I contracted to participate in a project designed by Luke P. Wilson, Executive Director of the Institute for Religious Research, to present an updated summary of modern Egyptological

1 I would like to express my gratitude to Barbara Lesko for kindly reading an early draft of this article and offering some valuable suggestions. Len himself was still able to correct my manuscript at one point when a mock-up of this volume was presented to him; and I am most grateful to him, too.

2 S. Larson 1996, pp. 92–93.

3 Cf. Wilson 1972, pp. 173–77; 1964, pp. 37–38; J. Larson 1994; C. Larson 1992; S. Larson 1996.

4 For this paper I have consulted the 1981 official Mormon edition of *The Pearl of Great Price*, a collection of the writings of Joseph Smith (first put together under this title in 1851), containing “The Book of Abraham” (pp. 28–42); cf. the caveat of Baer 1968, p. 126, n. 106, regarding apparent modification of the Facsimiles in some earlier editions; see Gee 2000, pp. 6–7, 34.

5 C. Larson 1992, p. 64. I would like to express my appreciation to Luke Wilson of the Institute for Religious Research for generously granting me permission to utilize material taken from C. Larson’s book in Figures 1–4 of this article, and to Barbara Ray, IRR Office Manager, for kindly preparing the illustrations and forwarding them to me. Luke also read an early draft of this article and offered some valuable suggestions.

6 Baer 1968: his translation takes account of P. JSI, X–XI, and Facsimile No. 3; in parallel columns on pp. 130–32, he compared his translation of column II/1–2 of text (see p. 119) with Smith’s interpretation of it—this numbering follows that used by Ritner: cf. Ritner 2002, p. 99; 2003, p. 164. Wilson 1968 and Parker 1968 had each identified fragments of a “Book of Breathing” in the Joseph Smith papyri; Parker even identified it as a “Sensen” text. Good color photos of the Joseph Smith papyri are published in C. Larson 1992 and Rhodes 2002; cf. Gee 2000. I would like to express my great appreciation to Stephen Thompson for calling the Rhodes 2002 work to my attention during the final stages of the preparation of my manuscript, and also for encouraging me to incorporate the Gee 2000 work with it. Scanned images of the Joseph Smith “Breathing Permit” are available online at www.irr.org/mit/Book-of-Abraham-page.html.

thought on “The Breathing Permit.”⁷ The main subject of this contribution is the reconstruction of the vignette of Papyrus Joseph Smith I (P.JS I), from which Facsimile No. 1 of “The Book of Abraham” was derived.⁸

A FAC-SIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM.
NO. 1.



Fig. 1: “The Book of Abraham”: Facsimile No. 1, as published in *Times and Seasons* 1842. Reproduced from C. Larson 1992, p. 64. Used by permission of the Institute for Religious Research.

A brief introduction to “The Breathing Permit” is required. Egyptologists knew it previously as “The First Book of Breathing,” but this designation was actually applied by the ancient Egyptians to a different text.⁹ “The Books of Breathing” constitute a corpus of Graeco-Roman funerary compositions related to the Book of the Dead. All versions seem to have originated in the Theban area,¹⁰ and Amun plays an important role in them.¹¹ The distinctive text of “The Breathing Permit,” consisting of 17 sections (“paragraphs” or “divisions”),¹² is fixed, with very little deviation.¹³ In marked contrast, the few vignettes accompanying this text are not standardized, but display great variation. This cluster of texts is thought to have been in use only during a very restricted time range. The date of the Joseph Smith “Breathing Permit” has been a matter

7 I would like to thank James Hoffmeier for suggesting my name to Luke for this project. Since I knew essentially nothing about “The Breathing Permit” at that time, I was able to approach it without preconceived notions. So I started at the beginning and read everything I could find on this subject. Because of time constraints and other prior commitments, I was unable to accept the commission to prepare a new translation of the Joseph Smith “Breathing Permit,” which was subsequently undertaken by Robert Ritner. The information contained in this article is largely derived from sections of my revision of the final report submitted to Luke Wilson on 18 August 2001, copies of which were forwarded by him to Ritner and to Ed Ashment. Wilson has provided me with copies of most of the relevant materials published outside Egyptological literature since 1968.

8 The first graphic reconstruction of the vignette of P. JS I made by an Egyptologist appears in Ashment 1979. I would like to express my deep appreciation to Jill L. Baker for her instruction, technical assistance, and great patience while I was preparing Figures 1–4 in the format in which they appear here.

9 Coenen 1995.

10 Goyon 1972, pp. 192–93; Kákosy 1995, p. 3002; Quirke and Forman 1996, pp. 167–68; Quirke 1999, pp. 90–91.

11 For Amun’s associations with air and breathing, cf. Goyon 1972, pp. 208–10.

12 See Coenen 1998, pp. 43–44.

13 So far, 33 examples of hieratic “Breathing Permits” have been identified (Coenen 2004, pp. 61–62, 72); at least 12 have no vignettes (cf. Coenen 1998, p. 38, n. 14; 2003, p. 165), and 21 are still unpublished or incompletely published. The fact that so few of these papyri have ever been published properly has complicated any attempt to study them as a whole. The ongoing studies of Marc Coenen and François-René Herbin represent tremendous progress toward the remediation of this situation.

of some discussion.¹⁴ I currently believe that it could date *no earlier* than the (1st half of the) 2nd Century BC.¹⁵

The year 1844 saw Joseph Smith's violent death at the hands of a mob in Carthage, Illinois (near Nauvoo). Already in 1859 copies of Facsimiles 1–3 were submitted for Egyptological examination to Théodule Devéria (1831–71), who had just been appointed at the Louvre.¹⁶ His assessment was published in Paris in 1860 and in London in 1861. In parallel columns, Devéria compared Smith's description of the elements of Facsimile No. 1 with the way they would be described in modern Egyptological terms. He identified the flying bird to the right as the *ba*-soul,¹⁷ which, he stated, "should have a human head."¹⁸ He further commented that the drawing of the black figure of Anubis had been "altered, for Anubis should have a jackal's head."¹⁹ Figure 2 reproduces a black and white photograph of the damaged vignette of P. JS I as mounted on backing paper, with sketched renderings of the missing portions dating to Joseph Smith's time.²⁰

In 1968, when Devéria's acute observations were confirmed, two additional Egyptological "corrections" to Smith's restorations entered the literature. Based on depictions of the resurrection of Osiris as represented in Graeco-Roman temples, one of the upraised hands of the figure on the bier in P. JS I²¹ was reinterpreted as the tip of a wing of the Isis kestrel²² hovering around

14 Ritner's hesitation in this matter (2002, p. 99; 2003, pp. 164–65) reflects the conclusions of the final report I submitted to Luke Wilson on 18 August 2001. However, while updating my manuscript in preparation for the Parker Memorial Lecture I delivered for Brown University's Friends of Egyptology on 10 December 2002, I examined Coenen's most recent articles at that time (2000, 2001), previously unavailable to me. These studies of additional "Breathing Permits" have considerably strengthened his arguments regarding the genealogy of the family of the owner of the Joseph Smith copy. He also became much more cautious in his assignment of absolute dates: "As for all *Documents of Breathing*, a Theban origin and a dating to the late Ptolemaic or early Roman Period cannot be far from the truth" (2000, p. 96). The "Breathing Permit" of P. British Museum 9995 is dated securely to the time of Augustus: cf. Quaegebeur 1997, p. 76, n. 31; Quirke 1999, p. 86. On 7 January 2003 I forwarded a copy of my revised report to Luke Wilson for the IRR files.

