

REFUTING THE BOOK: BY HIS OWN HAND ON PAPYRUS

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THE NEED TO CONFRONT ANTI-MORMON WRITINGS

Several years ago the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), now part of BYU, begun to institute a deliberate confrontation and analysis with and of Anti-Mormon literature. In The FARMS REVIEW, in The Editor's Introduction to Vol. 16, Number I, 2004, Anti-Mormon Writings: Encountering a Topsy-Turvey Approach to Mormon Origins, by George L. Mitton, an Associate Editor, Mitton presents a lengthy analysis, justification and reason to really respond in depth to those who attack the Church in any category. He explains "why we feel a need to study and respond to them." (Mitton p. xi) Davis Bitton also wrote a thoughtful piece in the same Volume, the anti-Mormons "do their best to undermine our faith and the faith of our youth, vilify the prophets ...dishonor our scriptures...trample on things that are sacred...violate some of our most tender feelings... repeated over and over as though no reply had ever been made." (Mitton p. viii) But even when we respond not matter in how much detail we are ignored as if we know nothing about our religious history and doctrine, "we then have reason to suspect that writers or publishers find it difficult to reply to our findings." (Mitton p. xiii) They "attempt to render our arguments ineffective by destroying our reputation. It is an ad hominem attack on us that fails to answer our arguments." (Mitton p. xii) 'The [anti-Mormon authors] have insisted loud and long [and they still do after these years] that they know exactly how Joseph Smith did the trick, and yet they have never had the good grace to tell the public how he did it—it remains a secret locked in their own bosoms." (Nibley 1971, pp. 350-354) Larson, author of "by his own hand on papyrus" pretends he knows the mystery and but his is also only a bubble filled with gas.

CONFRONTATION FROM THE BEGINNING

It is clear from the history of Joseph Smith that confrontations and anti-Mormon activities were initiated the moment Joseph stepped out of the Grove after the Great Vision that opened this dispensation. The work of anti-Mormon's will continue until this world ends and then they will really find out who knew the truth. So the anti-Mormon concatenation's go on. Simple truths seem to have escaped most anti-Mormon writers. They develop a hypothesis about a certain point, then fall so in love with it that they cannot discern the intrinsic error in their thinking, even though the evidence is extensive against the idea. Then they follow their idea to its final demise in abject error.

It is the duty of everyone to strive to discern between error and truth, between Lucifer and Jesus. Too many Mormons are simply not aware of the preponderance of evidence accumulated and on-going, presented by knowing Mormon writers, most do not even know about FARMS now in the forefront

of responders; they are so gullible as to accept without critical examination whatever is put forth. They do so at their own intellectual peril, let alone their spiritual peril. The anti-Mormons totally snub the witness of the Holy Ghost and put at naught the consistency of the scriptures and recent discoveries that confirm them as well as unique Mormon Doctrine, such as is covered in my more than 70 hours of tapes and the many articles included in this web site.

FARMS PUBLICATIONS

During the last several years, a growing deliberate effort has become a strong tide of answering the anti-Mormon claims. The FARMS REVIEW OF BOOKS, and other writings, is now systematically dealing with all of the recent and past anti-Mormon writings. In a book ...by his own hand upon papyrus, Charles M. Larson joins the ranks of those who have exceeded propriety and truth and come out in open attack, following up on his book published in 1985 with public appearances. A convert to anti-Mormon publications and assertions mentioned by Larson was Thomas Stewart Ferguson, associated with the New World Foundation, but who died an active Mormon. Members of my Lecture Classes given twice a month have been disturbed by Larson's presentations and his Book. I have had a copy of his book for many years, but I will confront only a few issues he has raised, because they are obvious ones, and no-doubt those within FARMS, and others like myself, with greater resources than my own, will, if they haven't already, deal with his book. Larson used up a lot of space in his book trying to undermine the writings of Nibley, the sad responses of Thomas Stewart Ferguson, and the criticism of Dee Jay Nelson, and others. Some of these are now deceased and Larson's attacks are no longer relevant. Larson simply did not get the facts correct. Nibley answered in advance some of his assumptions in his article *As Things Stand at the Moment*, in *BYU Studies*. But Larson persisted in sinking into the quicksand of his own making.

To conclude or depend on the accuracy and correctness of Larson's book, that the recovery of the eleven or so documents from the Museum is a recovery of the original documents used by Joseph Smith to translate the Book of Abraham, is to do so at ones own intellectual peril. Larson makes many serious incorrect, but critical, assumptions, all of which are wrong, which means the veracity of his explanations and treatment of the Papyri recovered form the Metropolitan Museum of Art 1966-67 is in question.

