

FACSIMILES OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

INTRODUCTION TO THE FACSIMILES

The facsimiles of the book of Abraham have accompanied its text in each edition of the Pearl of Great Price since the 1851 first edition. Although the facsimiles have historically had only marginal influence or significance in the official canon of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, readers of the book of Abraham have nevertheless long been curious about them. To date, however, no single systematic methodology has been advanced for studying the facsimiles, nor has a single theory been articulated about the facsimiles that can account for all the evidence. Some scholars have interpreted the facsimiles from an Egyptological vantage, while others have compared the facsimiles with ancient Semitic elements. Others still have focused on how the facsimiles work together with the text of the book of Abraham to create a sort of ritualized dramatization of the narrative. For this study edition, the commentary will focus on two main components to the facsimiles: their ancient Egyptian context and meaning and how they act in relation to the text of the book of Abraham as revealed and translated by Joseph Smith. Areas of convergence between Joseph Smith's explanations and ancient Egyptian and Semitic concepts will also be highlighted while not presuming to say that these convergences are definitive or provide the only way to approach or interpret the facsimiles. Readers interested in seeing different approaches to the facsimiles are encouraged to consult the reference works included in the bibliography.

A FACSIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ARAHAM, NO. 1



Figure 1. The Angel of the Lord.

Figure 2. Abraham fastened upon an altar.

Figure 3. The idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice.

Figure 4. The altar for sacrifice by the idolatrous priests, standing before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and Pharaoh.

Figure 5. The idolatrous god of Elkenah.

Figure 6. The idolatrous god of Libnah.

Figure 7. The idolatrous god of Mahmackrah.

Figure 8. The idolatrous god of Korash.

Figure 9. The idolatrous god of Pharaoh.

Figure 10. Abraham in Egypt.

Figure 11. Designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians.

Figure 12. Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify Shaumau, to be high, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word, Shaumahyeem.

COMMENTARY ON FACSIMILE NO. 1

Facsimile 1 originally appeared at the beginning of a papyrus scroll owned by an ancient Egyptian priest named Hor. The original illustration was drawn on this papyrus scroll adjacent to an ancient Egyptian text on that same scroll known today as the Book of Breathings. This copy of the Book of Breathings can be securely dated to the Ptolemaic period of Egyptian history (circa 330–30 BC). The type of scene depicted in this facsimile is from an Egyptological perspective frequently called a lion couch scene, due, unsurprisingly, to the prominent lion couch in the center of the picture.



Figure 1. *The Angel of the Lord.*

In the original papyrus illustration (called a *vignette* in Egyptological nomenclature), the head of this bird figure is missing. It probably was a human head, thereby representing the *Ba* (*baʿ*) of the deceased owner of the papyrus (Hor).

The *Ba*, a fundamental component of the ancient Egyptian notion of what constituted a human being, is a difficult concept to fully grasp and translate into a modern conceptual counterpart. Often rendered as “soul” (or left untranslated), the *Ba* essentially constituted the nonmaterial essence of an individual (their personality, character, reputation, their “self,” and so on). Gods also had a *Ba* that could be detected in any phenomenon or action, which demonstrated the given deity’s presence or essence. The *Ba* could freely come and go after death and could even be sent and commanded to perform certain tasks (such as deliver messages or appear in dreams) if properly ordered. For this last reason, it seems, in the Greco-Roman period the *Ba* was sometimes rendered in Greek as “assistant, attendant” (*paredros*) and was conceptualized in parallel function with “messengers” (*angeloi*). This figure corresponds to the “angel of [the Lord’s] presence” described at Abraham 1:15; 2:12, who rescues the patriarch from death.