15 Cf. Coenen 1998a, pp. 1110–1111; 2001, pp. 71, 80–81; 2003, p. 167.

16 Bierbrier et al. 1995, p. 124. Devéria's catalogue of Egyptian manuscripts in the Louvre was published posthumously in 1874–81: see pp. 130–37 (IV.1–9), 74–75 (III.31: cf. Herbin 1999, p. 155) for the copies of "The Breathing Permit" identified by Devéria; cf. Goyon 1972, pp. 230–32.

17 For this concept, see Bell 2002, pp. 39–40.

18 Followed by Baer 1968 (citing Dee Jay Nelson: see p. 118, n. 34*); for the 1968 comments of Wilson and Lesko, see S. Larson 1996, pp. 95–98; Rhodes 2002. Breasted in Spalding 1912 interpreted the *ba*-bird as Isis, while Parker 1968 saw it as a figure of Nephthys. Ashment 1979 points to parallels from the iconography of P. JS I itself to explain the surviving traces of the bird's human head.

19 Followed by Parker 1968, Baer 1968—both dismissing Smith's sketched restorations of the damaged papyrus as incorrect, when black and white photographs of the mounted P. JS I became available; cf. the 1968 comments of Lesko as reported in S. Larson 1996, p. 97; cf. Rhodes 2002; Ashment 1979 points to the surviving traces of Anubis' headdress. For the identification of the black figure in Facsimile No. 3 of "The Book of Abraham" as the god Anubis, with the observation that he would be expected to be jackal-headed, see Devéria 1860/1861 and Breasted in Spalding 1912; S. Thompson 1995 provides an explanation for a peculiar iconographic feature of this figure, the "spike" on his head: it represents "the remnant of a dog's ear." For the association of Facsimile No. 3 with the Joseph Smith "Breathing Permit," see von Bissing in Spalding 1912, Baer 1968 (identified as the concluding vignette); followed by Coenen and Quaegebeur 1995, p. 40, and Thompson 1995—both Ritner 2002, 2003 and Rhodes 2002 read the name Anubis in the hieroglyphic label above his head. Thompson cites the placement of a similar vignette at the beginning of the contemporary "Breathing Permit" of P. Tübingen 2016: Brunner-Traut and Brunner 1981, pls. 12–13.

20 C. Larson 1992, p. 64; cf. Gee 2000, p. x.

21 The deceased on the bier is not Osiris the god, but the Osiris NN = Hor/Horus/Horos. The dead were identified with Osiris, and the rites that had resurrected the god were thus also efficacious in the resurrection of deceased humans who had access to them; cf. Goyon 1972, p. 214.

22 Parker 1968; followed by Baer 1968, who was unable to cite any parallel for the representation of the Osiris in this scene "with both hands in front of his face"—so also Ashment 1979, though he is very tentative in his interpretation of the traces as a bird's wing (see further below); Ritner 2002/2003 proposes an alternative reconstruction with a winged sundisk.



Fig. 2: Vignette of P. JS I, as restored during the lifetime of Joseph Smith. Reproduced from C. Larson 1992, p. 64. Used by permission of the Institute for Religious Research.

his erect phallus²³ in preparation for landing on it in order to conceive Horus.²⁴ To assist in the assessment of these suggestions, Figure 3 reproduces a drawing of the damaged vignette as it survives today.²⁵

“The Breathing Permit” concerns itself to a great extent with the reunion of the *ba*-soul and the corpse to enable the revitalization of the dead—a concern commonly expressed in the Book of the Dead and texts derived from it. Hence the vignette of P. JS I is especially appropriate here; the *ba*-soul also appears in conjunction with the mummiform body of the deceased in a vignette of the “Breathing Permit” of P. Tübingen 2016.²⁶

23 Parker 1968, followed by Baer 1968—although Baer rejected Parker’s suggestion that the missing “left arm of Osiris is in reality lying at his side under him,” preferring instead the alternative possibility, namely that it was “grasping the phallus;” Ashment 1979, followed by S. Thompson 1995 (although the published reconstruction omits the erect phallus—as well as the left arm which presumably held it—probably as a gesture of decorum in view of the intended audience of this article, it is clear from the Egyptological parallels and the references cited that Ashment, a student of Baer, intended it, and that Thompson understood it); Coenen and Quaegebeur 1995, pp. 39–40; Coenen 1998a, 2001; Gee 1992, p. 101, objects to such a reconstruction, on the grounds that there is no parallel for a recumbent ithyphallic figure in a bierscene in a private funerary papyrus. However, the decoration on the interior of a private Dynasty 21 Theban coffin now in Cairo does depict a mummified ithyphallic Osiris on the lion bier, attended by Anubis: Niwinski 1988, pl. 21B and p. 124 (109).

24 Far from being ancient pornography, this is an important mytho-theological icon; cf. Shore 1992, pp. 226–27: “Dead and dismembered, nevertheless, Osiris is brought back to life.... The vitality of this restored life is demonstrated by the ability of Osiris to raise an erection and impregnate Isis.” For this scenario described already in the Pyramid Texts, see Žabkar 1968, p. 101. Often characterized simplistically as the god of the dead, Osiris was actually associated with the promise of rebirth or resurrection. Grounded in the life-and-death cycle of agricultural crops, he was naturally associated with the fertility of the living soil of Egypt, especially as it was enriched through the annual renewal of the creative waters of the Nile at the time of the inundation, following the parching, scorching months of summer. By the time of the New Kingdom, when he was fully integrated into the theology of the universal sun god, Osiris had become a prominent aspect of a rather complex Creator.

25 C. Larson 1992, p. 65; for photos of the papyrus without Joseph Smith’s sketched reconstruction of the vignette, see Rhodes 2002, pp. 33, 43.