He has not listened, or totally ignored, as most anti-Mormons do, the experts and Church authorities, who really know, that those eleven recovered documents were not the ones Joseph Smith translated the Book of Abraham from. Those who

persist in asserting that they know better and that those papyri are the originals only persist in making grievous mistakes that totally invalidate the interpretation they make.

LUCIFER THE SERPENT ON TWO LEGS.

Most anti-Mormon writers, and even some Mormons, ignore a particular book written in 1955 by J. Ruben Clark III. He was teaching religion at BYU, teaching a course on the Pearl of Great Price which I attended, in 1950. The book is THE STORY OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE. It is carefully researched and thorough in historical detail. He demolishes in advance, most anti-Mormon writers criticizing the Joseph Smith preparations of the Book of Abraham, when Joseph translated and what he translated from. The papyri found in the Metropolitan Museum in 1966 were a particular collection of papyri retained by Emma Smith, most of which was hanging under glass on the walls of the Mansion House. Those documents are not the scrolls from which Joseph translated. The error in asserting that they were is common to most anti-Mormons and critics. No matter who and how many times we tell the anti-Mormons writing about them that they are not the scrolls Joseph translated the Book of Abraham from they just do not get the message. So all of their interpretations based on their false assumption can only lead to erroneous conclusions. They ignore specific historical information, and the content of the Book of Abraham, that portions were never published because Joseph never finished it, and had actually promised to translate and publish more as late as 1843.

PAPYRUS JOSEPH SMITH V

The actual proof of this is in the Papyri Larson so splendidly assembled in his book, a neat color fold-out of less than three feet in length, with the museum's documents reproduced in color on both sides, pieced together; but in some instances incorrectly. We will point out just one, perhaps one of the most important items that confirm that those documents were not what Joseph used to translate the Book of Abraham from. It is found on the pieced together item identified by Larson as Papyrus Joseph Smith V.

If one opens the fold-out of the reproduction and assembly prepared

by Larson of the Papyrus documents, and examines that portion of the series of Papyrus documents attributed to Joseph Smith, particularly the portion designated as the JSP V document, one will immediately notice in the upper part a depiction of a snake on two legs talking to a single person who is holding a staff.

From page 16 of Clark's book, I take a quote from a non-Mormon observer and a visitor who personally visited Nauvoo and the prophet Joseph in 1840. Joseph personally showed his visitor, Josiah Quincy, fragments of documents under glass, rolls, and mummies. Details of what Quincy saw and was told are found in the Quincy Whig, Vol. 3 No. 25, October 17, 1840 of that same year. A prior publication of nearly the same data appeared in the Alexandria Gazette. The Quote in Clark is from Josiah Quincy, Figures of the Past, page 386, 1883. Quincy was still telling the same story more than 40 years later. A copy of page 16 of Clark's book is provided; notice the last portion of the quote, it refers to the writings of Abraham, "The parchment [the actual document Joseph translated the Book of Abraham from] last referred to showed a rude drawing of a man and woman, and a serpent walking upon a pair of legs..." The Larson document cannot be the one Quincy saw or which Joseph Smith indicated was the source of the Book of Abraham, because what Quincy saw was a much larger and longer document. Joseph called it a roll, and the attention of Quincy was drawn to the depiction "of a man and woman, and a serpent walking upon a pair of legs!" Two people confronted by the serpent, not one as depicted on JSP V fragment from the museum papyri which Larson so vehemently declares is the original document Joseph is supposed to have translated. We are clearly talking about two different documents. Clearly Larson does not find in any of the documents he reproduced that came from the Museum a depiction of two people standing before the snake walking on two legs! Making this error, Larson has no foundation for his criticism and treatment of the documents and his improper and incorrect conclusions that occupies most of his book.

THE EGYPTIAN ALPHABET AND GRAMMAR

The mummies and papyri fragments and scrolls were obtained July 3, 1835. (Hunter p. 29) Joseph then was in Kirtland. During the first two or three months Joseph devoted considerable time to working upon them, essentially sharpening his translating skills, reviewing them, identifying them, and getting an idea of their content. Thereafter the task of translating was worked in piecemeal among all his other activities. (Hunter p. 29) "The remainder of this month [July] I was continually engaged in translating an Alphabet to the Book of Abraham, and arranging a grammar of the Egyptian Language as practiced by the ancients." (HC Vol. 2, p. 238) "This afternoon I labored on the Egyptian Alphabet with others, during which time principles of astronomy were unfolded." (HC Vol. 2, p. 286) On October 7, 1835, he recorded "This afternoon I re-commenced translating the ancient records." (HC Vol. 2, p. 289) Five days

later he wrote: "Inn the afternoon we translated some of the Egyptian records." (HC vol. 2, p. 318) ...and the next day, "Spent the day in translating." (HC Vol. 2, p. 320)