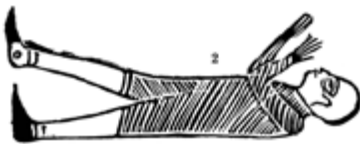


Figure 2. *Abraham fastened upon an altar.*

The figure on the lion couch at the center of the vignette has been interpreted by Egyptologists as, variously, the mummy of the deceased Hor being prepared for embalming, the resurrected Hor, or the resurrected god Osiris. (These interpretations are not necessarily exclusionary since in Egyptian belief the mummified, resurrected deceased was identified with the god Osiris.) As preserved today, there is a lacuna, or gap, in the middle of this figure cutting off the torso and arms. It is unknown when this portion of the vignette was damaged and when some unknown person attempted to (re)draw the figure with

pencil. In the original vignette the figure is wearing a knee-length kilt (which was drawn up to the neck in the printed facsimile) and anklets. Both hands are raised in the air (the traces of the fingers of the hands are still visible) in what has been interpreted, variously, as either a position that denotes a struggle, the classical Egyptian gesture of prayer and supplication, or the deceased reaching out to embrace his *Ba* (see fig. 1). The first two interpretations of this gesture would accord well with the narrative in Abraham 1:12–15. By the Roman period, Abraham had become a syncretized substitute for the god Osiris in Jewish works drawing from Egyptian literary and mythological elements. In a papyrus from Thebes dating to the second or third centuries AD, a female mummiform figure is depicted on a lion couch similar to the lion couch in Facsimile 1, and the name of Abraham, among others, is invoked underneath as a sort of magical keyword to make the spell effective.



Figure 3. *The idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice.*

This figure has been interpreted among Egyptologists as either the god Anubis or a priest preparing the deceased for embalming and burial. As preserved today, there is a lacuna where the figure's head would be. There appear to be traces of a headdress over the figure's right shoulder that indicate, in all likelihood, that the figure originally had the head of a jackal. This plus the figure's black skin lend

themselves to identifying this figure as either the god Anubis or a priest imitating the god while wearing a mask in a ritual setting. The figure's left arm is extended over fig. 2, but the hand is missing in a lacuna. Eyewitnesses to the papyrus from the nineteenth century described this figure as wielding a knife, as depicted in the printed facsimile. The crescent shape of the knife in the facsimile would be consistent with the shape of flint knives used in ancient Egypt in ritual slaughter and execration rites. These strands of evidence reinforce the overall probability that the knife was original to the vignette. The priest of Elkenah is depicted endeavoring to take away Abraham's life in Abraham 1:7–12, 20.



Figure 4. *The altar for sacrifice by the idolatrous priests, standing before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and Pharaoh.*

At Abraham 1:12–13 this altar is said to have been made “after the form of a bedstead, such as was had among the Chaldeans.” In its funerary Egyptian context, the lion couch (also sometimes called a funerary bed or lion bed in Egyptological literature) served as the bier of the deceased. Numerous examples of funerary iconography exist de-

picting the preparation of the mummy on the lion couch. Non-funerary examples of the lion couch are also attested, such as in the theogamy and royal birthing scene of Hatshepsut at the temple of Deir al-Bahri. Alabaster offering tables from the Old Kingdom shaped as elongated lions (carved in relief) are reminiscent of later lion couch funerary biers (such as the splendid gold lion couch recovered from the tomb of Tutankhamun) and the Ptolemaic lion-shaped alabaster embalming platforms for the Apis bull. By the Ptolemaic period the word for lion couch (*nmit*) was homophonous with the words for “slaughterhouse, abattoir” and “offering” (*nmt*), according well with the sacrificial setting ascribed to the lion couch scene in the book of Abraham.



Figure 5. *The idolatrous god of Elkenah.*

Figures 5 through 8 are what are commonly called canopic jars (after early Egyptologists associated the human-headed jar in the assemblage as Kanopos, the helmsman of the ship of the legendary king Menelaus). These cylinder-shaped vessels held the viscera of the deceased (specifically, the lungs, stomach, liver, and intestines) during the mummification process. The jars were identified and conflated by the ancient Egyptians with the four sons of the god Horus (see also Facsimile 2, fig. 6), who guarded the jars containing the mummified organs. Fig. 5, the falcon-headed jar, is widely recognized as the deity Qebhsenuf, one of the four sons of Horus. In the context of the Abrahamic text revealed by Joseph Smith, these four figures correspond to the four idolatrous gods mentioned at Abraham 1:6, 13, 17. The relationship or association of the identities of the four named gods in the text of the book of Abraham and the four sons of Horus in Facsimile 1 is not clear.



Figure 6. *The idolatrous god of Libnah.*

The jackal-headed canopic jar often identified with the god Duamutef, one of the four sons of Horus.



