

Hidden Document Revealed

Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar suppressed for 130 years now comes to light. This document proves that Joseph Smith did not understand ancient Egyptian and that the Book of Abraham was a work of his imagination!

In the year 1835 the Mormon people purchased some Egyptian mummies and rolls of papyrus. Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, made this statement concerning the papyrus:

... I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc.,—a more full account of which will appear in its place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them. Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth. (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 236)

The Book of Abraham was published in 1842 and is now found as a part of the *Pearl of Great Price* (one of the four standard works of the Mormon Church).

Unfortunately, the original papyrus roll from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Abraham was lost. Joseph Smith did, however, include three drawings in his Book of Abraham, and also gave a translation of much of the material which appeared on these drawings.

In the year 1912 F. S. Spaulding sent the facsimiles from the *Pearl of Great Price* to a number of the most noted Egyptologists. These Egyptologists examined the facsimiles and Joseph Smith's interpretation of them and declared that his interpretation was fraudulent. Letters from these Egyptologists are published in the book, *Joseph Smith, Jr., as a translator*, 1912, by F. S. Spaulding, D.D. On page 23 of his book F. S. Spaulding reproduces a letter from Dr. A. H. Sayce of Oxford, England. In this letter Dr. Sayce stated:

It is difficult to deal seriously with Joseph Smith's impudent **fraud** ... Smith has turned the Goddess into a King and Osiris into Abraham.

Dr. W. M. Flinders Petrie of the London University stated:

To any one with knowledge of the large class of funeral documents to which these belong, the attempts to guess a meaning for them, in the professed explanations, are too absurd to be noticed. It may be safely said that there is **not one** single word that is **true** in these explanations.

... None but the ignorant could possibly be imposed on by such ludicrous blunders. (*Joseph Smith, Jr., as a translator*, page 24)

Dr. Arthur C. Mace, Asst. Curator, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Dept. of Egyptian Art, stated:

I return herewith, ... the "Pearl of Great Price." The "Book of Abraham," it is hardly necessary to say, is a **pure fabrication**. ... Joseph Smith's interpretation of these cuts is a farrago of nonsense from the beginning to end. Egyptian characters can now be read almost as easily as Greek, and five minutes' study in an Egyptian gallery of any museum should be enough to convince any educated man of the clumsiness of the **imposture**. (*Joseph Smith, Jr., as a translator*, page 27)

Rev. Prof. S. A. B. Mercer, Ph.D., Western Theological Seminary, Custodian Hibbard Collection, Egyptian Reproductions, stated:

3. That the author knew neither the Egyptian language nor the meaning of the most commonplace Egyptian figures; neither did any of those, whether human or Divine, who may have helped him in his interpretation, have any such knowledge. ... the explanatory notes to his fac-similes cannot be taken seriously by any scholar, as they seem to be undoubtedly the work of **pure imagination**. (*Joseph Smith, Jr., as a translator*, page 29)

The magazine section of the *New York Times* for December 29, 1912, carried this headline:

MUSEUM WALLS PROCLAIM FRAUD OF MORMON PROPHET

Under this headline appeared several pictures, one of which proves that the hypocephalus reproduced as Facsimile no. 2 in the *Pearl of Great Price* (supposed to have been drawn by Abraham) is in reality nothing but one of the "magical discs" which were placed under the head of a mummy. The picture shows a hypocephalus from the collection in the Berlin Museum which is almost identical to the one found in the *Pearl of Great Price*. Below is a photograph of this hypocephalus on the left side of the one found in the *Pearl of Great Price*.



In 1913 Dr. Samuel A. B. Mercer wrote a letter in which he claimed that Joseph Smith would not get more than zero in an examination on Egyptology:

All the scholars came to the same conclusion, viz: that Smith could not possibly correctly translate any Egyptian text, as his interpretation of the facsimiles shows. Any pupil of mine who would show such absolute (Continued on page 2)

10% SALE WILL END JUNE 30, 1966

We have decided to continue the 10% sale until June 30, 1966. The following books have sold out: *Temple Mormonism*, *Selected Changes in the Book of Mormon*, *Race Problems as They Affect the Church*, *The Golden Bible* and *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints*.