Dr. S.B. Sperry, of BYU, wondered about the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar. Having access to the archives of the Church with two of the archive historians he actually found it in 1938. It was in the archives where Brigham Young had put it in 1954, and made an interpretation of what he saw without referencing that he had seen it. (Sperry pp. 68-69) The Church did not let him remove it or catalogue it differently. Just before 1950, J. Ruben Clark, III, then teaching at BYU and who seemed to have worked in the archives and knew of Sperry's find, gained access to the bound volume and used it in his classes, which I was fortunately privileged to attend. A photo of the bound volume is on page 101 of Clark's book. A page from the Alphabet and other information is also reproduced by Clark in his book on page 103. Joseph Smith had worked and entered data on more than 80 pages of ruled paper, since a copy was available, these pages could be counted as well as the characters in the left hand Column. Those writers who, including recent Mormon scholars, who neglect this compilation by the Prophet Joseph, are likely to make errors in assumptions and conclusions, Larson among them.

THE MISSING SCROLLS

As Clark told us as students, one of the scrolls, written in black and red ink or red paint, was long enough to go from the middle of one room through the doorway into the middle of the next room. More details of what Quincy saw are also found in the Quincy Whig, Vol. 3, No. 25, October 17, 1840, which was soon after Quincy had visited the Prophet. The five or so documents represented by the fragments Larson reproduced certainly do not fulfill this requirement in length or content. As noted below, Brigham Young may have brought the two scrolls and other documents with him when he made the exodus to Salt Lake City.

JOSEPH SMITHS FIRST WORK ON THE SCROLLS

of the Church, Period I,
 Vol. 2, p. 236, Joseph states that soon after the purchase of the mummies, he commenced translating some of the characters, and "much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph in Egypt." Thus, there were at least two rolls! The Egyptian Alphabet that he prepared during the period 1835-1837, does seem make some references to the Book of Abraham, and though he reviewed both rolls sufficient for Olivier Cowdery to write a summary of their contents (Hunter pp. 36-38) he actually did not translate most of the roll of the Book of Abraham until 1842, and was still working on it in 1843. In February 19, 1842, Willford Woodruff, while on a mission to England, compiled the material on the Book of Abraham from the several issues of the Times and Seasons, along with other revelations and data, and was the first to publish it as The Pearl of Great Price, for the English saints, who at that time, in 1854, outnumbered all other saints. He recorded in his Daily Journal and History, that Joseph had the writings of Father Abraham in his possession "But is now about to publish it to the world or parts of it by publishing it in the Times and Seasons, [Woodruff was himself] setting the type that very day for the printing the first portion of the Book of Abraham." (Hunter p. 32)

On Feb 27, Woodruff recorded that for the past week most of the time he and his associates had been preparing a plate "at the commencement of the Book of Abraham." (Hunter p. 32)

In some twenty pages of the History of the Church, Vol. 4, 519-548,

much of what we now have as the Book of Abraham was included, along with three facsimiles. Yet, on March 8, 1842, Joseph's entry states that he "Re-commenced translating [the same expression he used when he renewed translating in Oct. 7, 1835] from the Records of Abraham for the tenth number of the Times and Season." (Hunter p. 33)

On the 19th of March Woodruff recorded in his journal that they had printed 500 copies of the Tenth Number. (Hunter p. 33) Joseph Smith became the editor of the Times and Seasons beginning with No. 9, therefore the contents of the Book of Abraham were approved by the prophet. It is

clear from historical entries of John Taylor, Willford Woodruff, and Joseph Smith himself, that much of what he included in the Book of Abraham was the results of translating activities in 1842. Woodruff in his second volume of his Journal tells how he saw the Urim and Thummim for the first time. (Woodruff Vol. 2) Did Joseph, in 1842, go back to the Egyptian Grammar book where there was space and insert portions of the Book of Abraham to the right of an Egyptian Character showing how words represented by the characters in the left hand column were used in a sentence? Some think so. We do not know what Joseph did with the Egyptian Alphabet after 1837.

