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The ABCs of the Book of Abraham

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Kevin L. Barney received his B.A. in classics (Latin and Greek language and literature) from BYU in 1982. While at the Y, he also studied Hebrew and Coptic, and worked as a teaching assistant for Professor S. Kent Brown. He has published numerous articles on LDS scripture in such venues as the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, the *Ensign*, *FARMS Review*, and *BYU Studies*. Kevin is currently his ward's Sunday School President, and just recently completed teaching his sixth stake continuing education (Institute) course (this most recent course was on early LDS Church history). Professionally, Kevin is an attorney and practices public finance law (J.D., the University of Illinois, 1985; LL.M., DePaul University, 1990) in Chicago. Kevin also serves on the Board of Directors of FAIR.

[This was a graphics rich presentation. This transcript does not include slides from the presentation. You can see these slides in the video presentation of this lecture located on our Youtube site. Links provided below.]

MIKE ASH: Of the uniquely LDS scriptures it seems that the Book of Abraham is one of the more difficult ones for lay members to get a scholarly hold of and so today we're going to be dealing with the issues involving the Book of Abraham. What's it all about? Why is it so tough? What makes it difficult for lay members to grasp or get their hands on the scholarly material?

Well there are several reasons. One, we have a challenging set of facts and sometimes those facts contradict traditions or pre-conceived thoughts; we have a complex web of issues; and we do have an extensive bibliography of writings about the Book of Abraham—articles, papers and books—unfortunately a lot of this is polemically charged. Much of the material that's available on the Book of Abraham is either written by anti-Mormons trying to prove that it's fiction or

defenders trying to prove that it's not; and there seems to be at least very little that just kind of lays out the facts for people to do their own research on.

The stuff that is available is often difficult to find or out-of-print and much of it is highly technical.

Now the Book of Abraham is something that of course involves Egyptology and Egyptology is fun and exciting and so the study of the Book of Abraham should be fun and exciting as well and we're hoping that we can make this fun and exciting for everybody to learn a little bit about what's going on.

Now a couple of things to keep in mind is that because there are challenging issues—and it's going to maybe conflict with some of the traditions that we've been taught—this is not for the faint of heart (Laughter); and it's not for those that have fundamentalist leanings about scripture. It is however for the open-minded and those who have scholarly humility.

Now we're not going to try to advance the ball today. Rather we're going to try to kind of lay out what the issues are; we're going to survey the field and perhaps point to some existing literature so that you can get in the game if you like.

KEVIN BARNEY: When I was in law school (I'm a lawyer) and you're faced with a huge complex area of law, and especially when you're a young law student and somehow you have to wrap your mind around it, and so, quickly what you learn to do is you learn to outline; and you can even go to a bookstore and buy commercially prepared outlines of contracts or torts or whatever.

And so what we want to start with is an 'issues matrix', which is just a- we don't have a lot of time to do a detailed outline but a fairly simple outline of the categories of issues that come up in Book of Abraham polemics.

And so this way you'll be able to see the big picture a little bit and you'll also kind of have an organized set of pigeon holes so as you learn new information you'll have a slot to put that in; and so if you have that kind of framework in your mind you'll be able to grasp things much better.

So everything we talk about is going to fit into one of these categories and the way I see it there are four large categories and I'm going to break each of those down into two or three sub-categories.

1. Historical Issues

The first large category I want to talk about or just identify (we're not going to talk about these in detail) is historical issues. And here there are three sub-categories.

(1) First of all, there's the history of the Joseph Smith collection of Egyptian antiquities and in particular the papyri and we're going to talk about that a little bit later in this presentation.

(2) There's the history of the translation of the English Book of Abraham and;

(3) The intellectual history, and by that we mean the give and take and the debates and the yin and yang of this whole area.

2. Joseph Smith Papyri (JSP)

The second large category of issues is the Joseph Smith Papyri and I divide this up into three sub-categories.

(1) The first is the three facsimiles which are the papyri that were published together with the Book of Abraham initially in 1842 in the Times & Seasons; as we'll describe in more detail later.

Now there is, as we say, there are three of these facsimiles, Facsimile 1[1] we often refer to as a 'lion couch scene' because this bier or altar or whatever it is the figure is lying on is as you can see in the shape of a lion. Facsimile 2[2] in the literature is referred to as a 'hypocephalus' and if you're going to get involved in Book of Abraham studies you need to become familiar with that word. It was coined by Champollion based on a Greek expression *hypo ton kephalon* which means "under the head". This was a circular disk that was placed under the head of the mummy to provide heat to the deceased in the afterlife. And Facsimile 3[3] is often referred to as a 'throne scene' and I'm using neutral terms for these that everyone can agree on because everyone agrees that figure is sitting on a throne.