Several of the other books have almost sold out. Since we do not plan to reprint many of these books, this may be your last chance to get them.

The book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* continues to be our biggest seller. We have now sold over 4,000 copies. A reader from Pennsylvania wrote us a letter in which he stated:

Some time ago you sent us ... *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality*. ... we did not realize the great significance of this amazing and revealing book ... That account you give, from Utah Church records, on the Manifesto, chapter 16, page 226, is terrific ... **This one chapter, alone, is worth the price of the book**, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality*. (Letter dated January 20, 1966)

Millennial Star

We have just finished printing volumes 6 and 7 of the *Millennial Star*. These volumes are photo-reprints of an early Mormon publication. We will take them to the binders as soon as we receive a sufficient number of orders. This is a very limited printing (only 250 of each volume), and they may never be reprinted. The printing in these volumes is very clear and readable, and they will be of great interest to the student of Mormonism.

Although these volumes will sell for \$7.00 each in the bookstores, we will give a special price to those who will order them before June 30, 1966. We will sell these two volumes for \$10.80 (this is \$6.00 a volume with 10% deducted). The price for all 7 volumes will be \$37.80.

ignorance of Egyptian as Smith does, could not possibly expect to get more than zero in an examination in Egyptology.

The science of Egyptology is well established as any one knows who is acquainted with the great Grammar of Erman a 3rd Ed. of which appeared in 1911.

I speak as a linguist when I say that if Smith knew Egyptian and correctly interpreted the facsimiles which you submitted to me, then I don't know a **word** of Egyptian, and Erman's Grammar is a **fake**, and all modern Egyptologists are **deceived**. (*Improvement Era*, vol. 16, page 615)

In the *Utah Survey* for September, 1913, Dr. Mercer wrote:

In the judgment of the scholarly world, therefore, Joseph Smith stands condemned of self-deception or imposition. (*Utah Survey*, September 1913, page 36)

Time magazine, November 3, 1952, recognized Samuel A. B. Mercer's work in the Egyptian language:

Born the very year that the pyramids were discovered, soft-spoken Samuel Mercer has spent a lifetime studying ancient languages. He has specialized in cuneiform and hieroglyphics, has compiled grammars in Assyrian, Ethiopic and Egyptian, written a definitive study of the tablets of Tell el-Amarna, been professor of Semitic languages and Egyptology at the University of Toronto. Since 1946 he has devoted his full time and energies to working on the pyramid texts. (*Time*, November 3, 1952, page 66)

After reading this article LaMar Petersen wrote a letter to Dr. Mercer in which he stated:

Recently at the Salt Lake Public Library I read your analysis of the Book of Abraham controversy in the *Utah Survey Magazine* for September 1913. Imagine my surprise upon laying down the *Survey* and picking up *Time Magazine* for November 3, 1952 to find the article on page 66 telling of your latest work in the translation of Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Would you mind telling me if in the intervening thirty-nine years since 1913 you have altered your opinion in any way concerning Joseph Smith's purported translation of the facsimiles appearing in the Book of Abraham? (Letter by LaMar Petersen to Dr. Mercer, December 16, 1952)

In a letter dated February 19, 1953, [copy of the letter in next column] Dr. Mercer replied that he had not changed his mind concerning Joseph Smith's purported translation:

I do indeed remember my work on the "Book of Abraham," although it is many years now since I have had occasion to think much about it, although I am sure that my views on the subject have not changed, because the question of translation was so clear-cut. (Letter by Dr. Samuel A. B. Mercer to LaMar Petersen, February 19, 1953)

Marvin Cowan, a Baptist missionary working among the Mormons, was told by different Mormons that the pamphlet by F. S. Spaulding was out-dated and that the Egyptologists today would probably give a different opinion concerning Joseph Smith's translation. After obtaining the names of prominent Egyptologists from the Smithsonian Institute, he sent them the facsimiles from the *Pearl of Great Price* along with a letter in which he asked if the Egyptian language was "completely decipherable," also if the facsimiles enclosed were "true Egyptian writing or characters?" He also asked if Joseph's explanations were "true interpretations of the pictures if they are Egyptian" and if the explanations are incorrect, "what do the three pictures mean?"