Figure 7. *The idolatrous god of Mahmackrah.*

The baboon-headed canopic jar often identified with the god Hapy, one of the four sons of Horus.



Figure 8. *The idolatrous god of Korash.*

The human-headed canopic jar often identified with the god Imsety, one of the four sons of Horus.



Figure 9. *The idolatrous god of Pharaoh.*

The crocodile figure underneath the lion couch has perplexed scholars since this element is unique to this lion couch vignette.

It may be the deity Sobek, the primordial crocodile god and lord of the Nile, in which case Joseph Smith's identification of this figure as the god Pharaoh would be entirely appropriate. Alternatively, it could be the crocodile who figures in the myth of the death and resurrection of the god Osiris as a magical creature who assisted the goddess Isis in reassembling Osiris's limbs. In any case, the crocodile was widely revered and worshipped (and feared!) as a sacred, powerful animal by the ancient Egyptians, and numerous mummified crocodiles have been recovered. As with the gods Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, and Korash, the god Pharaoh is mentioned at Abraham 1:6, 8–10, 13, 17 as one of the idolatrous gods worshipped by Abraham's kinsmen.



Figure 10. *Abraham in Egypt.*

An offering table with what appears to be a lotus flower. Underneath appears to be two jars, one on each side of the stand, perhaps containing ointment or perfume. In Facsimile 3, fig. 3 this figure (also an offering table) is said to *signify* Abraham in Egypt, suggesting a more abstract representation was intended in Joseph Smith's explanation than the face value Egyptian significance of this figure. Offering tables served an important role

in both mortuary and temple settings as a place to dedicate food, drink, and other offerings (such as ointments and incense) to either the deceased for use in the afterlife or the deity in the temple. The lotus held deep mythological significance for the ancient Egyptians since in some Egyptian creation accounts the sun god was born from a lotus that emerged from the primordial water. As such, the lotus was closely associated with the solar cycle and was thus a symbol of rebirth and divinization.



Figure 11. *Designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians.*

Another highly unique element in this lion couch vignette, these parallel, columned niches appear to depict the façade characteristic of Egyptian temples, tombs, and palaces. They also share a visual affinity with the *serekh* (*srh*) sign that bore one of the names of the Egyptian monarch and depicted this niched façade.



Figure 12. *Raukeeyang*, signifying *expanse*, or the *firmament over our heads*; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify *Shaumau*, to be

high, or the *heavens*, answering to the Hebrew word, *Shaumahyeem*.

The zigzagging lines in this figure represent water (in which the crocodile is swimming), perhaps likely the Nile. The word *Raukeeyang* is clearly the Hebrew *rāqî‘a* meaning “expanse, firmament” (compare Genesis 1:6). *Shaumahyeem* is likewise recognizable as the Hebrew *šāmayîm* (“heavens, sky”), with *Shaumau* perhaps intended as a reconstructed hypothetical root of *Shaumahyeem*. All of these Hebrew words have been rendered here by Joseph Smith in accordance with the transliteration system outlined by his Hebrew instructor Joshua Seixas in his Hebrew grammar used for study in Kirtland, Ohio, in early 1836. The Prophet here and elsewhere (see Facsimile 2, figs. 4–5) explains the facsimiles using Hebrew vocabulary and terminology he learned from Seixas to elucidate ancient Egyptian concepts. (Indeed, the ancient Egyptians, like the ancient Hebrews and other Near Eastern cultures, conceptualized the heavens as a domed ceiling supported by cosmic pillars. In this respect figs. 11 and 12 should be conjoined to get the full intended effect of this symbolism.) That Joseph Smith would use Hebrew terminology to clarify Egyptian concepts is perhaps peculiar by modern scholarly standards, but understandable in the context of nineteenth century linguistic assumptions evidently held by the Prophet.

A FACSIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ARAHAM, NO. 2



Figure 1. Kolob, signifying the first creation, nearest to the celestial, or the residence of God. First in government, the last pertaining to the measurement of time. The measurement according to celestial time, which celestial time signifies one day to a cubit. One day in Kolob is equal to a thousand years according to the measurement of this earth, which is called by the Egyptians Jah-oh-eh.