When we talk about the facsimiles, there are typically two types of issues that come up. The first is, to what extent were the restorations of the facsimiles for publication correct? And then the second (which didn't make it onto the slide) is, to what extent were the explanations of numbered figures in the facsimiles that are printed with them, to what extent are those correct? And these issues raise all sorts of issues about who gets to sit as judge and jury on that question? Who gets to decide? What standards are we going to apply? And so forth.

(2) Now under the Joseph Smith Papyri the second category are what I call the extant papyri; and *extant* is kind of a scholar's term for that which is known to be physically existing in the world today. And there are 11 papyrus fragments from

Joseph Smith's collection that we do have and they exist—you can take a short drive to the north to the LDS Archives and that's where they are—and again, I'm going to kind of divide this up into three categories:

First is JSP I, and you may recognize this is the source from which Facsimile 1 was derived—you can see the lion couch scene again.

Second are JSP X and XI, and this is often referred to as the 'Sensen' text. *Sensen* is again one those words you have to get used to in Book of Abraham studies. It's the Egyptian word for breathing and this is what's called a Book of Breathings and a Book of Breathings is kind of a late- summary- it has an analogous purpose to the Book of the Dead. It's instructions to help people negotiate the afterlife.

Now the JSP I matches up with JSP XI and then number X and then there are columns missing and then the original of Facsimile 3 would have been on that same scroll. So that's how those texts would have lined up originally.

The third sub-category under the Joseph Smith Papyri under the extant fragments of papyrus are, fragments from two different copies of the Egyptian Book of the Dead. So these are the remaining fragments from the Joseph Smith collection of Egyptian papyri.

(3) The third sub-category are the non-extant papyri—so in other words we have 11 pieces that physically exist but those 11 are a minority of the original collection. What Joseph originally had was more, substantially more than those pieces.

So what can we decide, or learn, or infer, about the not extant pieces from those which are extant and the published facsimiles and a couple of historical allusions?

3. Kirtland Egyptian Papers (KEP)

The third large category of issues is the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. This is a collection of documents which is extant, again, it's in the LDS Church Archives, dates to the Kirtland period of Church history; and these documents are there without context. So they're without explanation as to what they are. They have something to do with the Book of Abraham but we have to infer from the documents themselves, you know, what they are, who created them when and for what purpose? And these are very controversial questions. We typically divide these documents into two types or categories.

(1) First, are Egyptian alphabet and grammar manuscripts, which are manuscripts which purport to, or attempt to decipher Egyptian language.

(2) And then secondly, there are Book of Abraham manuscripts, there are three or four of these and they have text from the first two chapters of the Book of Abraham written out in flowing longhand and then in the left-hand margin there are symbols, Egyptian symbols, which derive from JSP XI.

4. English text of the Book of Abraham

The fourth and final category I'm going to mention is the English text of the Book of Abraham and this tends to get short shrift in the discussion. Polemicists don't want to talk about the actual Book of Abraham they want to talk about all the Egyptian stuff.

So this is actually an important area that needs more attention rather than less and there are typically two ways to go at it. One, is to look and see whether there are indirect indicia of antiquity in the English text and then conversely, are there historical anachronisms and if- or purported historical anachronisms and if so, how do we deal with those?

And that is our Book of Abraham issues matrix and now we're going to turn to the history of the papyri.

ASH: Okay so we know we have these Egyptian documents that were in the possession of Joseph Smith; how did he come by these? Our story starts in Egypt in the city of Thebes which is modern-day Luxor.

In 1798, Napoleon invaded Egypt and accompanying Napoleon were several scholars and scientists that began exploring the antiquities of Egypt and these scholars and scientists were more like gravediggers or grave robbers I guess is that we'd view today—almost like the Indiana Jones type—and they began looking for all these ancient artifacts that they could find.

Napoleon had hired or had brought in several people one of which was Bernardino Drovetti, and he was the former consul general of France in Egypt and he had many people in his employ that would search for these Egyptian artifacts.

One of the many men that was hired by Drovetti was Giovanni Pietro Antonio Lebolo and he was an Italian who was once enrolled in Napoleon's service. Now it's possible that Lebolo's family knew Drovetti's family since they grew up in Italy in the same city. Lebolo spent the years of 1817 through 1822 in Egypt excavating artifacts. He may have been in charge of anywhere from two to 400 different diggers and may have discovered several hundreds of mummies while working for Drovetti. Much of Lebolo's digging would have taken place in the

Valley of the Kings, or the Valley of the Nobles, and this is where King Tut was found.

So there were a lot of mummies in this area and sure enough, Lebolo found several mummies in tombs.