To date he has received two replies. In a letter dated March 16, 1966, John A. Wilson, Prof. of Egyptology at the University of Chicago, stated:

We have had previous occasion to comment on the illustrations in Joseph Smith, "The Pearl of Great Price." Two or three documents are in question as the two oblong illustrations show pictures from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*. Whether this is one papyrus or two is immaterial. In illustration No. 1 the god Anubis is preparing a mummified body on a bed. The head of the god has been miscopied as human and should be that of a jackal. Beside the head of the mummy there is a flying bird which represents the Egyptian's soul. Under the bed there are four jars into which

the soft inner parts of the body were placed by the ancient Egyptians. Figure 3 is even more common, showing the dead Egyptian led into the presence of the god Osiris for judgment as to his moral character in life. In these the hieroglyphs have been very sketchily copied, and probably could have been read on the original.

Figure 2 is a round disk made of cloth and jesso to be placed under the head of a mummy in the late period of Egyptian culture (after 900 B.C.). It shows the scenes customarily on such magical protection for the dead. In this the hieroglyphs can in part be checked and do correspond to those on such pieces as known in various museums. In fact the name of the dead appears as the same as that of Shishak in the Bible.

From the standpoint of the Egyptologist the explanations given with these illustrations are **incorrect**. The Egyptian language on such documents is decipherable and has appeared in translation in various books. If these copies were more accurate, one could probably read connected texts from them. (Letter from Prof. John A. Wilson, University of Chicago, March 16, 1966)

In another letter dated March 22, 1966, Richard A. Parker, of the Dept. of Egyptology, Brown University, stated:

(Continued on page 3)

SAMUEL A. B. MERCER
5 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, WORCESTER, MASS.

19 Feb. 1953

Dear Mr. Petersen,

Yesterday I arrived in Boston on the "S.S. Encalibur" for a four-month trip to Europe & Egypt, and out of a mass of letters and other mail, I chose yours of Dec. 16 th. for I did not want you to think that I was so disinterested as to ignore your letter. It was not forwarded to me because it was registered and could not be forwarded "out of the country".

I do indeed remember my work on the "Book of Abraham", although it is many years now since I have had occasion to think much about it, although I am sure that my views on the subject have not changed, because the question of translation was so clear-cut.

I wish I could do as you request, namely, to write for you a complete statement of the subject. But with a four-month mail and a series of lectures to prepare for the middle of April of this year at Evanston, Ill., I cannot possibly undertake an entire piece of work - and that at the age of 73!

Were you to be in Chicago about the 13th. to the 18th. of April, I could meet you and talk about the subject with a copy of some of my former work on the Book in my hand.

With kindest regards & best wishes & regards.

Very sincerely,
Samuel A. B. Mercer

To answer your questions: (1) The ancient Egyptian language can be called completely **decipherable**. There are some words in the vocabulary whose specific meaning is still undetermined but there are very few whose general meaning remains uncertain. We can read almost any text with a high degree of confidence.

(2) (a) The pictures you sent me are based upon Egyptian originals but are poor or distorted copies. Many of the hieroglyphs are recognizable but so many others have been so poorly copied that the illustrations cannot be read. (b) The explanations are **completely wrong** insofar as any interpretation of the Egyptian original is concerned. (c) Number 1 is an altered copy of a well known scene of the dead god Osiris on his bier with a jackal-god Anubis acting as his embalmer. The four jars beneath the couch are four canopic jars with the heads of a human, baboon, jackal and falcon. The bird over Osiris is a *ba* or soul-bird. There are many variation of this scene in Egyptian monuments.