THE SCROLL OF ABRAHAM AND THE SCROLL OF JOSEPH

his book Pearl of Great Price Commentary, published in 1948, was apparently also ignored by Larson; most Mormons do not have this book, but it refers on page 10 to the "two or more rolls of papyrus covered with hieroglyphic figures and devices." ... "One of the papyrus rolls was written by Father Abraham, and the other by Joseph who was sold into Egypt." Oliver Cowdery refers to these two rolls and a small quantity of papyrus in addition, [are these the ones the museum ended up getting?] in a letter written to William Frye, quoted by Hunter on pages 11, and 14-15. (Oliver pp 235-237) Joseph had so completely reviewed the Book of Joseph as to provide Oliver with an excellent summary of its contents. (Hunter pp. 36-38) If he did that for the Book of Joseph, he most certainly did it for the Book of Abraham. Either one of these scrolls would be longer than the entire museum papyri put together reproduced by Larson in his fold out.

One of the most apparent and erroneous conclusions made by Larson is that on page 81 of his book. He says "Recent discoveries [what he claims as discoveries are not so] have shown [conclusion that is unwarranted and in error] that the roll of papyrus Joseph had represented as the Book of Abraham was actually [his erroneous conclusion] the Book of Breathings for the priest Hor....there is every indication [where] the scroll Joseph Smith identified as the 'Book of Joseph,' was in fact [his declaration without true facts] the "Egyptian Book of the Dead for the Lady Ta-shert-Min, daughter of Nes-Kensu." (Larsen p. 81) He struggles against all realities to assert that one of the papyrus fragments JSP II, which may actually be what he says it is an excerpt from the Book of the Dead is what Joseph Smith identified as the Book of Joseph. Such an identification by him as to the document Joseph reviewed and called the Book of Joseph was not in any document Larson had access to. All conclusions he therefore comes to are all absolutely wrong. Mormon scholars as noted below have recognized the Book of the Dead as a source for some of the papyri material, as well as the Book of Breathings, now the subject of a full translation by Dr. Michael D. Rhodes. (Rhodes p. 4-5)

On page 49 of his book Larson tries to claim that the JSP XI papyri among the fragments had four characters excerpted from it, which he then tries to identify and cross reference to various documents, according to his interpretation, which appear on page three of a ten-page Manuscript, No. I, from about 1835. These seem to be part of what is called the Kirtland Papers. It appears to be part of the Sensen, or Breathing document, but he is in error to conclude that it was used by the prophet Joseph to compile the Book of Abraham. He selects four characters. Indeed these are found on the fragment mentioned, and he then finds them on one of the pages of the ten page document. But in addition to the single page he takes these four characters from, there are in the Egyptian Alphabet more than another 80 pages of ruled, prepared and inscribed material with more than 1230 characters in the left column. Why didn't he deal with those? He really has to stretch for his conclusion on this one. Those same Egyptian Characters most likely could be found on other pages of papyri and documents that Joseph possessed. Those more than 1230 characters certainly are evidence for more extensive documents than the ones Larson is so convinced are the ones Joseph worked on.

Nibley and Gee have dealt with the Breathing texts. They recognize them for what they are, and they have been expertly translated. They are not claimed by the Church to be the documents used by Joseph Smith. The church was so certain these fragments had no value for the content of the Book of Abraham and the Book of Joseph that soon after they were received from the Metropolitan Museum they were widely circulated for the public to examine in a number of ways and publications. The Church had no concern about the documents, only those, who like Larson with a run-away imagination arrived at erroneous conclusions and built a structure of collapsible cards around them. He purports to know exactly what was in Joseph Smith's mind and exactly how Joseph Smith handled the Egyptian Alphabet, and exactly which document Joseph Smith used for the source of the Book of Abraham. He is wrong, as publications by the church before and after Larson's book appeared indicate, some of which are referred to in this brief analysis.

Oliver Cowdery in his letter to William Frye gave a rather interesting and detailed summary of the contents of the Book of Joseph. (Cowdery p. 236) If Joseph conjured up in his imagination the Book of Joseph and Book of Abraham, why are there so many other discoveries now confirming that the issues, doctrines, and ideas they contain, were known before, in fact anciently, but the apostate religious world had lost them until their restoration by Joseph now confirmed by recent discoveries.

CHARACTERS WRITTEN IN BLACK AND RED INK

Another extremely important aspect of the writings from which Joseph took the Book of Abraham is that Joseph stated the roll was written in black and red ink. "The record of Abraham and Joseph, found with the mummies, is beautifully written upon papyrus, with black, and a small part red, ink or paint, in perfect preservation." (HC Vol. 21, pp. 348) The Larson documents are all written in black. Larson tries to squirm out of that one. It is more than coincidental that no documents has been found among all of what is now known the Prophet had that has writing in red, or a snake on two legs talking to two people. The document having both of these items was referred to as the Book of Abraham. Therefore, Larson's assumption that the documents recovered from the Metropolitan Museum were the ones used by Joseph to translate the Abrahamic writings from is false. All of Larson's interpretations and conclusions about the fragments of scrolls are therefore erroneous. Throughout his book he keeps building on wrong assumptions. The true historical facts do not support his assumptions. To accept his interpretations is to do so at ones intellectual peril.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PAPYRI FRAGMENTS FROM THE MUSEUM