Now an interesting side note is the word *mummy* comes from the Arabic word *mumiyah*. There is a black tarry substance found in the Middle East that they would call *mumiyah* and when the Arabs invaded Egypt they found these mummies covered in black which they thought was covered in *mumiyah* incorrectly but nevertheless the term stuck and that's where we get the word mummy from.

Now Ross T. Christensen, LDS scholar, he speculated that Lebolo may have found the mummies in tomb 33 and that's one possibility. We know that H. Donl Peterson speculated that the mummies came from pit-tomb 32. At pit-tomb 32 there's a graffito with Lebolo's name inscribed there so we know that Lebolo was actually there—we don't know for sure if the mummies came from there or from pit 33. But we know Lebolo was there and where exactly the mummies were found is somewhat speculative.

So how did the mummies get from Egypt to Joseph Smith? By 1822, Lebolo had returned to Europe and on February 18th, 1830, he passed away at the age of 49. The 11 mummies that he had were not initially catalogued in the inventory of his estate. It was later discovered that Lebolo had given the mummies to Albano Oblasser to make arrangements to sell them. Oblasser shipped them to New York in about March 1833 where they were purchased and picked up by one Michael Chandler—probably as an agent for interests in Philadelphia.

Now the History of the Church has an account where Chandler claims that he was Lebolo's nephew and that Lebolo had willed him the artifacts and it seems that that's not true. That that's perhaps a story that he made up about it.

Michael Chandler exhibited the mummy antiquities, which of course contained the papyri, in the Masonic Hall in Philadelphia from April through July 1833 and we can trace these activities and know how he was displaying these from newspapers advertisements. Over time he began to sell the mummies, first five, then two more, and soon he was down to four.

Chandler had heard through his travels of showing these mummies that Joseph had the ability to translate ancient documents and when he was in Ohio, he came to see Joseph and this was the end of June 1835. Chandler stayed for about a week and Joseph was interested in the papyri but he wasn't interested in the mummies.

Chandler said, 'I'm not going to break up the set; you've got to buy them all together.'

Finally, a group of Latter-day Saints purchased the collection of mummies for about $2,400 and this was between July 5th and 9th in 1835. And Joseph announced at this time that the papyri contained the writings of Abraham and Joseph that was sold at Egypt.

BARNEY: Just so you know how we've kind of broken this up. Mike is kind of dealing more with the historical side and I'm dealing more with the bibliographical side. We're giving little historical vignettes and little bibliographical vignettes. It seemed like the most efficient way to introduce you to this area as a whole.

So what are some of the main books you can look at if you're interested in this history and fleshing this out that Mike just gave you in a nutshell? When the papyri fragments were recovered by the Church in 1967 there was a flurry of interest and activity and a lot of this history was written then.

First there's James Clark, *The Story of The Pearl of Great Price*. As you can see this book was published before the papyri were formally recovered. And so if you read material from this early period of Book of Abraham studies, you'll often see, like Nibley and stuff, citing to Clark. So this is an important book in the intellectual history. However subsequent events have really made it obsolete so it's not so important for us to read today unless you're concerned about the intellectual history of the time.

Another book, this one does come out the year after the papyri fragments were recovered, *From the Dust of Decades*, frankly this is not that important a volume (just to be blunt about it).

The third volume I want to mention is Jay Todd, a long-time managing editor of the *Ensign* had a fascination with this topic and he wrote a book called *The Saga of the Book of Abraham* published by Deseret Book in 1969. And out of all these this is probably my favorite and so I recommend it, however you should be aware of two problems. Number one, it's long out of print so if you want to get a copy you've got to go into the Mormon secondary book market and as always in that market you have to pay a premium. I bought my copy a few years ago for like $45.00 and over time that price is going to inch up.

The second problem is it is dated, there have been significant developments since this book came out and so you must update Todd with Donl Peterson. This book was published posthumously shortly after his death. But Peterson really advanced

the ball in terms of our understanding of Lebolo and how the papyri came into Joseph's hands so you simply must read Peterson and so you can update Todd with the book. There are also a couple of articles. Most of the guts of what Peterson came up with is in this article from *BYU Studies*.

(When the conference is over, we plan on putting this PowerPoint up on the website so don't feel like you have to- there's going to be a lot of bibliography, don't feel like you have to jot it all down now. You'll be able to get it at your leisure off the website.)

So yeah, this is *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism* (a little 'm' alliteration there); and then we have Peterson's *BYU Studies* article.

And then there's also a paper by John Gee at FARMS (Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies) and Gee eventually will write a full-length history that will supersede a lot of this material but in the meantime you have to kind of get it in bits and pieces.