Figure 2. Stands next to Kolob, called by the Egyptians Oliblish, which is the next grand governing creation near to the celestial or the place where God resides; holding the key of power also, pertaining to other planets; as revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered sacrifice upon an altar, which he had built unto the Lord.

Figure 3. Is made to represent God, sitting upon his throne, clothed with power and authority; with a crown of eternal light upon his head; representing also the grand Key-words of the Holy Priesthood, as revealed to Adam in the Garden of Eden, as also to Seth, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and all to whom the Priesthood was revealed.

Figure 4. Answers to the Hebrew word Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament of the heavens; also a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand; answering to the measuring of the time of Oliblish, which is equal with Kolob in its revolution and in its measuring of time.

Figure 5. Is called in Egyptian Enish-go-on-dosh; this is one of the governing planets also, and is said by the Egyptians to be the Sun, and to borrow its light from Kolob through the medium of Kae-e-vanrash, which is the grand Key, or, in other words, the governing power, which governs fifteen other fixed planets or stars, as also Floese or the Moon, the Earth and the Sun in their annual revolu-

tions. This planet receives its power through the medium of Kli-flos-is-es, or Hah-ko-kau-beam, the stars represented by numbers 22 and 23, receiving light from the revolutions of Kolob.

Figure 6. Represents this earth in its four quarters.

Figure 7. Represents God sitting upon his throne, revealing through the heavens the grand Key-words of the Priesthood; as, also, the sign of the Holy Ghost unto Abraham, in the form of a dove.

Figure 8. Contains writings that cannot be revealed unto the world; but is to be had in the Holy Temple of God.

Figure 9. Ought not to be revealed at the present time.

Figure 10. Also.

Figure 11. Also. If the world can find out these numbers, so let it be. Amen.

Figures 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 will be given in the own due time of the Lord.

The above translation is given as far as we have any right to give at the present time.

COMMENTARY ON FACSIMILE NO. 2

Facsimile 2 of the book of Abraham is a type of Egyptian document called a hypocephalus. The name derives from Greek (*hypo tēn kephalēn*) and means literally “under the head” (corresponding to the Egyptian *hr tp*). The hypocephalus was a specialized funerary amulet that was placed under (or sometimes just near) the head of the deceased and served to protect the deceased in the afterlife, provide light and heat for the deceased, and to transform the deceased into a resurrected divine being. Hypocephali also served as astronomical documents, functioning as a type of guide through the cosmos for the deceased. The hypocephalus that served as the basis for Facsimile 2 was owned anciently by a man named Sheshonq, whose name appears in fig. 8, and most likely dates to the Ptolemaic period.



Figure 1. *Kolob, signifying the first creation, nearest to the celestial, or the residence of God. First in government, the last pertaining to the measurement of time. The measurement according to celestial time, which celestial time signifies one day to a cubit. One day in Kolob is equal to a thousand years according to the measurement of this earth, which is called by the Egyptians Jah-oh-eh.*

Kolob features prominently in the cosmology of the book of Abraham as a star or planet nearest to the residence of God (see Abraham 3:3–10). As with the explanation to this figure, Kolob in the text of the book of Abraham is said to have timekeeping significance (Abraham 3:9). The comment that celestial time “signifies one day to a cubit” is perplexing, but perhaps is meant to describe angular velocity, or the speed at which an object revolves relative to another object (in this case the orbits of celestial bodies). According to this understanding, the movement of Kolob (assuming it is intended to be a physical star in the visible night sky; see the commentary accompanying Abraham 3:3) is being measured in cubits, an anciently attested phenomenon for other celestial bodies. In its Egyptian context this figure is commonly identified in other hypocephali as the god Amun (or Amun-Re), a supremely important deity in ancient Egypt as the primeval, self-generating creator god whose name means “hidden one” (*imn*). Although usually depicted in hypocephali with four heads, representing the universality and totality of this god’s power over the cosmic elements, here the figure has two heads, as also attested in other hypocephali. He holds what appears to be the Egyptian *w3s*-scepter, indicating his lordly dominion. A hand copy of Facsimile 2 drafted sometime between 1835 and 1842 indicates that this portion of the hypocephalus was damaged and that restorations were made to it before its

publication in March 1842. Flanking this figure are two baboons (figs. 22 and 23) performing gestures of praise that are adorned with horned moon discs. They appear to represent the moon (among other possible celestial connections, including astral) and are receiving light and heat from the central figure, which was understood by the ancient Egyptians to represent the sun. Jah-oh-eh, said here to mean “the measurement of this earth,” might reflect a rendering of the Egyptian word for “soil, field” (*3h/3ht*), or, alternatively, could be a rendering of the Tetragrammaton, the divine name (YHWH; Jehovah), but these identifications remain tentative.