The museum fragments have all been identified by Dr. John Gee, a trained Egyptologist, in *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*. (Gee pp. 8-14) The fragments have been in the process of being individually translated. The fragment that Larson incorrectly identifies as the portion Joseph Smith obtained the Book of Abraham from, is identified as the Hor Book of Breathings, has been translated in 2002 by another Egyptologist, Michael D. Rhodes, in his Book *The Hor Book of Breathings a Translation and Commentary*. (Rhodes p. ix) Larson wrote his original book in 1985, totally disregarding the flat out statements made repeatedly in many Mormon publications that the museum documents had nothing to do with the Book of Abraham. By making so many wrong conclusions about them Larson compounds his errors.

It was pointed out thirty five years ago by Nibley that "Some people were endlessly dinning into the ears of the public [and still area] that what was written on that small and battered strip [from the museum] proved beyond a doubt that Joseph Smith was a fraud because he thought that it contained the Book of Abraham, whereas it contains nothing of the sort. But who said he thought so? They did." (Gee Second Edition p. xxv) "There are three classes of Breathings books, all of which cast light on the Joseph Smith version—which happens to belong to class 2, by far the most important of the lot. But the Book of Breathings of that class are extremely limited in the time and place of their production (making it relatively easy to place any one of them)." (Gee SECOND EDITION p. xxvi) There are texts that are four hundred years older than the fragments of the Joseph Smith papyri, and others that are another 1000 years older, taking this class of documents back to nearly 2000 BC. In Egypt about 600 BC there had been a renaissance of old documents and doctrines including the Hor Book of Breathings. (Erickson 7 Jan 2005) Ancient teachings were reassembled for use and extensively used, but most often times not understood.

DID BRIGHAM YOUNG BRING THE TRUE SCROLLS WITH HIM?

In the class I attended taught by Dr. Clark, he quoted from a letter sent back by Brigham Young to Emma Smith, after they were settled in Salt Lake City, requesting that "she send the mummies and the rest of the scrolls and fragments", indicating that Brigham Young may have brought with him, the long scrolls from which Joseph translated and had shown to Quincy. Emma sold her retained papyri fragments in 1856, later these became available to the Metropolitan Museum as described by Rhodes.

(Rhodes p. 2) The Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar may not have been the only documents he brought with him.

THE MESSAGE OF THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPYRI AN EGYPTIAN ENDOWMENT

Ten years before Larson wrote his book, Hugh Nibley, in 1975, published *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, an Egyptian Endowment*, a translation and commentary of Larson's J.S. Papyrus X and XI. He provides copies in color of the papyri documents, and a translation with commentary. It is not the Book of Abraham, but strangely enough, it seems to be prompter's texts for someone officiating in an ancient endowments, very familiar to Mormons, but totally unrecognized by Larson. Larson or any non-Mormon translator would not recognize the Temple Ceremony parallels. The parallels to our present temple endowments are astonishing. Nibley's book is still, at present, the only book-length treatment of the important Egyptian text now known as the 'document of Breathing Made by Isis,' a copy of which was found among the Joseph Smith papyri. If you look at the round facsimile in the Pearl of Great Price, the Hypocephalus of Sheshonq, you will find references to the temple in many items on that round drawing which reflects the temple ceremony. But Larson's text did not contain that round drawing. The Hypocephalus document is found in the Egyptian Alphabet that Joseph Smith prepared while working on the scrolls!

The round drawing or wood cut reproduction is found as the last page in the Egyptian Alphabet prepared by Abraham whom Joseph Smith was translating during 1835-37. That Alphabet, along with a lot of other doctrines and teachings of the Prophet and the details of the Book of Abraham, were put in the archives of the Church in 1854, and into a fire proof vault a year later, by Brigham Young; found again in 1938 by Dr. S. Sperry, and obtained for use and study by Dr. Clark in 1950 who showed to his students, including me, his data. Eventually a micro-film copy of the Egyptian Alphabet became available, sometimes also referred to as the Egyptian Grammar Book; so these comparisons could easily be made today. Nibley also shows parallels to the temple endowment he finds in the papyrus material in the Appendixes to his book. He provides at least nine more sources that confirm that such Doctrines were well known and circulated widely in ancient times, including Dead Sea Scrolls. (Nibley in Gee, SECOND EDITION, pp. 459-587) Since Larson ignored the content of this book his own study is rendered fiction.