26 Brunner-Traut and Brunner 1981, pl. 151.

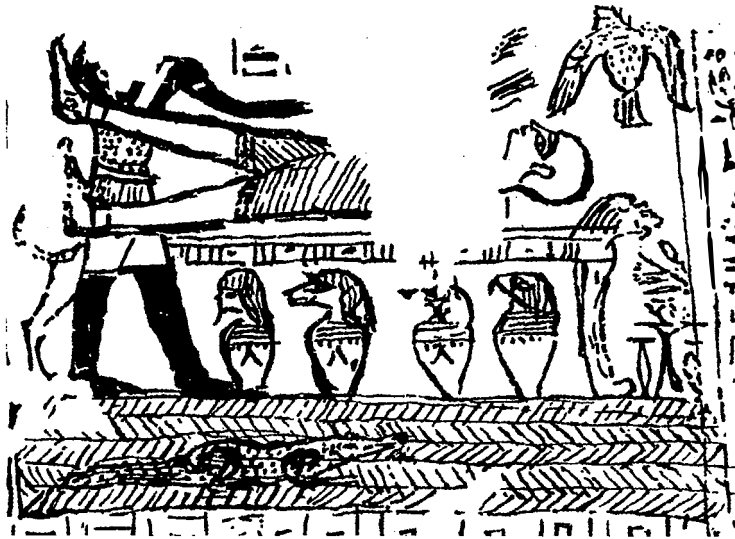


Fig. 3: Line drawing of the vignette of P. JS I, as it survives today. Reproduced from C. Larson 1992, p. 65. Used by permission of the Institute for Religious Research.

The frequently represented scene of Anubis attending the deceased's mummy lying on the funerary bier shows numerous iconographic variations.²⁷ Let us examine some details of the depiction of the recumbent figure in the vignette of P. JS I, starting with his close-fitting kilt²⁸ and the pose of his legs. Normally the individual lying on the bier is mummiform;²⁹ both the kilt and the striding legs of the figure who has thus already shed his mummy bindings—"the bonds of death"³⁰—are relatively rare. The restoration of movement to the legs indicates a major step in the resurrection process.³¹

This artistic innovation is first attested on the underside of the lid of a wooden Dynasty 21 Theban coffin in the Louvre.³² Here the god Osiris is represented, nude and ithyphallic, on the lion bier in the process of rejuvenation; non-mummiform, he lies on his back, with striding legs, one hand raised to his head/face³³ and the other one lying at his side; the Isis kestrel flies above, extending the *ankh*-sign toward the erect phallus; Anubis is not in attendance; the associated hieroglyphs identify the god as Osiris *res(-wedja)*, "one who (re)awakens (whole or intact)."

In the Osiris Chapel (the Second Chapel of Djedkhonsiufankh) of the Dynasty 26 Temple at Ain el-Muftilla in Bahariyya Oasis (temp. Amasis),³⁴ the nude, ithyphallic, non-mummiform

27 For Anubis depicted attending the mummy of the deceased on a lion bier in a vignette of another "Breathing Permit," see P. British Museum 9995; Faulkner and Andrews 1985, p. 25; Quirke and Spencer 1992, p. 55. Anubis is generally anointing the Osiris as he ministers to him on the bier. Despite older claims to the contrary, the Egyptians do not represent the mummification process itself: Assmann 1991, p. 110; Germer 1997, pp. 17–19; S. Thompson 1995; cf. Wilson 1964. There is absolutely no justification for restoring a knife in Anubis' hand: Thompson 1995, following Baer 1968.

28 The deceased was certainly wearing a kilt, not the "long johns" of Facsimile No. 1.

29 Cf. Saleh 1984, pp. 9–13 (BD 1), 51–52 (BD 89), 84 (BD 151—the *ba* also appears here in conjunction with Anubis and the mummy); Hornung 1979, pp. 41–45, 178–80, 318–23, 413–15, 470, 508–509; Davies 1938, p. 30: the *ba*'s connection with restored breathing ability is here made explicit through the sail and the *ankh* (the combination of hieroglyphic signs reading the "breath of life") which it extends toward the nostrils of the mummy. Cf. also Rhodes 2002.

30 See te Velde 1988, p. 34.

31 Cf. Zecchi 1996, pp. 120–21; Rhodes 2002.

32 Ziegler 1990, p. 73; Luft 1998, p. 429 (photo apparently reversed).

33 Already in the Ptah-Sokar Chapel of the Sety I Temple at Abydos a depiction of the mummified-resurrecting Osiris exhibits this gesture: cf. Cauville 1997a, p. 120.

34 Fakhry 1942, pl. 59A and p. 163. I would like to express my appreciation to Isolde Lehnert of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo for kindly facilitating my examination of the library's copy of this book.

Osiris lies on a bier, with striding legs, one hand raised to his head/face and the other one at his side; the Isis kestrel is not present, nor is Anubis.

In the Hibis Temple at Kharga (temp. Darius I),³⁵ six representations in the inner sanctuary depict the non-mummiform Osiris, nude with striding legs, lying on his back on a bier; four times his right arm is raised toward his head/face, while twice it is used to grasp his erect phallus; in one case his left arm is down at his side, while twice it is bent across his chest and in three cases it grasps his phallus; in two cases the Isis kestrel approaches the erect phallus; Anubis is never shown with these figures.

In the Osiris roof chapels of the Temple of Dendera,³⁶ when Osiris is represented non-mummiform lying on his back on the bier, there is considerable variation in detail. Once he is shown wearing a kilt, with no phallus indicated, and the Isis kestrel is not present; his legs are striding, and one hand is raised to his head/face while the other is at his side; Anubis is not in attendance. Otherwise he is shown four times nude with striding legs, either with erect phallus (three times) or small/child's penis (once), always with one hand raised toward his head/face; once he grasps his phallus in his other hand; once, with Anubis in attendance, the Isis kestrel extends the *ankh*-sign toward the phallus, while Osiris's other hand is down at his side.³⁷

In the Sokar-Osiris Chapel (XVI) off the corridor around the sanctuary at Dendera we also find a representation of the non-mummiform Osiris lying nude on the lion bier, with striding legs and erect phallus, one hand raised to his head/face and the other one at his side; the Isis kestrel is not present, nor is Anubis.³⁸

Likewise, in the Osiris Chapel on the roof of the Isis Temple at Philae,³⁹ the nude, ithyphallic, non-mummiform Osiris lies on the lion bier, with striding legs, one hand raised to his head/face and the other one at his side; the Isis kestrel is not present, nor is Anubis.