Number 2 is what we call a hypocoephalus with scene and extracts from chapters of the *Book of the Dead*. It was placed on the mummy and buried with it. There are many examples of these.

Number 3 is a poor copy from a scene from some funerary papyrus in which the dead person is conducted by the goddess of truth and another unknown figure into the presence of Osiris seated on his throne with presumably Isis standing behind him. The hieroglyphs are so badly copied that nothing can be made out but this also is a very common scene. (Letter by Richard A. Parker, Dept. of Egyptology, Brown University, March 22, 1966)

JOSEPH SMITH'S EGYPTIAN ALPHABET

For 130 years the Mormon Church has suppressed a document which absolutely proves that Joseph Smith did not understand the Egyptian language. This document is known as the "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar." In the month of July, 1835, Joseph Smith recorded the following in the *History of the Church*:

The remainder of this month, I was continually engaged in translating an alphabet to the Book of Abraham, and arranging a grammar of the Egyptian languages as practiced by the ancients. (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 238)

After Joseph Smith's death the "Egyptian Alphabet" was brought to Utah. Little was known about the "Egyptian Alphabet" until the year 1935. James R. Clark, of the Brigham Young University, stated:

Your author was from 1932 to 1936 a student of Dr. Sperry's at Brigham Young University and was in "on the ground floor" of this research with Dr. Sperry. This included our "discovery," with the assistance of A. William Lund, assistant Church Historian, in February, 1935 of Joseph Smith's translation of Abraham's Alphabet and Grammar to accompany his (Abraham's) record which we discussed in Chapter 8. (*The Story of the Pearl of Great Price*, by James R. Clark, page 156)

Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, of the Brigham Young University, made this statement concerning the "Egyptian Alphabet":

I went up to the Church of Historian's office and lo and behold we found this old Egyptian grammar in the archives of the Church. . . . I am amazed even to this day how we managed to persuade the Church authorities to let us bring the Egyptian grammar down here to the B.Y.U. to have Dr. Hales photograph it for us. Here is the book. You will notice it says, "Egyptian Alphabet." (*Pearl of Great Price Conference*, December 10, 1960, page 7 of 1964 ed.)

Dr. Sperry anticipated that the "Egyptian Alphabet" would help the Mormon Church to "answer more specifically the accusations that had been made by the Egyptologists who had made their pronouncements upon the material supplied by the Reverend Mr. Spaulding of Salt Lake City."

Instead of helping the Mormon leaders to answer the "accusations" made by the Egyptologist, the "Egyptian Alphabet" has turned out to be a source of embarrassment for them. James R. Clark stated that he was not in favor of submitting the "Egyptian Alphabet" to scholars:

Many people have asked me, "Well, why don't they submit the grammar and alphabet to scholars?" Well, my answer is this, that the Prophet didn't complete it. They have already disagreed with him, most of the scholars, on his translation. I'm wondering if there would be any change in their approach to it now to what it has been, and so I'm not personally in favor of submitting it. . . . I'm not in favor of re-opening the question. I'm in favor of doing what we've done with the Book of Mormon. Let the thing keep rolling and depend on our testimonies of the gospel. (*Prophets and Problems of the Pearl of Great Price*, B.Y.U., page 75)

Although the Mormon Church Historian's Office has the original document and also a microfilm copy, members of the Mormon Church have been required to get special permission from Joseph Fielding Smith, Church Historian, to even see the microfilm. In one instance they even denied that they had such a document.

On December 10, 1960, Sidney B. Sperry was asked if the "Egyptian Alphabet" could be published:

Question: Why not publish the Egyptian grammar?

Answer: Well, I do not know whether the Church authorities would let us do it now or not. (*Pearl of Great Price Conference*, B.Y.U., page 9 of 1964 ed.)