Figure 2. *Stands next to Kolob, called by the Egyptians Oliblish, which is the next grand governing creation near to the celestial or the place where God resides; holding the key of power also, pertaining to other planets; as revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered sacrifice upon an altar, which he had built unto the Lord.*

This figure is identified in some hypocephali as Amun, or Amun-Re. It is a crowned, two-headed deity and is holding the Wepwawet standard (*wꜣwꜣwt*; “Opener of the Way”) and what appears to be an *ankh* (*ꜥḥ*) symbol (a symbol for life), based on the draft hand copy. The glyphs to the left of the figure read, “The name of this great god.” No immediate etymology for Oliblish, as rendered here, presents itself. To the right of the deity is an offering table (compare Facsimile 1, fig. 10; Facsimile 3, fig. 3). The reference to Abraham building an altar and offering sacrifices hearkens to either Abraham 2:17 or 2:20 (compare Genesis 12:7) and appears to make a narrative link between Abraham offering sacrifice and his revelation about Kolob and other celestial bodies. This suggests that this is when and where Abraham received the revelation described in Abraham 3.



Figure 3. *Is made to represent God, sitting upon his throne, clothed with power and authority; with a crown of eternal light upon his head; representing also the grand Key-words of the Holy Priesthood, as revealed to Adam in the Garden of Eden, as also to Seth, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and all to whom the Priesthood was revealed.*

This portion of the hypocephalus was damaged before the publication of Facsimile 2 in March 1842. Joseph Smith or a clerk assisting him in the printing of the book of Abraham restored the damaged portion by filling it with a figure from the Joseph Smith Papyri (specifically, from P. Joseph Smith IV, a copy of the Book of the Dead belonging anciently to a woman named Tshemmin). In other hypocephali this portion is often filled by either one or two

registers that feature combinations of figures, typically including a falcon, the *Ba* (spirit), the goddesses Isis or Nephthys, a scarab beetle, or the god Re, all typically on a boat. Here it is the god Re (or Re-Horakhty) seated on his solar boat and flanked by two *wedjat* (*wḏjt*) eyes. Atop his head is a solar disc. He holds a scepter and is seated before an offering table with a lotus (compare Facsimile 1, fig. 10; Facsimile 3, fig. 3). The *wedjat* eye was a symbol for health and wholeness (compare Facsimile 2, fig. 7). There is no overt reference to God revealing the key words of the priesthood to Abraham or the other patriarchs in the extant text of the book of Abraham, but it is perhaps hinted at with the language of priesthood in Abraham 2:9, 11.



Figure 4. *Answers to the Hebrew word Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament of the heavens; also a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand; answering to the measuring of the time of Oliblish, which is equal with Kolob in its revolution*

and in its measuring of time.

Compare Facsimile 1, fig. 12 and Facsimile 2, fig. 2. This mummified hawk with outstretched wings appears in other hypocephali, where it is sometimes identified as, variously, “a living *Ba*,” “the lord of heaven,” the solar god Re (compare Facsimile 2, fig. 3), or the god Osiris. Alternative, it might be a form of either of the hawk gods Horus or Sokar, personifications of the sky.

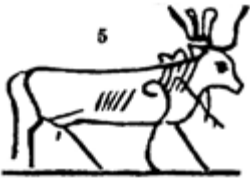


Figure 5. *Is called in Egyptian Enish-go-on-dosh; this is one of the governing planets also, and is said by the Egyptians to be the Sun, and to borrow its light from Kolob through the medium of Kae-e-vanrash, which is the grand Key, or, in other words, the governing power, which governs fifteen other fixed*

planets or stars, as also Floese or the Moon, the Earth and the Sun in their annual revolutions. This planet receives its power through the medium of Kli-flos-is-es, or Hah-ko-kau-beam, the stars represented by numbers 22 and 23, receiving light from the revolutions of Kolob.