In the Opet Temple at Karnak,⁴⁰ the non-mummiform Osiris lies nude on the lion bier, with striding legs and erect phallus, one hand raised to his head/face and the other at his side; Amun-Re, identified as the *ba* of Osiris⁴¹—with plumed human head and erect phallus⁴²—flies above him, preparing to unite with his corpse and thus resurrect him.

To round out this picture, we must include two late painted wooden coffins in Hildesheim (originally from el-Hiba, near the northernmost extent of the control of the High Priests of Amun-Re of Thebes during Dynasty 21). Scenes on the exteriors of the lids depict the resurrection of their deceased owners, who are once each represented nude with striding legs and no phallus, lying on their backs on a leonine "Osiris bed" which is sprouting grain; their arms are folded across their chests, while Anubis attends them.⁴³ In each case, the deceased

35 Davies 1953, pls. 3 (III.22–23—reproduced in Sternberg-el-Hotabi 1994 and Zecchi 1996; IX.4, 17), 4 (VI.20–21); Cruz-Urbe 1988.

36 Cauville 1997, pls. 105 (III), 134, 89; 106 (XI), 135, 87; 107 (IV), 136, 90; 256, 279, 263, 238; 257, 280, 264, 239. I would like to express my gratitude to May Trad for kindly assisting me in obtaining a copy of this book from the French Institute in Cairo.

37 Sokar-Osiris is three times depicted in similar poses with striding legs, once wearing a kilt and twice naked (once ithyphallic and once without indication of the expected small penis), but never touching his phallus or with a hand upraised to his head/face: Cauville 1997, pls. 108 (X, XI), 137, 87; 251, 274, 263, 238.

38 Chassinat 1934, pls. 135, 142.

39 Champollion 1835–45, vol. I, pl. 90.

40 Schwaller de Lubicz 1999, pl. 289; cf. de Wit 1962, pl. 4; photo available online at www.egyptology.com/extreme/opet/.

41 De Wit 1958, p. 121.

42 For the association of the *ba* with continued sexual activity in the Afterworld in both the Pyramid Texts and the Coffin Texts, see Žabkar 1968, pp. 101–104.

43 Germer 1997, pp. 16–19; Schmitz 1990, pp. 28–31; Peck 1997, pp. 74–75; el-Saddik 1998, pp. 472–73; Dunand and Lichtenberg 1994, pp. 26–27, 38, 88–89; Andrews 1998, p. 18; Taylor 2001, p. 49; D'Auria 1988, p. 15; Ikram and Dodson 1998, p. 108. Attempts to date these unusual coffins have yielded results ranging from after 600 BC, to ca. 600–300 BC, and 2nd–1st Century BC. Once again, some scholars raise the issue of depictions of the mummification process in these symbolic scenes. Here, however, the bier has become merged with an Osiris seed bed, as indicated by the sprouting grain—certainly not natron—which elevates the reviving corpse; for comparable material, see Hornung 1990, pp. 118–19.

is represented black by association with the shade or shadow—another aspect of human personality.⁴⁴ Some vignettes associated with Book of the Dead Spell 89 show the *ba* returning to reunite with a corpse similarly depicted—including the striding legs.⁴⁵ In related scenes the shade/shadow (sometimes with a small penis) is standing—depicted, of course, with striding legs—in the presence of the *ba*, which also may be represented as the reinvigorating black night sun of the netherworld.⁴⁶ The examination of these standing figures in juxtaposition with the corresponding reclining ones immediately explains the latter's pose: their resurrection has progressed so far that they are just about to stand up!

The preceding catalogue confirms that Anubis is rarely found in conjunction with the striding Osiris on the funerary bier. In fact, this combination is otherwise attested only once at Dendera.⁴⁷ When attending the mummy, Anubis generally has at least one hand actually touching the body. But the projecting legs of this resurrecting Osiris interfere with the depiction of this gesture, and here Anubis is shown with both arms upraised. When Anubis ministers to this form of Sokar-Osiris at Dendera,⁴⁸ he is even shown standing at the head of the bier, instead of the foot—as would be expected; this is also the case in the representations of the two Hildesheim coffins. This problem explains why the artist of P. JS I apparently did not know how to show Anubis' "missing" right arm at the foot end of the bier. The priority of Osiris in the vignette is maintained not only by his centrality and size, but also through the distinctive way in which Anubis is worked in around the figure of the deceased,⁴⁹ almost as though he had to approach the body by squeezing between the two moving legs.

It should be observed that in ancient Egyptian art no strict iconographic canon was imposed on all versions of a single type scene; therefore, variations occur among individual representations.⁵⁰ Since each example was hand-produced, and not stenciled, even "direct copies" are not identical in every detail. In the refreshed Egyptian art of Dynasties 21 and 25–26 and the Graeco-Roman period, we encounter new usages and creative (re)combinations not seen previously, especially in private (non-royal) representations produced in Upper Egypt and outside the Nile Valley under the direction of local priesthoods—some borrowed from temple decoration.⁵¹ Although subject increasingly to the pressures of multicultural influences, Thebes, a major provincial religious focal point, remained a bastion of traditional Egyptian culture which continued to flourish in the atmosphere of the loosely centralized administrative control which it generally enjoyed until the reign of Diocletian (284–305 AD). Under these circumstances a considerable degree of flexibility apparently existed in deciding what was appropriate to depict in a given context.

Till now, we simply cannot escape the fact that every proposed reconstruction of the vignette of P. JS I entails attributing to it at least one "unique" element. So next the probabilities need to be considered. In general, the best reconstruction, proceeding from certainties and the known parallels, involves the fewest assumptions and imposes the minimum number of (significant) unparalleled elements. Most importantly, we should not project, nor seek to impose, our own cultural norms and expectations onto the Egyptians. In ancient Egypt, where the physical

44 For this concept, see Bell 2002, p. 40.

45 Naville 1886, pl. 101; Dawson 1924, pl. 8 and p. 40; Munro 1988, pl. 14; Munro 1994, pl. 23; Dunand and Lichtenberg 1994, p. 40. Dawson interpreted the black figure as "a shrunken corpse," again raising the issue of depictions of the mummification process.

46 Saleh 1984, pp. 52–54 (BD 92), 37 (BD 71).

47 Cauville 1997, pl. 257.

48 Cauville 1997, pl. 108 (X).

49 Pointed out by Rhoades 2002, p. 18.

50 In this context, see Lesko's 1968 comment as reported in S. Larson 1996, p. 97: "I have not been able to find the deceased depicted so elsewhere though it is not too unexpected;" see also Baer's statement, quoted in Ritner 2002, p. 114, n. 117; 2003, p. 175, n. 126: "I doubt that one could find many instances of exactly identical scenes in Egyptian art."