Although the Mormon leaders have done their best to prevent it, microfilm copies of the "Egyptian Alphabet" have leaked out of their control. A copy of this film was sent to the British Museum. In a letter dated December 22, 1965, I. E. S. Edwards, Keeper of Dept. of Egyptian Antiquities, British Museum, made this statement concerning the "Egyptian Alphabet":

I am writing rather belatedly to acknowledge the receipt of the film of the Mormon documents which you sent me recently.

I have looked at all the documents and I can only say that they reinforce, in my view, the opinion which I expressed in my letter to you of 11th November. The commentary, such as it is, shows that **the writer could not possibly have understood ancient Egyptian. They simply do not deserve serious study.**

Thus we see that the "Egyptian Alphabet" proves that Joseph Smith did not understand Egyptian and that the Book of Abraham is a work of his own imagination. We feel that a person does not have to be an Egyptologist to see that Joseph Smith's "Egyptian Alphabet" is not authentic. For instance; a person has only to compare the Egyptian system of counting as found in the *Encyclopedia Britannica Junior*, 1953 ed., page 350, with Joseph Smith's purported system of counting found on page "G" of the "Egyptian Alphabet." The real system of Egyptian counting does not resemble the system we use in America today, but Joseph Smith's purported system looks almost like our own.

You will notice that in Joseph Smith's system the numbers 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8 are almost identical to our numbers. The number 9 looks like our 9 written backwards. The number 10 looks like our 10 except that it is written backwards with a small cross through the one. Below is an actual photograph of part of Joseph Smith's purported system of Egyptian counting:

Number	Egyptian Name	English Explanation
1	Ek	one
2	Si	two
3	Ze	three
4	Jeh	four
5	Yeh	five
6	Thi	six
7	Boa	seven
8	a	eight
9	na	nine
10	Tah	ten
104	EkTah	104 = 100 + 4 = 104
105	SiTah	105 = 100 + 5 = 105
106	ThiTah	106 = 100 + 6 = 106
107	BoaTah	107 = 100 + 7 = 107
108	aTah	108 = 100 + 8 = 108
109	naTah	109 = 100 + 9 = 109
110	TahTah	110 = 100 + 10 = 110

Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, of the B.Y.U., admits that Joseph Smith's system is not the conventional system of Egyptian counting:

Now, I might point out that this Egyptian counting shows that we are not dealing with Egyptian in the conventional sense. For example, here, counting from one up to ten. (Dr. Sperry counts, reading from the book the Egyptian words.) Now that counting, so far as I am aware, is **not** used in conventional Egyptian. (*Pearl of Great Price Conference*, B.Y.U., page 8 of 1964 ed.)

Included in the "Egyptian Alphabet" are photographs of the original manuscript of the Book of Abraham. This manuscript contains the text for the *Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham 1:4 to 2:6. These photographs are very revealing for they show how many English words were translated from each character. In looking over the characters we find that in one instance one set of characters makes 71 words in English, another set makes 121, another set makes 170, and still another set makes 234 words. One simple looking character makes 76 words in the Book of Abraham. Below is a photograph of this character set to the side of the words it makes in the Book of Abraham 1:13 and 14.



13 It was made after the form of a bedstead, such as was had among the Chaldeans, and it stood before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and also a god like unto that of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

14 That you may have an un-derstanding of these gods, I have given you the fashion of them in the figures at the beginning, which manner of figures is called by the Chaldeans Rahleenos, which signifies hieroglyphics.

Notice that the purported Egyptian character is not much more complex than our letter E, yet it makes 76 words in English. These 76 words are composed of 334 letters. Now, is it really possible to imagine that one character (almost as simple as the English letter E) could be translated to make 76 words containing 334 letters?

Below is an actual photo of the Book of Abraham manuscript. Notice the large amount of English words which come from the small number of Egyptian characters. This is published in the *Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham 1:29-31.