ASH: Joseph recognized that there was some important things connected with these documents. Obviously he was ready to start translating and we find that in July 1835 he began translating these documents and a month later, took a break from translating to visit the Saints in Michigan.

And in October of 1835 he resumed the study of the papyri and we get this from his accounts in journals and in the History of the Church, other fragments of history that we have, and it's at this point that he received revelation concerning Facsimile 2.

Then in November, the study of the papyri continued and it was in the Kirtland period that also he created the Kirtland Egyptian Papers which Kevin mentioned earlier—and will be brought up again—was done.

The current text was finished—that we have now—by the end of July.

Now what we have for the Book of Abraham is probably only about one-fourth of what was produced. We know that it took a lot longer according to journalists to read through the Book of Abraham that they had than what we have today. So we know that they had much more that was translated than what we have.

And beyond that, the stuff that we don't have in the Book of Abraham is lost, we don't know what happened to the rest of the translations that they had—it just doesn't exist anymore, or we don't have it anyhow.

The history of the publication. It was first published in three issues in the *Times & Seasons* in Nauvoo beginning in March 1842 and then it was reprinted in the *Millennial Star* in England in 1842. And then in 1851, it was re-published by Franklin Richards in his British tract *The Pearl of Great Price* which is where we get the title of course for our portion that we have in the scriptures now. And then Orson Pratt edited an American edition in 1878 and it was canonized in 1880. So it took a number of years to go from the translation to canonization.

BARNEY: Now we've mentioned the Kirtland Egyptian Papers, I'm going to give you a little bibliography on that. You should understand the Kirtland Egyptian Papers have been understudied so far and this is probably the area where there's going to have to be a lot more study in the future so if you want to get involved in Book of Abraham studies this is an area that needs work.

The kind of classic article on this subject is by Hugh Nibley—long article, like 50 pages long—in *BYU Studies*. It's called "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers"[4] and so if you're interested in this topic I think you've got to start there.

Now this article by John Gee is not focused on the Kirtland Egyptian Papers but it has a significant section devoted to it and there's some updating of Nibley there that I think is important so I do think you need this chapter in one of the two volumes of the Richard L. Anderson festschrift—Br. Anderson being one of our speakers at this conference.

Now, those are articles about the Kirtland Egyptian Papers; what if you want to actually look at the things? Well that's kind of a problem, there really isn't a good edition of them available. One way you can look at them is to get a set from the Tanners from their bookstore. A somewhat better way is you can order a set from Michael Marquardt who has the same microfilm edition as the Tanners but he- on facing pages he has transcriptions and it makes it a little bit easier to follow. This however is not a good edition; the pictures come from microfilm and so they're black and white, they're scratchy, they're hard to see and so- this, if you want to kind of look at them and get a sense for them go ahead and buy this but it's not something that a scholar can really use very well.

Scholars of course will want to access to the originals, or failing them, decent color photographs and there are color photographs that scholars at FARMS have and other people have.

Brent Metcalfe who was unable to be here today (he usually attends our conferences) he's preparing a critical edition of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers that will have a color plate on the left-hand side and a greatly improved transcription on the right-hand side with textual notes. I hope he will do this as a neutral tool

that anyone can use and that should be out in a year or two. So if you want to wait for that, that will probably be a better edition than what we have now.

Well, I'm going to do a little history. In the intellectual history of the debates on the Book of Abraham, in the 20th century the first significant event is the Spalding pamphlet. In 1912, Franklin Spalding who was the Episcopal Bishop of Utah—and by the way not to be confused with Solomon Spaulding whose name gave rise to the dominant theory of Book of Mormon origins among anti-Mormons in the 19th century—but anyway, Franklin Spalding published a little pamphlet called "Joseph Smith, Jr. As a Translator" and this pamphlet was actually an attack on the Book of Mormon not specifically the Book of Abraham; however he tried to kind of bootstrap his argument by attacking the Book of Abraham.

And the centerpiece of this pamphlet is he sent letters to eight Egyptologists or-they weren't all Egyptologists I would say Orientalists, giving them the facsimiles and Joseph's explanations and he published the letters back from them, all saying, 'Oh this is all wrong.' And of course five of the people he sent these letters to were his fellow Episcopalians and in fact looking back on it in hindsight, Spalding made a number of mistakes. I mean he really had a good opportunity, and this was the right time to do this and it was a good idea, but he could have executed it better in certain respects and one thing I want to mention is he never would release the correspondence he used to solicit these letters from these scholars and it's obvious from the letters he got back he had poisoned the well.