51 Cf. Breasted in Spalding 1912, and Ritner 2002, p. 102, n. 30; 2003, p. 167, n. 39; for other aspects of this issue, cf. Kurth 1990, pp. 38–43.

survival of the body⁵² was deemed necessary for resurrection, flesh was not in itself considered wicked, nor were the normal desires of the flesh seen as evil. As a result, Egyptian artists were not as reticent as we frequently are about matter-of-fact expressions of human sexuality. At least from the Late Antique onwards, mere nudity alone has often been regarded as sufficient cause for the suppression of an artistic work, especially in any kind of religious context; and many a phallus has been edited out of an artwork (sometimes brutally) in the name of “decency” or eliminated (sometimes subtly) during the printing process, even in “modern” Egyptological publications.

Finally we are prepared to deal with the questions surrounding the suggested phallus in P. JS I. Gee 1992, pp. 101–102, has already objected that there is not enough available space to reconstruct the Isis kestrel here. Let me state clearly at the outset my conviction that the questionable traces above the head of the Osiris figure are actually the remains of his right hand; in other words, Joseph Smith was correct in his understanding of the drawing at this point. Ashment 1979, pp. 36, 41 (Illustration 13), is very balanced in his analysis of the problem, presenting compelling arguments for reading two hands; Gee 1992, p. 102 and n. 25, refers to Michael Lyon in describing the “thumb stroke” of the upper (right) hand; cf. Gee 2000, pp. 37–38; and Rhodes 2002, p. 19, concludes: “... a careful comparison of the traces with the hand below as well as the tip of the bird’s wing to the right makes it quite clear that it is the other hand of the deceased.” A valuable lesson to take away from long-term epigraphic experience is that when we do not have a good parallel at hand to guide us, we tend to read too much into the “disembodied” traces surviving along the damaged margins of texts and representations. For the sometimes rapid, “impressionistic” drawing or sketching of hands on papyri and ostraca—where the clear contexts leave no room for doubt—compare similar examples illustrated in Kischkewitz and Forman 1972, Peck and Ross 1978, Faulkner and Andrews 1985.⁵³ An important clue is provided in the orientation of the thumbs of the upraised hands toward the face. This is the expected way of depicting the hands of mourners and others when they are held up to (both sides of) their heads or before their faces.⁵⁴ In general, in resurrection scenes the raising of a hand to the head/face represents another aspect of the stirring or stretching of Osiris during his reawakening;⁵⁵ here the gesture with two hands might be related specifically to reaching up to embrace the returning *ba*.⁵⁶

As detailed above, scenes of the resurgent Osiris at Dendera once display him wearing a kilt, with no indication of a phallus.⁵⁷ This would seem to be the model for the figure of the deceased in the vignette of P. JS I. On the other hand, the representation of an ithyphallic figure wearing a kilt would not be unparalleled.⁵⁸ However, judging from the position of the erect phallus of the reclining kilted earth god Geb in a cosmological scene on Dynasty 21 Theban coffins now in Turin⁵⁹ and Bristol,⁶⁰ there would not be enough available space to restore the hand of Anubis, the erect phallus of the Osiris, and the body and wings of Isis in P. JS I: Anubis would have to be grasping the phallus himself and assisting Isis in alighting on it—which is unimaginable. In one variant of the cosmological scene just mentioned, that in a Dynasty 21

52 Various body substitutes could also fulfill this function magically in the event the body was damaged or destroyed. For the special provision made for drowning victims, whose bodies were not recovered, see Hornung 1990, pp. 138, 144–45.

53 “The brush-stroke is free, unencumbered by the details and refinements of painting.” Peck and Ross 1978, p. 13.

54 For the sake of convenience, cf. examples in Kischkewitz and Forman 1972, pls. 15, 29, 31, 43, 54; Peck and Ross 1978, pls. 7, 23; Faulkner and Andrews 1985, pp. 25, 38, 150. Many other cases could be cited.

55 Cf. Zecchi 1996, pp. 120–21; Rhodes 2002. Perhaps he is rubbing his face or wiping the sleep from his eyes; one would not expect the accompanying yawning to be depicted.

56 For the *ba* captured and held in the arms of a standing man in BD 61, see Faulkner and Goelet 1994, pl. 15.

57 Cauville 1997, pl. 105 (III); cf. also one of the depictions of Sokar-Osiris: pl. 108 (X).

58 Cf. Rhodes 2002, p. 19, n. 18.

59 Niwinski 1988, p. 87; Quirke and Forman 1996, p. 9.

60 Taylor 1996, color illustration III.

Theban mythological papyrus in the British Museum, Geb is nude and ithyphallic;⁶¹ other examples in the same genre render him either nude or wearing a “fringed” loincloth or a penis sheath—but in none of these latter instances is he ithyphallic. In this area, I believe the Parker-Baer-Ashment reconstruction (with its “implied” erect phallus) is seriously flawed.⁶² In any case, when deceased private individuals are represented in New Kingdom royal tombs, although the resurrecting males rising from their biers (in response to the regenerative power of the sun’s nightly appearance in the netherworld) may be ithyphallic, they are also nude.⁶³

Graphic reconstruction of a damaged scene or text is a very useful exercise. When one actually has to commit pen to paper, unsightly gaps and embarrassing inconsistencies appear starkly in black and white; the errors of preconceived notions become apparent, and alternative possibilities must be found. As the work progresses, one thing leads to another, since the composition was a unified whole—piecemeal solutions do not yield satisfactory results. Figure 4 represents my new attempt to reconstruct the essential elements of the vignette of P. JS I.⁶⁴ Stephen Thompson 1995, p. 144, n. 5, suggests adding a pot in Anubis’ outstretched hand, citing Davies 1953, pl. 3 (V.20); Cruz-Urbe 1988 describes this vessel as an “ointment jar.” At Dendera, Anubis holds an unguent container in several lion-bier scenes associated with the Ritual of Embalming.⁶⁵ He also holds this vessel in bier scenes found, for example, in Roman period tombs at Kom el-Shuqafa (Alexandria),⁶⁶ Ezbet Bashendi and el-Muzauwaqa (Dakhla Oasis),⁶⁷ as well as on coffins,⁶⁸ shrouds,⁶⁹ and funerary stelae.⁷⁰ The arrangement advocated here now leaves sufficient space to postulate the original presence of at least one additional short column of hieroglyphs between columns I/3 and I/4 (as they are numbered by Ritner). As for the clothing and jewelry worn by the deceased in P. JS I, he clearly sports a pleated kilt accessorized with ankle bracelets. Facsimile No. 3 represents him with a different garment, but wearing armlets in addition to the anklets. The closest parallel to the P. JS I Osiris is the one at Dendera wearing a pleated chest-high “kilt” or tunic, strapless and cinched with a belt; his costume is complemented by bracelets and armlets.⁷¹ In my reconstruction I have chosen to

61 Quirke 1992, p. 35.

62 Cf. the extremely awkward attempted reconstruction with phallus published in C. Larson 1992, pp. 65, 102. Most strikingly, Isis has missed the mark, completely overshooting the disproportionately drawn small phallus. Note, however, that this drawing does show the deceased wearing a kilt, as well as attempting to resolve the issue of the recumbent figure’s “missing arm;” it also properly utilizes the clear stroke representing the figure’s left shoulder.