This cow figure is sometimes labeled in other hypocephali as Ihet or Mehet-Weret, two bovine goddesses commonly identified with the goddess Hathor. Elsewhere Hathor is seen wearing a sun disc between her horns, which is fitting given her solar attributes and her role as both the consort and daughter of the sun god. By the time the Joseph Smith Papyri were written, Hathor was being identified by ancient Egyptians explicitly as the sun itself. Hah-ko-kau-beam is clearly recognizable as the definite plural form for “star” (*ha-kôkâbîm*; compare Abraham 3:13), but no obvious etymologies for Enish-go-on-dosh, Kae-e-vanrash, Floese, or Kli-flos-is-es, as rendered here, stand out, although the *ese* and *is-es* elements in these

words might be related to the name of the Egyptian goddess Isis.



Figure 6. Represents this earth in its four quarters. The four sons of Horus (compare Facsimile 1, figs. 5–8) do indeed represent the four cardinal points of the earth, among other important functions including the protection of the deceased.



Figure 7. Represents God sitting upon his throne, revealing through the heavens the grand Key-words of the Priesthood; as, also, the sign of the Holy Ghost unto Abraham, in the form of a dove.

This seated figure is a form of the deity Min (or Min-Amun), sometimes identified in hypocephali as “the great god,” “the lord of life,” and “the lord of all.” His back is bird-form (a hawk tail), thus perhaps attributing to him aspects of the god Horus. Here, as in many other (but not all) hypocephali, he appears to be ithyphallic, which, on the one hand, may signify sexual potency, fertility, creation, and rejuvenation, or, on the other hand, aggression, power, and potency. His arm is raised above him as he holds a flagellum, a gesture associated with kingship and displays of power. Before him the minor deity Nehebkau (commonly depicted as a snake or snake-headed man, but other times, as here, as a falcon or falcon-headed man) presents the *wedjat* eye (compare Facsimile 2, fig. 3) to the seated figure of Min. As mentioned above, in the extant text of the book of Abraham, there is no overt reference to God revealing the key words of the priesthood to Abraham nor mention of Abraham receiving the sign of the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove.



Figures 8–11. 8 Contains writings that cannot be revealed unto the world; but is to be had in the Holy Temple of God. 9 Ought not to be revealed at the present time. 10 Also. 11 Also. If the world can find out these numbers, so let it be. Amen.

These four lines contain hieroglyphic text, most of which appears legible enough to read. Starting from the top row reading left, the text invokes an unnamed “mighty” and “noble” god from the “time of creation”—the “lord of heaven and earth” and of the underworld—in order to cause Sheshonq, the deified owner of the hypocephalus, to live again. (Sheshonq’s name is legible in the bottom row at the far left.)