We don't know what he said but he must've said, you know, 'This is from Joseph Smith, and he's a quack, so can you give me a letter to buttress that?' So, if he had just done a blind solicitation he probably would've got pretty much the same letters back anyway that wouldn't have hurt him but he just didn't trust his position and he probably should've trusted it but he didn't.

And so, this leads us to the bibliography on this episode, so if you want to read this pamphlet you can get a copy from the Tanners (so I'm advertising for the Tanners today!).

At the time there was a massive LDS response to this pamphlet and at least two dozen articles appeared, mostly they would appear in the newspaper but then they would be republished in the *Improvement Era*. So if you want to read these, one way to do it is to go to the BYU Library and start at 1912 and go to about 1918 and just flip through the issues and you'll find them—they're all over the place.

Another way to do it which might be easier for you that don't have access to an LDS library, Kerry Shirts—who is with us today—has many (and I haven't

checked to see if they're all there) but I know he has many of these responses up on his website.

For kind of a summary view of this there is a paper by Samuel Mercer at the time, kind of summarizing this from the critics' perspective and again this is available from the Tanners. I think they package the Spalding pamphlet with Samuel Mercer's paper.

And then for a summary, from the point of view of the Saints, Hugh Nibley's two year serial in the *Improvement Era* beginning in January of 1968 is a review of the whole Spalding incident and towards the end of that serial he starts to get into Facsimile 1. But most of this is a review of Spalding and it's a lot of fun if nothing else. It's a very fun read so I highly encourage you to read that. Now again, you can find these in the old *Eras* themselves or there's an edited set of this in the FARMS (2000) edition of *Abraham in Egypt*.

ASH: What happened to these documents, the papyri, after Joseph Smith had them? Well he gave them to his mother, Lucy Mack Smith, and she used to show them at her house; people would come by and pay her in order to see the mummies and the papyri and she would make a little bit of extra money doing this and of course Joseph had passed away and so she kept possession of these.

In 1856, they were passed on to Emma Smith, who had remarried at this time to Lewis Bidamon, and they took possession of it. Within two weeks, Emma, Lewis and Joseph III signed a bill of sale transferring them to Abel Combs.

Now it's possible that this may have confirmed a prior transaction in which William Smith may have pawned the antiquities for living expenses. We don't really know the relationship between William's supposed sale to this- so that's a little bit unclear.

Combs promptly sold a portion of the collection containing two mummies and some papyri—which very probably included Facsimile 3—to the St. Louis Museum.

Now for a good article on this you can read Walter Whipple's "The St. Louis Museum and the Two Egyptian Mummies and Papyri" was in *BYU Studies*.

The St. Louis Museum was sold and moved to Chicago in 1863 and then sold again to Col. Joseph Wood in January of 1864 who included the collection in the Wood's Museum on Randolph Street. The Wood collection burned in the great Chicago fire of 1871 and it was long assumed that all the papyri, the entire Joseph Smith collection, burned up in the fire as well.

In reality, a portion of the collection which would later come into the possession of the Church went to Combs' nurse Charlotte Benecke Weaver Huntsman after he'd died. Charlotte's daughter, Alice Combs Weaver, later Heusser, brought the fragments to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1918 for an evaluation but the Museum did not purchase them at the time.

Ludlow Bull, associate curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, reached out to Alice to see about acquiring the papyri in 1946. By that time Alice had died but her widowed husband Edward Heusser, now who was 80 years old, sold the pieces to the Museum for an undisclosed sum of money together with the original bill of sale from Emma Smith. Now because of the bill of sale the Museum knew the connection with these papyri pieces to the Joseph Smith collection. This was Emma Smith the wife of Joseph Smith and so they knew what they had there.

In the 1960s the Church was made aware of the existence of this collection and negotiations to bring them back to the Church eventually were successful and the transfer took place in 1967.

Now there's a story of a University of Utah Coptic scholar, a well-known Coptic scholar by the name of Aziz Atiya and supposedly, the story goes, that he found them in a drawer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and most scholars think that there's too many problems with that story—that this is probably not accurate.

Now there's several unsolved mysteries still regarding the missing papyri and the mummies that were not sold to the St. Louis Museum. Two mummies remain unaccounted for, we don't know what happened to them. There is some evidence that Charlotte had Facsimile 2 as late as 1918 and Stan Kimball in a *Dialogue* article entitled "New Light on Old Egyptiana: Mormon Mummies 1848-71" has a good article about this fact.

The recovery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's pieces of the Joseph Smith Papyri and its aftermath is really the significant event in the basic history of the papyri and it's at this point that the intellectual history explodes. (Laughter)

Now who wrote the papyri and when was it written? Those are questions and some confusion among Latter-day Saints of what was happening. There were five papyri in the Joseph Smith collection.