THE ST. LOUIS AND CHICAGO MUSEUMS

Originally there were four mummies and various papyrus materials. The historical evidence suggests that Brigham Young had brought some of the papyrus rolls with him, Emma had retained eleven other documents at least, and perhaps other papyrus had been acquired by other museums through the transactions of Isaac Sheen and William Smith. (Clark p. 162) "The St. Louis Museum acquired these [just two] mummies sometime between 1844 and 1856." (Clark p. 162) Two mummies and perhaps some papyrus "stayed in St. Louis until 1863." (Clark p. 162) Before August of 1863 the entire contents of the St. Louis Museum was transferred to the Chicago Museum. (Clark p. 162)

"The plano editor of Mother Smith's history [states] that at least part of the papyrus was in the museums." (Clark p. 162) And it seems that the mummies were in the Chicago Museum up to 1869, but "no documented evidence beyond 1869 ...that the mummies were in Chicago up to the day" of the famous fire in 1871. (Clark p. 162) Therefore it is within the "realm of reasonable possibility that at least part of the papyrus rolls of Abraham and Joseph are still in existence somewhere." (Clark p. 162)

Charles Haggerty, a former colleague of Dr. Clark, in 1950 had "traced the other 2 mummies and at least one or two bits of papyrus to the Philadelphia Museum." (Clark p. 163) There, it seems, one of the mummies may have been used in the Medical University for cadaver dissection. So there is another place to look. Researchers are looking in numerous places for the papyrus rolls, the archives of the Church, the Philadelphia Museum, Chicago, and elsewhere. Research always comes up with pertinent information.

Larson also does not take into consideration how much of the papyri were destroyed by the Chicago Fire, if any, when the museum in which they were housed for some time burned down. The preserved fragments JSP I, XI, and X, are only outer fragments of a roll, that appears to have included Facsimile 3, the ancient owner was Hor, son of Osoroeris and Chibois, at this time it is considered most likely that this document was destroyed in the Chicago Fire. (Gee p. 11) Fragments JSP IIIa-b seem to have been part of a document belonging to Noufianoub, and also appears to have been destroyed in the Chicago Fire, as it seems was also the case with Facsimile 2, perhaps owned by Seconchis. (Gee p. 11) But these documents may have ended up in the Philadelphia Museum.

As Gee points out in his book, the papyrus from the Metropolitan Museum had an entirely different history which he provides.

Four years before Larson published his book, Hugh Nibley also published a definitive study of the Book of Abraham published in 1981, *Abraham in Egypt*, those who pretend to understand the Book of Abraham and its origins and history, if they neglect that book do so again, at their intellectual peril. While paying homage to Nibley's book, Larson ignored its content, which rendered his own publication a work of fiction; terribly flawed.

NEW PUBLICATIONS ON THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

FARMS have initiated a new series of studies on the Book of Abraham. In that series of Studies three books have appeared so far. Study No. 1, presents more than 120 ancient documents and references that parallel the Book of Abraham, it was published in 2001 by FARMS, (Tvedtnes pp. xiv-xv), which again if ignored puts one at a serious disadvantage in not keeping up with the details of studies being made on all of the documents and puts one in a position that is untenable. Of these 120 or so ancient sources only one was known before the translation work by Joseph in 1842. They confirm that much of the unusual doctrine found in the Book of Abraham had been circulated in various details in many other sources and places that are now becoming available. (Tvedtnes pp ix-xii) (See my CDs KOLOB, and THE 4TH CHAPTER OF ABRAHAM, and the Erickson web site entry for 20 Aug 2005)

Study No. 2 by John Gee, is his book, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 2000, dealing with historical and technical details of the recovered documents assembled by Larson's flawed work. He points out that the fragments identified as the Scroll of Hor, is only a small part of a scroll less than 32 centimeters wide that was about 10 feet long. Larson only had fragments JSP X, JSP XI, and JS I, that represented this much larger scroll. Larson has in error, attached to the left of these fragments, the drawing chosen by Abraham to represent certain things he was writing about, Facsimile No. 3, but Abraham's actual writing is not mentioned in any of the recovered fragments. Larson has it all wrong. It is sad that uninformed Mormons have been subject to this so called wrecking ball. Gullible Mormons, falling for Larson's and other's presentations and interpretations, have really been hoodwinked. Study No. 3 by Gee and Hauglid, is *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, published by FARMS in 2005; one of the studies intended when FARMS "decided in 1998 to ...focus on the Book of Abraham. At that time FARMS formed the Book of Abraham research project, headed by John Gee, William (Bill) Gay....and Brian M. Hauglid." (Gee p. vii) The first three of many studies are now available, devastating the conclusions made by Larson

and others.