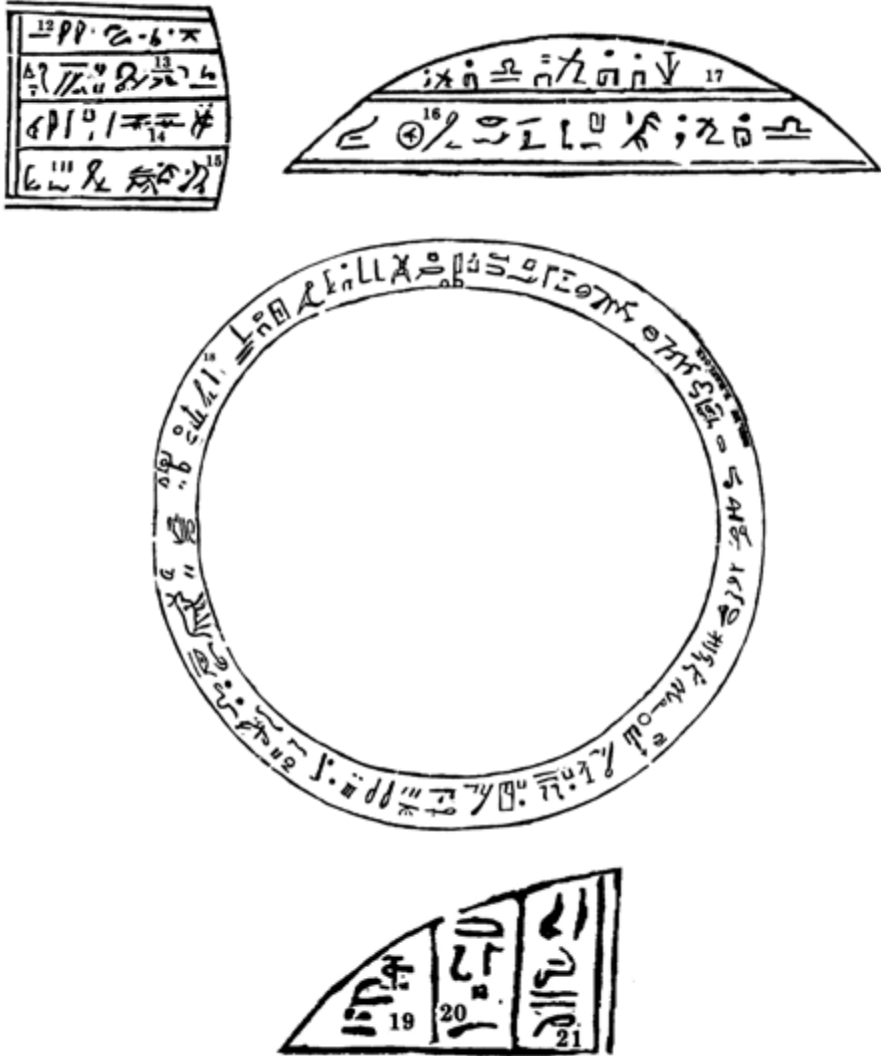


Figure 12–21. *will be given in the own due time of the Lord. The above translation is given as far as we have any right to give at the present time.*

Because they have been poorly copied in the printed facsimile, the characters in these figures have been read and reconstructed in different ways by Egyptologists. The lines of text comprising figures 12–15 were damaged at some point before the publication of Facsimile 2 and were restored by filling them in with text from the Book of Breathings. As with the rim inscription, Joseph Smith left these lines and other lines of text untranslated or otherwise without commentary.

A FACSIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ARAHAM, NO. 3



Figure 1. Abraham sitting upon Pharaoh's throne, by the politeness of the king, with a crown upon his head, representing the Priesthood, as emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven; with the scepter of justice and judgment in his hand.

Figure 2. King Pharaoh, whose name is given in the characters above his head.

Figure 3. Signifies Abraham in Egypt as given also in Figure 10 of Facsimile No. 1.

Figure 4. Prince of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, as written above the hand.

Figure 5. Shulem, one of the king's principal waiters, as represented by the characters above his hand.

Figure 6. Olimlah, a slave belonging to the prince.

Abraham is reasoning upon the principles of Astronomy, in the king's court.

COMMENTARY ON FACSIMILE NO. 3

Facsimile 3 originally appeared on the same papyrus as Facsimile 1 at the end of the Book of Breathings. The name of the owner of the papyrus, Hor, is visible in the bottom row of hieroglyphs. This facsimile in its Egyptian context has been persuasively argued to be a presentation scene in which the deceased (Hor) is brought into the presence of the deity Osiris in the culmination of his process of postmortem divinization.



Figure 1. *Abraham sitting upon Pharaoh's throne, by the politeness of the king, with a crown upon his head, representing the Priesthood, as emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven; with the scepter of justice and judgment in his hand.*

This figure is, in the context of an ancient Egyptian presentation scene, Osiris sitting enthroned as lord of the afterlife. The name Osiris is barely legible in the hieroglyphs copied in the third column from the left. He wears the Atef (*ꜣtꜥ*) crown, which is typically (but not exclusively) worn by Osiris as an emblem of his authority as ruler and sovereign of the afterlife. He brandishes the Heka (*ḥkꜣ*) crook, a symbol of kingship, again signifying his role as king of the afterlife. (Compare Fac 1, Fig 2, also identified by some as Osiris and also identified by Joseph Smith as Abraham, thus reinforce the syncretic intent behind linking these two personages.)