63 Hornung 1990, pp. 137, 146; te Velde 1988, pp. 34–35.

64 It is based on C. Larson 1992, p. 65 (upper). For the heads of Anubis and the *ba*-bird, I follow Ashment 1979. For the most part, in an effort to help distinguish my added lines from those of the original, I have not attempted to reproduce the visual effect of the ancient artist’s brushstrokes.

65 Cauville 1997, pls. 108 (X, XII), 137, 87; 247, 271, 236—the wall is damaged in pls. 243, 268, 236, but presumably Anubis carried the jar here too; 1997a, pp. 194–96. For a recent treatment of the Ritual of Embalming, see Troy 1993. In the New Kingdom, Anubis can be found holding the adze used in the Opening of the Mouth Ritual: e.g., Saleh 1984, p. 10.

66 Empereur 1995, p. 10; 1998, pp. 164, 170–72; Guimier-Sorbets and Seif el-Din 1997, pp. 364, 367–68, 374, 380–81; Venit 2002, pp. 136–37, 145–46: she describes Anubis standing behind the mummy, ministering to it, as “the most frequently depicted scene in Alexandrian Roman-period tombs.... He places his right hand on the mummy and, in his raised left hand, holds a small lotus-patterned unguent cup in the traditional gesture signifying lustration or ritual embalming;” cf. Corcoran (1995), pp. 58, 165, 175—in this case, “ritual embalming” is clearly the solution called for.

67 Osing et al. 1982, pls. 16, 24, 26, 28, 29/33; cf. Hawass 2000, p. 136 (Bahariya Oasis).

68 E.g., Corcoran 1995, Figures 5, 11, 20, 23, 28 and pls. 14–16, 18–19; 1988, p. 209; Taylor 2001, pp. 89, 242–43; Andrews 1998, p. 65; Aubert et al. 1997, p. 42. Corcoran (1995), pp. 58–59, calls attention to a glass “amulet” (Reisner 1958, p. 130 and pl. 20 [13580]—cf. also p. 129 and pl. 20 [13569]) displaying this scene, and refers to Bianchi (1983) for the interpretation of such pieces as “glass inlays” from “a molded cartonnage coffin.”

69 E.g., Bresciani 1996, frontispiece and pp. 35 (32), 48–49 (49–50); pp. 22–23 (17), 24–25 (21); Walker 2000, pp. 95–97 (56); Brunner-Traut et al. 1984, pp. 157–58.

70 E.g., Kamal 1905, pls. 8 (22021), 15 (22050); Spiegelberg 1904, pls. 1 (31084), 8 (31108), 11 (31120), 12 (31126), 14 (31134), 15 (31138), 16 (31143); Teeter 2003, p. 112; cf. Mathieson et al. 1995, p. 29 and n. 8.

71 Cauville 1997, pl. 105 (III).

combine anklets, armbands, and bracelets. The deceased may or may not have had a collar around his neck. Because Hor's left arm seems to have crossed his chest, I think the possibility that he wore a "kilt" extending above his waist can safely be eliminated as too complicated for the needs of our provincial artist.



Fig. 4: Suggested reconstruction of the vignette of P. JS I. Drawn by L. Bell over the base reproduced in Fig. 3. By permission of the Institute for Religious Research.

To summarize the overall results of this investigation so far: the conclusions reached by Devéria in 1859, based on his personal examination of copies of Facsimiles 1–3 of “The Book of Abraham,” anticipate in detail most of the observations of the seven Egyptologists who—along with one Semiticist, John (Punnett) Peters—contributed to F.S. Spalding’s 1912 inquiry,⁷² as well as the Egyptologists who have discussed the Joseph Smith “Breathing Permit” since 1967. Taking account of the occasional breakthroughs which have significantly advanced or refined our understanding of these documents, the consistency of the results attained by three “generations” of Egyptologists, working intermittently and more or less independently over a period of nearly a century and a half, is striking.⁷³ Extremely important in anti-Mormon literature and Mormon responses to it, especially through the writings of Hugh Nibley, the chief modern Mormon apologist, research on this subject has largely not been reflected in “standard” Egyptological literature. The controversy began to thrust itself into current Egyptological thought thanks to the efforts of Wilson (1964, 1972), J. Larson (1994), Bierbrier et al. (1995), and especially Coenen and Quaegebeur (1995), Coenen (1998, 1998a, 1999, 1999a, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004), and Ritner (2003).

I would like to conclude this essay with an attempt to reassess Joseph Smith’s place in the history of American Egyptology. In brief, Smith’s approach to the translation of ancient Egyptian documents ranks him squarely in the tradition of the esoteric interpretation of hieroglyphics, dating back to Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) who maintained that the hieroglyphs “were purely symbolic.”⁷⁴ Kircher’s opinion prevailed throughout most of the first half of the 19th Century, before the widespread acceptance of Champollion’s groundbreaking achievement of

72 An anti-Mormon tract containing interviews with eight international scholars—including Petrie and Breasted; shortly followed up in a story featured prominently on page 1 of the Magazine Section of the *New York Times* of Sunday 29 December 1912.

73 The only noteworthy exception I would, of course, point to here is the matter of the understanding of the vignette of P. JS I.