12962 When after the print of Elkenah was written that he died there came a fulfillment of those things which were spoken unto me, concerning the time of Elkenah that there should be a famine in the land, and according to a vision I received throughout all the land of Elkenah, and my wife was sorely troubled, because of the famine, and he reproved of the evil which he had determined against me, to take away my life; but the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs concerning the vision of priesthood, the Lord my God promised in vision was made.

Therefore a remembrance of the beginning of creation, and also of the jubilees and of the laws, as it was made known unto the fathers, is a great and precious promise that doth

A Mormon, who had done missionary work in the Mormon Church and was very interested in several languages, told us that when he saw the Book of Abraham manuscript and the number of words that were translated from each character, it absolutely destroyed his faith in Joseph Smith's work as a translator. From then on he knew that the Book of Abraham was a fraud.

EGYPTIAN ALPHABET NOW AVAILABLE

We are now happy to announce that we have printed Joseph Smith's "Egyptian Alphabet" and that it is now available to the general public. This document not only contains Joseph Smith's purported translation of many Egyptian characters, the purported system of Egyptian counting, part of the Book of Abraham manuscript, but also an Egyptian drawing which Oliver Cowdery called "one of the greatest representations I have ever seen upon paper, or a writing substance." Oliver Cowdery stated that this drawing was taken from the papyrus roll known as the "Book of Joseph." Also included is a photograph of an actual piece of papyrus which may be part of the "Book of Abraham" or the "Book of Joseph," and a drawing of the hypocephalus reproduced as Facsimile No. 2 in the *Pearl of Great Price*. This drawing is different in many respects from the printed version.

We feel that this document will absolutely prove that Mormonism is false.

JOSEPH SMITH'S EGYPTIAN ALPHABET & GRAMMAR AVAILABLE IN TWO EDITIONS

***The small edition** contains photographs of all the Egyptian characters and drawings with the English words typed out for easy reading. This edition does not contain photos of all the handwriting in the manuscript but does have typed copies of all the handwritten pages. The regular prices on this edition will be: \$3.00 — 2 for \$5.00 — 5 for \$10.00 — 10 for \$18.00. THE SPECIAL PRICES, IF ORDERED BEFORE THE 10% SALE ENDS JUNE 30, 1966, will be as follows: \$2.70 — 2 for \$4.50 — 5 for \$9.00 — 10 for \$16.20.

***The large edition** contains all of the above material plus actual photographs of every page. In this edition the reader will not only see photos of all the Egyptian characters, but also photos of all the English writing (as written by Joseph Smith and his scribes). The regular prices on this edition will be: \$5.00 — 2 for \$9.00 — 4 for \$15.00 — 10 for \$30.00. THE SPECIAL PRICES IF ORDERED BEFORE THE 10% SALE ENDS JUNE 30, 1966, will be as follows: \$4.50 — 2 for \$8.10 — 4 for \$13.50 — 10 for \$27.00.

Religion, you say, has broken down? Well, it may be that your puny prejudices, your preconceived ideas, your home-made theories and selfish philosophies have broken down—and that's a good thing. But that's not religion!

Perhaps you have seen that the ballyhoo and bunk that previously passed for religion aren't worth anything, and that's a splendid discovery to make. But real religion—experimental knowledge and worship of a personal God—communion with a risen Christ in a Spirit-directed life; hearts consecrated to Jesus Christ; lives motivated by the principles of the Great Galilean—these things are still here, just as regnant and as real as ever.

There is a great difference between the failure of a conception and the failure of the reality itself.

From SINGING IN THE RAIN

Bible Study

We are now holding a Bible study in our home at 1350 S. West Temple, every Thursday evening at 8:00 pm. Everyone is welcome.

With my whole heart have I sought thee:
O let me not wander from thy commandments.
Thy word have I hid in mine heart,
that I might not sin against thee.

Psalms 119:10-11