Figure 2. *King Pharaoh, whose name is given in the characters above his head.*

This figure has been identified by Egyptologists as the goddess Isis, the sister-wife of the god Osiris who is often featured in comparable presentation and judgement scenes in Egyptian art. Unfortunately, the hieroglyphs in the column next to this figure's head were poorly redrawn in this facsimile, and so the name of this figure is not legible. The bovine horns and moon (or solar?) disc atop this figure might identify it as the goddess Hathor, but Isis is also known to bear this iconography, and so without the name being legible, identifying this figure remains problematic. Assuming the figure

is Isis, it is compelling to note that at the time of the Joseph Smith Papyri because of her royal associations she was identified as, variously, “the Pharaoh(ess) of the whole land,” “ruler of the two lands [i.e. Egypt] in the house of joy,” “the Pharaoh(ess) of everything,” “ruler of Egypt,” and “excellent ruler on the throne of her father,” among other royal epithets.



Figure 3. Signifies Abraham in Egypt as given also in Figure 10 of Facsimile No. 1.

An offering stand customary for presentation scenes such as this. See the commentary accompanying Fac 1, Fig 10. The 1921 edition of the Pearl of Great Price followed the explanation to this figure as given in the *Times and Seasons* (“Signifies Abraham in Egypt—referring to Abraham, as given in the ninth number of the *Times and Seasons*. [Also as given in the first facsimile of this book.]”).



Figure 4. Prince of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, as written above the hand.

Based on the feather sported by this figure atop her head, and based on the barely legible hieroglyphs at the top of column 5, this figure in its Egyptian context is the goddess Maat, the divine embodiment of cosmic order, harmony, justice, and truth. Maat guides Hor, the owner of the papyrus (cf. Fig 5), into the presence of Osiris as both of them make the customary ritual gesture of greeting and hailing before him. The associations between Maat and kingship are plentiful, as the king was expected to perform and uphold *mꜣꜥt* (“justice,” “order,” “rightness,” etc.) in both the ritual and political spheres to ensure the perpetual defeat of *isft* (“chaos,” “disharmony,” etc.), thereby fulfilling his role of champion of Maat (both the goddess and the abstract concept).



Figure 5. Shulem, one of the king’s principal waiters, as represented by the characters above his hand.

The name Shulem is an attested Semitic name from Abraham’s day, and his epithet “king’s principal waiter” has close attested parallels in Egyptian administrative titles, but Shulem does not appear in

the extant text of the Book of Abraham, leaving his role in the narrative unknown. Egyptologists have identified this figure as Hor, the deceased owner of the papyrus scroll. His name is perhaps legible in the second column from the left of the head of this figure, right above the hand, but has some irregularities compared to how it is attested elsewhere on the papyrus (suggesting either that it is not his name or, more likely, that the glyphs were copied poorly). Hor, in the Egyptian context of this scene, is being introduced into the presence of Osiris (Fig 1).



Figure 6. *Olimlah, a slave belonging to the prince.*

As with Shulem, Olimlah does not appear in the extant Book of Abraham text, leaving his role in the narrative unknown. This figure has been identified by Egyptologists as the god Anubis, based on comparable iconography from other presentation scenes and from proposed readings of the (badly copied) hieroglyphs above him. However, although Anubis is a likely identification for this figure in its Egyptian context, there are multiple challenges to this identification, leaving some uncertainty as to the identity of this figure.

Abraham is reasoning upon the principles of Astronomy, in the king’s court.

This portion of the narrative is foreshadowed at Abraham 3:15 and would logically have picked up after the Creation account depicted in Abraham 4–5 but was never published by Joseph Smith before his death in 1844. The canopy of twenty-three stars depicted on the ceiling of this scene (perhaps meant to signify the open night sky) is unique to this vignette, having no parallel in comparable vignettes from other copies of the Book of Breathing. The stars might be an iconographic reference to one of the explicit purposes of the Book of Breathing, which was to make the deceased “appear in heaven as the disk of the moon” and “to make his body shine as Orion in the body of Nut [the sky].” Curiously, although the facsimile reproduced a line of hieroglyphs below this scene, they were passed over without comment in Joseph Smith’s explanations. Although many of the glyphs are illegible, enough are legible to discern that various gods are being invoked to bless Hor, the owner of the papyrus.