74 Bierbrier et al. 1995, p. 229.

1822.⁷⁵ Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832) was about eight and a half years old when the Rosetta Stone was discovered in July of 1799. He first saw a copy of it in 1804,⁷⁶ and a personal copy was brought for him from London in 1807, just after he had set his sights on its decipherment.⁷⁷ In 1823, following the first announcement of his breakthrough, his success was quickly dismissed by the British intellectual establishment, who condemned it as entirely derivative and not applicable except to the reading of Graeco-Roman cartouches.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, in 1826 a scholarly paper on the inscriptions of some Egyptian artifacts in Great Britain was read in London before the newly instituted Royal Society of Literature.⁷⁹ Cautiously, using carefully phrased language, to be sure, Charles Philip Yorke (1764–1834)⁸⁰ and William Martin Leake (1777–1860)⁸¹ acknowledged their indebtedness to Champollion, going so far as to print substantial extracts from two letters which Champollion had written in 1823 to the Reverend G.A. Browne of Trinity College, Cambridge, concerning the lid of the sarcophagus of Ramesses III which Belzoni had just presented to the Fitzwilliam Museum.⁸²

In 1829 J[ean]-G[abriel]-Honoré Greppo published an essay on Champollion's hieroglyphic reading system and its usefulness in furthering research on biblical studies. In the following year an English translation of the book was published in Boston. At the same time, in 1829 and 1831,⁸³ American scholars exploring biblical chronology rushed to embrace Champol-

75 Bierbrier et al. 1995, pp. 92–94. In fact, it may be argued justly that it was only with Richard Lepsius' thorough study of the Tanis version of the trilingual Canopus Decree, published in 1866, that skepticism finally all but vanished: Ebers 1887, pp. 228–29; Solé and Valbelle 2002, p. 107; Quirke and Andrews 1988, p. 3.

76 Produced from proof sheets made in Cairo and taken to the Institut National des Sciences et Arts in Paris in the spring of 1800: Solé and Valbelle 2002, pp. 10–13.

77 Solé and Valbelle 2002, pp. 54–55. He finally got to see the original during a trip to London in 1824: Adkins and Adkins 2000, p. 209.

78 *The Quarterly Review* 1823, p. 188: "And yet, paradoxical as it may appear, though we can thus read and write with the utmost facility all those names which are found on the public monuments of Egypt, and write billet-doux, as we understand the petit-maîtres of Paris are now doing, in characters of this hieroglyphical alphabet, we are not a single iota advanced in understanding the meaning of any one of these sacred characters, unless when so applied in designating the mere names of foreigners. Such being the case, we may say, without at all derogating from the merit of M. Champollion's indefatigable labours, that, whether we weigh their value in the scale of utility or novelty, we find little or nothing in them that can repay him for the persevering siege which he has conducted against the pot-hooks of Egypt, for just so many years as the Greeks sat down before Troy; nothing, in fact, of originality in his supposed discovery to console him for the laborious investigation he has patiently submitted to, merely to complete an invention which had been known to so many of his predecessors, but the pursuit of which had deterred them." However, a review published only four years later, speaking of the decipherment, openly declared that "...Dr. Young, Mr. Salt, and M. Champollion, by the help of the Rosetta stone, and other monuments, have been able, if not wholly to remove, at least to draw up a corner of the dark veil which for so many ages had forbidden all approach to [hieroglyphics]" (*The Quarterly Review* 1827, p. 496).

79 In their introduction, the two authors cited the potential importance of ancient Egyptian for scriptural studies.

80 Bierbrier et al. 1995, p. 454.

81 Bierbrier et al. 1995, p. 240.

82 Yorke and Leake 1827. They even "ventured to add [Plate 20: 'Phonetic Alphabet'] an explanation of the names founded upon the system of Monsieur Champollion and Mr. Salt [of whom Yorke was the patron], not as presuming to decide upon the complete accuracy of that system, which may perhaps be considered premature, in the extent to which it has been carried, but rather with the view of eliciting the speculations and acuteness of those who possess more learning and ingenuity than ourselves."

83 *The North American Review* 1829, pp. 361–88 (review of Champollion 1827): "... he has been able to read upon the still existing monuments of Egypt... the names and attributes of the sovereigns of Egypt.... The same means have rendered intelligible other inscriptions on the public and private monuments of Egypt, as well as various public and private writings on papyrus..." 1831, pp. 95–127 (review of Greppo 1830): "Being the production of a French writer, it may exaggerate a little, though as our readers we think will see, but little, the credit due to M. Champollion, on the score of originality; but M. Greppo is wholly free from the violent party spirit of most of the English writers on this subject, who really go beyond the bounds of reasonable excitement, whenever the comparative merits of Dr. Young and M. Champollion are named;" "We have already observed that M. Champollion has returned from Egypt, with the materials of one of the most important works, which the age has produced, and which will probably, in no very long period, be given to the world. It will doubtless require, in order to be understood, that the reader should have a pretty accurate general knowledge of M. Champollion's system. Such an idea can be very conveniently obtained from M. Greppo's essay, as translated and illustrated by M. Stuart."

lion's decipherment, citing examples of his translations and castigating British scholars for their rejection of it.⁸⁴ Champollion was dead barely a year later, and his Egyptian grammar was published only in 1836–41 through the efforts of his older brother, Jacques-Joseph Champollion-Figeac (1778–1867).⁸⁵ In 1842, George Robins Gliddon (1809–57),⁸⁶ a well-traveled American formerly resident in Egypt, moved to Philadelphia. He had made the acquaintance of Champollion's brother, who presented him with a collection of the younger Champollion's off-prints. In 1842–43, he delivered a well-attended series of popular lectures in Boston on various ancient Egyptian topics, including Champollion's decipherment, for which he proved to be an ardent advocate.⁸⁷ In 1843 he published these lectures in a small book printed in Philadelphia, a "best seller" which quickly sold 24,000 copies.⁸⁸

In the meantime, the future Joseph Smith papyri arrived in America in 1833, soon to be purchased through the agency of Michael Chandler (1797–1866).⁸⁹ They were among the very first Egyptian artifacts (mostly mummies—mainly acquired by sailors and missionaries) to reach America; and no Egyptian papyri are known to have come to America prior to these.⁹⁰ Although the "facsimile" of a "Breathing Permit" (P. Denon A; now in the Meermannno-Westreenianum Museum in The Hague) had been published in 1802,⁹¹ Champollion was the first to mention "The Book of Breathing" (1827: called by him "Tascho-an-Nésensôn");⁹² and it was not until 1851, in a book written in Latin, that a thorough Egyptological treatise on a "Book of Breathing" appeared.⁹³ The year 1858 saw the first American work of modern Egyptology, the English translation of the hieroglyphic and demotic texts of the Rosetta Stone.⁹⁴ This project, commissioned in 1856, was based on a plaster cast which was presented to the Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania for this purpose.⁹⁵ It intended to demonstrate once again the correctness of Champollion's decipherment.