EARLY STUDY OF THE HOR SEN-SEN PAPYRUS

One of the early studies showing church scholars had made correct identifications of the fragments was October 15, 1968, shortly after the fragments became available. The authors adequately responded to anti-Mormon's and critics alike, anticipating Larson's arguments with adequate answers to them seventeen years before Larson published his ill thought out book. The authors proposed two alternate explanations, and an accompanying chart. One was the clear indication that those who prepared the Egyptian Alphabet "had a significant insight into the meaning of the hieratic words of the Sen-Sen document, and that the symbols on this papyrus have a definite relationship to the Book of Abraham verses with which Joseph Smith associated them." (Crapo p. 4 and figure 5) The Characters in the left columns of the Egyptian Alphabet "appear in relevant ways in the associated English verses-a fact which might be expected if the text had been adopted as a memory device by a group of Semitic people." (Crapo p. 4) Larson does not want to accept this. He thinks that by merely rejecting such evidence and fabricating his own interpretation without objectivity that he is making a case. "What the Book of Breathing is Not. [It is] not the source of the Book of Abraham." (Gee Second Edition, p. 1)

Because all of these and other books that are available, Mormons are responsible for their content and being alert to the effort of unscrupulous persons claiming too much and so much if what they claim is in error. The fragments are genuine, but they are not what Larson claims them to be or what Joseph Smith used for his Book of Abraham. Other newly discovered sources confirm the Book of Abraham is a correct book, especially as to its content. If Joseph Smith used spurious documents, or conjured up out of his imagination such ideas as contained in the Book of Abraham, there should never be found significant parallels in any ancient documents! But when they are what do you conclude? Larson's book does not shout that Joseph Smith is a fraud, it shouts loud and clear that Larson's is the "Fraud."

JOSEPH STILL TRANSLATING IN 1843

If the Egyptian Alphabet is a contender for the actual scroll Joseph translated, and fragments from the museum do not contain what is in the Book of Abraham, then no matter how strong one contends that they were

or are, is incorrect, or why was Joseph still translating and working on the translation of the Book of Abraham in 1843, if he had already translated all of it before? And why would Parley P. Pratt publish this: "We have the pleasure, this month, in being able to give an illustration and extract from the Book of Abraham, a book of higher antiquity than any portion of the Bible....The record is now in course of translation...and proves to be a record written partly by the Father of the Faithful, Abraham, and finished by Joseph when in Egypt." (Clark p. 111) Such references indicate that Joseph had not fully translated the scroll and was working on it and revising it for publication in 1842. He was still working on it in 1843 with parties who knew he was and were anticipating what he would present. And the evidence is that there "is conclusive proof from Joseph Smith himself that he did not translate or at least publish all of the record of Abraham." (Clark p. 114)

In the Times and Seasons Feb 1843, John Taylor indicated to the Saints and subscribers that if their subscriptions were not kept current they would miss the additional translations from the Book of Abraham which Joseph has promised to let him publish." (Clark p. 98) "It is clear that Joseph referred to what had been published were only extracts from the original documents and writings, not the complete writings in either case." (Clark p. 99) We have not idea how much more he translated of the Book of Abraham during the next fourteen months before his death, or even if that work is available someplace in the archives. There is a likely chance that it is.

EARLY DISPOSITION OF THE EGYPTIAN ALPHABET

"After the purchase of the mummies and papyrus Joseph Smith and his scribes copied characters from the papyrus into a ruled journal approximately 8 x 12 inches, which was labeled Egyptian Alphabet on the outside spine." (Clark p. 100) Larson gives an incomplete summary of its history, though it was put into the Church Archives in 1854, then into the fireproof vault of the Historians office in 1855. His evaluation of the documents that "they are page after page of nonsensical gibberish," is singular proof of his bias and how inaccurate he is. There are several studies in the web site that deal with the contents of this document, and more will appear in the future, because since Larson's messed up study other sources have been translated from the work's of Enoch, and the Dead Sea Scrolls both before and after Larson's study that he did not avail himself of. (Milik p. 20-21)

The Egyptian Alphabet is an extremely important document and is beginning to be realized as such. Larson incorrectly believes and asserts that various pages of documents prepared by Joseph and his scribes in 1837 "is the copy used for the 1842

publication of the Book of Abraham in the Times and Seasons." (Larson p. 44) He also assumes to know the mind and purposes of Joseph Smith when he concludes that those pages with a symbol in the left hand margin and column represents a character so filled with detail that an entire paragraph of data is translated from it. No such claim is made by Joseph or anyone associated with or having a knowledge of what Joseph did or did not do. It is clear that the characters in the left column are genuine Egyptian characters, and in some cases were exact representations of characters on the Hor documents, also called by Larson the 'Sensen', or breathing text. His conclusion that Joseph listed these characters for the precise purpose to list them and then derive all of the data to the right of them in the Alphabet study from a few characters has no basis in fact.