(1) We have the scroll of Hor which contain facsimiles 1 and 3 and the Sensen text so that scroll of Hor is the most commonly analyzed portion of the Joseph Smith collection. Hor was an Egyptian priest. He was the son of the great governor of Thebes and while some fragments of this text survived, much of the scroll was probably destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871.

(2) Then we have the scroll of Tsemminis, which contains several chapters of the Book of the Dead as well as some unidentified text. Tsemminis was the daughter of a wealthy Egyptian and she was apparently of priestly lineage. While several fragments of her scroll survived much of it was also lost presumably in the 1871 fire.

(3) We have the scroll of Neferirtnoub, which contain a vignette, or summary, of one chapter of the Book of the Dead and several other unidentified texts. Neferirtnoub was a wealthy Egyptian of Thebes and the only place her name is attested is in JSP III—only one fragment of this survived and again the rest probably destroyed in the fire.

(4) Then we have the scroll of Amenhotep, which contain chapter 45 of the Book of the Dead and other unidentified text. Amenhotep was a son of Tanoub who was an Egyptian priest in Thebes. No fragments of the scroll survived and it is presumed they were also destroyed in the fire.

(5) Then we have the hypocephalus of Sheshonq which is the source for Facsimile 2. The only thing we know about Sheshonq is that he was a wealthy member of an Egyptian priestly family and it's uncertain whether this hypocephalus was destroyed in the fire—we don't really know what happened there.

When were the papyri written? Well there's two issues: We have the date of the text and the date of the papyri.

The date of the text is when the author wrote the text. Such texts are often copied in different languages, for instance, the Gospel of Matthew was written in the 1st century AD but the earliest Matthean manuscript that we have is a copy written in the 3rd century AD by a copyist—the text was written earlier than the document. Now most Latter-day Saints believe that the text was written by Abraham.

Then we have the date of the papyri which is a separate issue. Many Latter-day Saints believe that the papyri date to Abraham's time but scholars date it usually either to the late- or to the Roman period between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD; or, to the Ptolemaic period which is about the first half of the 2nd century BC or the 3rd century BC.

BARNEY: Okay we're starting to run out of time so I'm going to go through the rest of this fairly quickly- again, this presentation will be on our website so don't feel too bad. We have a lot of bibliographical notes at the end here.

The second stage in the intellectual history begins with the recovery in 1967 of the Metropolitan Museum fragments. In the summer of 1968 issue of *Dialogue* there's

a whole bunch of articles on this topic and one is an article pointing out that in these manuscripts of the Book of Abraham the Egyptian symbols in the margin come from the Sensen text and also kind of pointing out the way that the Sensen text would have been organized as we described before.

Then there were several articles by noted Egyptologists of the time—Richard Parker, John Wilson, and Klaus Baer—who translate the Sensen text and it was an Egyptian Book of Breathings; it didn't appear to have anything to do with the Book of Abraham.

I give this cite to Charles Larson as- if you want to read the critical arguments about the Book of Abraham this is one place where it's kind of all together and one place you can read it. It's available on the Internet, there's the site but if you write to Luke Wilson and tell him you're a Mormon he'll probably send you one for free and that way you'll get all the pictures. It's published by the Institute of Religious Research (IRR) in Michigan and Luke Wilson is the muckety-muck there.

Now in this early period, after the recovery of the papyri, you know the Book of Abraham studies from the faithful side is kind of dominated by Hugh Nibley and he took a sabbatical year and came back to the University of Chicago and studied with Klaus Baer and John Wilson.

We already mentioned his two-year serial in the *Improvement Era*; a whole raft of articles in *BYU Studies* (at least a half dozen). In 1976, he published his own translation of the Book of Breathings in a book called *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*[5]. And we put up here a copy of kind of his methodology of illustrating this. The top line is an actual photograph of a line of text from the papyrus and then underneath it he has transcribed the hieratic script into hieroglyphic and then he took a tracing table and he flipped it so as to read from left to right instead of right to left and if you look at the symbols you can see they're the same symbols they're just going in a different direction. Then immediately under that, he gives a transliteration into Roman characters and then there are textual notes at the bottom; and then elsewhere he gives a smooth English translation.

So, I bought this book on my mission, I didn't even know what it was but I flipped through it and I thought, 'Wow this looks interesting' so I bought it and I actually read it. I'm one of the twelve people in the Church that have actually read this book! (Laughter)

He followed that up with *Abraham in Egypt*, originally in 1981, re-issued recently by FARMS. And his final work, *One Eternal Round* is in preparation by FARMS.