It can readily be inferred from this that there still remained at least some diehard doubters in the American scholarly community. The chief among them may be identified as Gustav(us) Seyffarth (1796–1885), a German scholar who continued to dispute Champollion's decipherment, in support of his own competing system—and "translated" accordingly.⁹⁶ It was his favorite

84 Cited in Trigger 1995.

85 Bierbrier et al. 1995, pp. 94–95.

86 Wilson 1964, pp. 41–43; Bierbrier et al. 1995, p. 169; Runnels 2003—I would like to express my appreciation to Meghan Dorney of the Boston University Alumni Association for her assistance in obtaining a hard copy of this article.

87 He was back in Boston in 1843–44 for another lecture series, this time at the Lowell Institute, where he was again a sensation; see Bridgman 1851, p. x: "It was by exploring the catacombs, obelisks, and monuments erected to the dead more than forty centuries ago, that Champollion discovered a key to Egyptian history, so happily and eloquently elucidated by George R. Gliddon, Esq., at the Lowell lectures, in this city, a few years since."

88 Revised in 1847, the book went into no fewer than 15 reprint editions, and continued in print until at least 1850.

89 Bierbrier et al. 1995, p. 95.

90 Personal communication by John Wilson during one of his hieroglyphic classes of 1961–63.

91 Denon 1802, pl. 136; Coenen and Quaegebeur 1995, pp. 9–10; Coenen 1995a.

92 Coenen 1995, pp. 29–30.

93 Heinrich Brugsch (1827–1894—Bierbrier et al. 1995, pp. 67–68): called by him "Saï an Sinsin," presenting the "Breathing Permit" of P. Berlin 3154, with variants from P. Denon A. Finally, in 1877 the editio princeps of the text of "The Breathing Permit" was published by Philippe-Jacques de Horrowack (1820–1902—Bierbrier et al. 1995, p. 209), presenting P. Louvre 3284 and 3291, as well as variants from six other MSS. De Horrowack had published an English translation of "The Breathing Document" in 1875.

94 Hale, Jones, and Morton 1858.

95 *The North American Review* 1831, p. 110; Wilson 1964, p. 58; Quirke and Andrews 1988, p. 3; Solé and Valbelle 2002, p. 37. The stone, removed from the Institut d'Égypte in Cairo (1798–1801) and surrendered to British forces at Alexandria in 1801, had been stored temporarily with the Society of Antiquaries of London until its transfer to the British Museum in 1802. The Society of Antiquaries had already sent a facsimile copy of the text of the Rosetta Stone to the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia.

96 Ebers 1887; Wilson 1964, pp. 19, 230; Blumenthal 1990; 1997, pp. 1–3; 1999; Bierbrier et al. 1995, pp. 386–87; Coenen and Quaegebeur 1995, pp. 41–42.

professor at Leipzig, the Classicist Friedrich August Wilhelm Spohn (1792–1824)⁹⁷—barely four years older than himself—who had proposed a system for deciphering hieroglyphics which was significantly different from that of Champollion. When Spohn died suddenly at less than 32 years of age, without presenting the “proof” of his decipherment, the mantle fell to his devoted young student, who designed his mentor’s funerary monument, wrote a biography of him, and undertook to edit and complete his hieroglyphic work for publication (1825–31). Ever after, he was the staunch defender and champion of Spohn; in recognition of his work, in 1830 he was promoted to the position of Extraordinary Professor of Archaeology at Leipzig University. Spohn had already spoken out against Champollion, and in 1826 Seyffarth rushed to meet him face-to-face at a scholarly gathering in Rome.⁹⁸ Although they appear to have separated amicably enough following their public debate, Seyffarth’s subsequent hostility toward Champollion is clearly reflected in his response of 1827 to Champollion’s 1826 critical assessment of his and Spohn’s work. As the number of Champollion’s supporters increased at Seyffarth’s expense—especially among his German colleagues—his personal animosity toward his rival grew. In 1855 he gave up his position at Leipzig and emigrated to America, where he could still find a measure of acceptance in an academic setting (initially at Concordia College of St. Louis). But he persisted, stubbornly and implacably, in his assaults on Champollion and his followers, while touting his own *Grammatica Aegyptiaca* of 1855, even accusing rival scholars of plagiarizing from it. In 1858 George Alfred Stone of Roxbury, Massachusetts, had acquired at Thebes a papyrus copy of “The Breathing Permit,” a photograph of which was sent to Seyffarth, who proceeded to publish it in 1860.⁹⁹ His translation is far from being a work of modern Egyptology—in fact, it shows how little progress he himself had made in the thirty-five years since he undertook his campaign to discredit Champollion. With such disagreement, even rancor, over the decipherment of hieroglyphics persisting among Egyptologists until well after his death in 1844, we should hardly expect Joseph Smith to have been able to familiarize himself with Champollion’s work, properly assess its validity, and possibly incorporate it into his own translation of the papyrus he had before him.¹⁰⁰

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97 Bierbrier et al. 1995, p. 402.

98 For an account of this historic meeting—and another at a social gathering the next day—in a letter written by the British classical archaeologist William Gell to Thomas Young (1773–1829; Bierbrier et al. 1995, pp. 454–55) in August of the same year, see Adkins and Adkins 2000, pp. 232–34, 225. Gell (1777–1836; Bierbrier et al. 1995, p. 166; J. Thompson 2003), who had been living in Italy since 1820, was very interested in the decipherment. Besides Young, he was also in touch with Henry Salt (1780–1827; Bierbrier et al. 1995, pp. 370–71), Champollion, and even Seyffarth (Hall 1915). The letter indicates he was not much impressed with Seyffarth, but immediately favored Champollion’s cause: “I am quite astonished to find how Champollion has *progressed*, as the Americans say, this year, in applying the Coptic words to the figures [i.e., hieroglyphics].”

99 Glueck, Carman, and Miller 1991. The papyrus was purchased in 1873, along with several other Egyptian artifacts from Stone’s estate, by Lafayette College of Easton, Pennsylvania. I would like to express my appreciation to Herb Barghusen, an alumnus of the college, for generously giving me his copy of the *Lafayette Magazine* in which this information appears. Cf. Seyffarth 1860, pp. 527–29; see also Coenen and Quaegebeur 1995, pp. 42, 49.

100 *The North American Review* 1831, pp. 96, 118: “This work of M. Greppo is an exposition and illustration of the Hieroglyphical System of Champollion, the younger. It will afford the reader, who has not access to the works of Champollion, (and they are not translated into English, nor of common occurrence in this country,)... the means of forming a pretty satisfactory acquaintance with its elements;” “M. Champollion’s writings are exceedingly rare in this country....” Cf. Breasted in Spalding 1912; Parker 1968, p. 90; Baer 1968, p. 133; Wilson 1972, p. 173; J. Larson 1994, p. 159; Coenen and Quaegebeur 1995, p. 40.

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