MORMON SCHOLARS HAVE OR ARE TRANSLATING THE PAPYRI

Rhodes and Nibley and others have fully translated the Hor document, or the Hor Book of Breathings. (See Rhodes) "John Gee and Michael Rhodes will soon publish a second edition of the Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri. It is still the only book-length treatment of the important Egyptian text now known as the 'Document of Breathing Made by Isis,' a copy of which was found among the Joseph Smith Papyri. The new edition features previously excised material, corrections of numerous typographical errors, improved illustrations, and accurate placement of the illustrations in the Text." (Insights, FARMS, p. 8, Vol. 29, No. 5, 2005) The revised Second Edition became available for sale at the beginning of 2006. (Gee p. xix) Larson's conclusions regarding the placement of Facsimile No. I and its relation to the Sensen document shows how eager he is to make points without really knowing what he is doing. The rest of it is not in any document now possessed by any archive that we know of.

Fragments pieced together and misrepresented by Larson as to what they originally were is fragments of a less than 32 centimeters wide Scroll of Semminis, which like the Book of Hor originally was more than 10 feet long. Early accounts indicate that Joseph Smith had more pieces, perhaps another short fragment of this less than 32 centimeters wide scroll that extended to the left of what Larson has. Larson has JSP II, which is not part of the Semminis scrolls, attached to JSP IV, JSP VI, JSP V, and JSP VII which is just over another fragment JSP VIII. The fragment JSP II, in its current condition is a vignette from the Book of the Dead 110. (Faulkner p. 113) A woman named Semminis, late third century BC, originally owned the papyrus. Faulkner's work is the first authentic presentation of the Complete Papyrus or Ani. The fragment JSP VIII is a vignette that accompanied Book of the Dead #125 in Ptolemaic times (322-214 300 BC; Leick pp. 130-131) The original scroll belonged to a woman named Noufianoub. (Gee p. 12) In general, Joseph Smith's dating of the mummies and scrolls were in the ball park, even though they were restored documents from greater antiquity. On the Larson fold-out the portion designated JSP III is a portion of another 10 foot scroll, also less than 32 centimeters wide, of Noufianoub. (Gee p. 10) There was a great revival of ancient doctrines and themes during the first Millennium

BC which saw the reappearance and restoration of many ancient documents, (Erickson web site entry 9 March 2005) that can easily account for the preservation and re-emergence of ancient teachings, even of Abraham. (Forman p.137)
More work in this restoration activity would be worth while.

There are indications that another scroll that of Amenophis, may have also been possessed by the Prophet. It is only known from a partial copy. (Gee p. 10)

The Church also has many other fragments and documents that were obtained by Joseph Smith, some of these have also been translated are now available in various publications, including BYU STUDIES. In the studies by Gee, Nibley, and others, they all provide blow up color copies of the papyrus referred to by Larson, but none of them show any characters written in the color red!

WHO REALLY KNEW THE MIND OF JOSEPH SMITH AND WHAT HE DID?

All of the above and more rebuts what Larson has to say. He, like others, thinks they know the mind of the prophet when they say that "Joseph Smith believed that the Breathing permit was the Book of Abraham."
(Baer p. 110) This is an unforgivable assumption, it is found on page 30 of his book. He is correct in saying that the Original papyri had not been destroyed, he omitted mentioning that a only few pages from the museum were not destroyed, some were. He is totally inaccurate and wrong is saying that the papyri from the Metropolitan Museum are all of the documents Joseph used. The recovered documents are only a small portion of an entire collection of document. Many of the originals were 10 feet long, but for the most part only fragments of other scrolls were preserved with the mummies, except in the case of at least two rolls. Why do anti-Mormons ignore these basic facts?

Gee in his book thoroughly identified the documents, their dates, and their ownership, and with all of that and the above, which with other documents referred to on my web site [w.w.w.einarerickson.com](http://www.einarerickson.com), totally refute the premature writings and conclusions of Deveria, a biased and early Egyptologist that Larson so fondly quotes.

This is but a small effort to draw attention to items and literature of interest to the LDS community, and certainly as evident, is not exhaustive. It is a call for the LDS students to examine all things in greater detail and become aware of what is available to support the positions taken by the Church and its scholars in the on-going confrontation with its detractors. It also helps to be a student of Church History and Doctrine. It is also a heads-up to all LDS detractors, to quit wasting so much time on false assumptions.

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