I understand that when the FARMS staff went to pick it up at his house there were stacks of paper all over his bedroom, and living room, and so they had to treat it like an archaeological dig and they had to- you know, 'This is from level C and so on.' There's probably a big vault somewhere on BYU that has all his manuscripts so how they'll ever sort through all that I don't know but I understand they're making good progress.

Now kind of in the footsteps of Nibley, there's kind of a younger generation, scholars that are interested in the problem but also have Egyptological training. I'm just going to mention some of the key figures and key publications.

Ed Ashment's article on the restoration of the facsimiles for publication in *Sunstone* is probably his most important contribution. There's an article by Stephen Thompson that's kind of an update of Spalding, saying what modern Egyptology makes of the facsimiles.

A little book by John Gee called *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*. Again, later there will be a bigger book but for right now this is enough to get you started; absolutely essential to anyone who's interested in Book of Abraham studies, a well constructed little book.

Michael Rhodes published a translation and commentary on Facsimile 2, or remember that we call that the hypocephalus, in *BYU Studies* and he keeps updating it and puts it on his website. So it's on his website[6], you can go there and read it, print it off and this is a model for Book of Abraham studies so it's a great article.

There have also, over the years since that first generation of Parker, Baer and Wilson, there have been other non-LDS Egyptologists who don't really understand the Mormon side of things but who are interested in these documents as Egyptian documents and I've listed some of those here.

Translations of the Sensen papyrus. Putting Dee Jay Nelson off to the side, there have been four: First of all, Klaus Baer in *Dialogue* in 1968; Nibley's which we already mentioned—now these two are actually translations of Louvre Papyrus 3284 which is a longer version. For an actual direct translation of the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings, there's one by Robert Ritner published in *Dialogue* and republished in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* and one by Michael Rhodes, *The Hor Book of Breathings*, published by FARMS.

I just want to mention this as an example of the give and take in Book of Abraham studies. This is a papyrus—not from the Joseph Smith collection—that has a lion couch scene, so you see the lion couch and Anubis figure behind it (and, do we

have it circled?) Okay, in the box is the name Abraham in Greek letters immediately underneath this illustration showing that someone saw a connection between Abraham and this lion couch scene.

So this is a good example of the give and take. John Gee publishes an article about this in *Insights* which is the FARMS newsletter and then a little later publishes another developed version of that article in the *Ensign* and that's obviously on lds.org if you want to read that.

Then Ed Ashment publishes a privately circulated critique of Gee's work and says, you know, 'You went too far with this and with that,' and then John Gee published a rejoinder to Ashment with one of the all-time great titles in the history of the *FARMS Review* "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob" and it's even funnier if you know what Ashment's argument is. So, I think this is good, I mean this is- you know I'm a lawyer and lawyer's are used to the adversarial system and there's give and take and people pound back and forth; and positions get refined that way and I think if you read all four of these you're going to be better off than if you just read the first one. So I don't feel badly about that at all.

FARMS has been a major source of work on the Book of Abraham in recent years and the flagship series is the Studies in the Book of Abraham—and this is going to be an encyclopedic set of volumes, large handsome volumes. When they're done there will be 15 or 20, or maybe more. The first one was *Traditions about the Early Life of Abraham*—and this is that whole thing about taking the English text of the Book of Abraham seriously. We already mentioned the Rhodes translation[7], which is a very well done book; it's my favorite of all the translations. This is the volume that is in preparation now, it's not out yet. I actually have a chapter in this volume so I'll be curious to see that when it comes out and then there's going to be translations of the other papyri in forthcoming volumes.

I think we're kind of out of time, right? Okay. So, there's more on the PowerPoint, as I say this will be up after the conference, so with that, I think we'll close this portion of it and turn it over to questions.

Thank you.

Q: What are some of the speculations on the fate of the lost part of the translation?

ASH: I don't know if maybe Kevin has any other thoughts but I think that, I mean as a speculation, there's lots of possibilities. Either just destroyed in Joseph Smith's time; you know shortly thereafter you would think they would have kept these things safe. You know of course with early Book of Commandments being burned and Book of Mormons being burned and people being driven from their

homes, I mean there's a lot of possibilities how these translations could have been lost just- I mean even the original dictated copy of the Book of Mormon that Oliver Cowdery wrote down was kept in what they thought was a safe place in a cornerstone and water got in and destroyed it. So, I think that that's open to lots of possibilities. Do you have any other thoughts on that?

BARNEY: If you're interested in that you need to read the Stan Kimball article in *Dialogue*. I mean; he goes about as far as humanly possible being a detective trying to trace all this. But you could probably- someone could pick up the trail and try to find it.

Mark Hofmann was probably thinking about trying to forge a Facsimile 2 because there's an argument that Facsimile 2 survived and that would have taken a lot of chutzpah and I don't think he could've pulled it off and maybe that's why he didn't actually try and do it but he was thinking about it. He had some papyrus on consignment from Ken Rendell and so-

Q: Do you believe that Oliver's description of the papyrus containing rubrics included the papyrus the Book of Abraham came from?

BARNEY: This is referring to a letter that Oliver Cowdery wrote in which he described the- well, there's some question about what he was describing. But, whatever he described was written in black ink and a portion in red. And those red portions are called rubrics and now some of the Book of the Dead manuscripts have rubrics. The Sensen papyrus has no trace of rubrics.

So, I think the question is asking did the Sensen papyrus have rubrics and the answer to that is no.

Q: Is there a better translation of the Book of the Dead that in Budge's?

BARNEY: Let me qualify this: I am not an Egyptologist so, you know if we had John Gee or Michael Rhodes or someone like that up here that could give an authoritative answer to that- I do know enough to know that people like that, it's a pet peeve of theirs that people continue to rely on Budge's. You know there are these paperback Dover publications, the Book of the Dead, and they're- Budge's is the early part of the 20th century. This is very dated stuff.

And so yes, there are better translations available of the Book of the Dead than Budge's. I know there's one by Joseph Allen that I have but again, I'm not an Egyptologist so take whatever I say with a grain of salt.

Q: What evidence exists that the Book of Abraham is from God? While the presentation was a very helpful scan of various critical and historical issues dealing with the Book of Abraham [you] did not give evidence of its divine origin.

BARNEY: Well that wasn't really our purpose. Our purpose was to deal with the polemics of it. We're bracketing doctrine or devotional approaches so yes, there's much more that could be said—we're just dealing with the anti-Mormon arguments in this presentation.

So what evidence is there? Well, it's like any other religious text. I mean you have to come at it from a perspective of faith. And there are lots of evidences. If you want a place to start read the first volume in the FARMS's Studies in the Book of Abraham series *Traditions about the Early Life of Abraham* and compare that to the Book of Abraham and that will be a positive introduction of evidences for the Book of Abraham.

Q: If 95% (and it's more like 85%) of the Joseph Smith Papyri were destroyed in the Museum fire and this 95% contained that which was translated why do we care about the irrelevant amount remaining at least from a Book of Abraham translation perspective?

BARNEY: This is assuming the missing papyrus theory which is that the source for the Book of Abraham was among that which was lost as part of the fire or otherwise. So why do we care about that which is extant? Well that which is extant is all we have, number one.

Number two, the critical arguments against the Book of Abraham are trying to make an argument that this material is the source for the Book of Abraham and so we have to deal with this material from that perspective. But you're right, if you take the missing papyrus view, then—except for JSP I which is the original source for Facsimile 1—the rest of the material is kind of irrelevant.

But, you know, FARMS is going to publish translations of the Book of the Dead manuscripts in the Joseph Smith collection. They're just like any other Book of the Dead manuscripts but since they belonged to Joseph, they were part of the collection, they were displayed by Lucy Mack Smith, you know, I think we do have an historical interest.

Q: If some of the papyri were destroyed in the fire, such as the scroll of Tsemminis and others, how do we know we had them?

ASH: We have fragments of all of them except for Amenhotep. That one, which had chapter 45 of the Book of the Dead, is the only one that we don't have

anything left of and if I remember correctly there was, I don't remember if it's in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers, but there was- we have notes from that I believe in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers so we can tie that to Amenhotep so that's the only one that is completely missing. The rest of them we do have some fragments that have survived.

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Watch this entire lecture on our Youtube site at:

Pt. 1- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nl7G1YrDp1Q

Pt. 2- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhrFxKo4GGk

Pt. 3- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxeyPWuuB_o

Pt. 4- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvZtFsSe_Ck

Pt. 5- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZTQirB013w&feature=watch_response_rev

Pt. 6- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcT5OebkBGI&feature=related

[Transcriber's endnotes.]

[1] <http://scriptures.lds.org/abr/fac_1> (accessed on 4 January 2006).
[2] <http://scriptures.lds.org/abr/fac_2> (accessed on 4 January 2006).
[3] <http://scriptures.lds.org/abr/fac_3> (accessed on 4 January 2006).
[4] Nibley, Hugh W., "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers." *BYU Studies* 11/4 (1971): 350 *et seq.*
[5] A 2nd edition, with expanded text and numerous illustrations, edited by John Gee and Michael D. Rhodes has recently been published. (2005)
[6] <http://home.comcast.net/~michael.rhodes/JosephSmithHypocephalus.pdf> (accessed on 10 January 2006).
[7] *The Hor Book of Breathings*.