

Reviewing Charles Larson "By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus", Institute for Religious Research, Grand Rapids Michigan, 1992.

Research by Kerry A. Shirts

There are so many things incorrect in this book that it is hard to wonder where to start. I'll examine it in several posts and not necessarily from page 1 to page 240 (counting the Index). Instead I'll just note problems that Larson has and we can examine and discuss them and bring them out as we go.

It has always fascinated me that the papyri brings out the worse in scholarship with anti-Mormons. Apparently they feel that it is safe to say just whatever pleases their fancy because there are so few who can check into it, and again there are so few who care less. Those of us who take it rather seriously however, do check into it and always find misconceptions with the anti view. Larson is certainly no exception.

On p. 137f, I find the most glaring and humorous example of Larson missing it altogether, perhaps more here than anywhere else in his book. Discussing what Larson calls the "Catalyst Theory" of how the BofA came about, he complains that the vague hypothesis that Joseph Smith sought revelation from the Lord concerning the papyri and received in the process, the BofA, is simply silly! And he screams for over three italicized paragraphs as to why this account will never do. (Incidentally, I note as an aside that Larson simply will not accept what any Mormon scholar says, so in light of the silliness of this idea of Joseph receiving revelation, what does Larson think of Michael Marquardt's discovery - another anti-Mormon of all things! - that Warren Parrish, who worked with Joseph Smith claimed that "I have set [sic] by his, Joseph Smith's side and penned down the translation of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics [sic] as he claimed to receive it by direct inspiration from heaven." Letter from Warren Parrish, Kirtland Ohio, Feb. 5, 1838; "Painsville Republican", Vol. 2, nos. 14,15; Feb. 15, 1838, whole # 67). So since Larson will not accept a Mormon who points this out, will he accept one of his own fellow anti-Mormons who also note that divine inspiration may have had a part in all this? (in Michael Marquardt - "The Book of Abraham Papyrus Found" 1975, p. 5).

Anyway, Larson claims that the catalyst theory is "fatally flawed" because it does what no Biblical Fundamentalist Christian can possibly conceive of God doing, namely, associating his

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sacred truth with a document consisting of "prayers to pagan Egyptian gods, and ripe with occultism...it is inconceivable, given God's holy character as received throughout the Bible, that He would associate Himself or his truth in any way with such pagan occult documents." (p. 138 - de-emphasis mine). Larson refers the reader to his analysis on pp. 119,120 where we find)... after Larson's demonstration that God disassociates the Israeleites from the pagan neighbors of theirs that "Since the Joseph Smith Papyri have been identified with absolute certainty as prayers to pagan Egyptian gods that, by biblical definition are ripe with occultism, it is inconceivable, given the holy character of God that he would associate Himself or His revelation in any way with these pagan religious documents. This fact alone is ample grounds for totally rejecting the Book of Abraham as a revelation from the one True and Living God." (p. 120 de-emphasis mine).

Now this is an interesting argument! Larson uses Klaus Baer, Richard Parker, and John Wilson, as well as Dee Jay Nelson, James R. Harris, Ed Ashment, Hugh Nibley, Michael H. Marquardt, Donl H. Peterson, Michael D. Rhodes, Jerald and Sandra Tanner, John Tvedtnes, Kirt Vestal, Robert C. Webb, Franklin S. Spaulding and a host of other experts, Egyptologists, and Mormon scholars, and absolutely NONE of them,

No, not one, has ever, concluded that the Book of Breathings, Joseph Smith Papyri are prayers to pagan Egyptian Gods! The Joseph Smith Book of Breathings is addressed to *no* Egyptian gods; rather it is addressed to a human individual and reminds him of promises made to him and things he has experienced. Where we may ask, in all of Papyrus Joseph Smith Xi-X is there any prayer to any Egyptian god? Hor is the name of an individual Egyptian man. His Father's name is Rmny-qey, and his mother's name is Tay-hbyt; the name is clearly identified as personal rather than divine. He simply condemns to contents of the papyri without ever examining them or understanding what they are about at all. He cannot even identify the contents of the various papyri correctly! (pp. 62, 120, 138). (John Gee- Review of Books", Vol. 4, 1992, pp. 104f).

But the real clincher that Larson does not understand very much of anything is when he screams for paragraph after paragraph (all italicized, to be sure), that God does not deal with pagans! Period! God is too holy! God is too good to grovel to the likes of such heathenish abomination. Well, the idea sounds very patriotic, very enobling and uplifting, except for one thing.... naturally, the evidence! And make no mistake about it, Larson wants us all to believe that not only in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament also, God just simply will have nothing to do with paganism, nor would any holy follower of God in his church have anything to do with it. Aside from the sheer selectivity of the scriptures he points out that apparently makes his case, he is completely ignorant of scholarship on this score. Ernst Robert Curtius, among other numerous scholars has noted some interesting things about Pagan connections with the Bible. He notes in his magnanimous "Europaische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter", trans.

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Willard R. Trask, that writers in the second and third centuries of the church set themselves the task of defending the new faith and making it acceptable to educated pagans. They use the reasoning of the Hellenized Jews (Philo, Josephus) which sought to demonstrate the conformity of the Jewish Law with Greek philosophy, especially taking over the allegorical exegesis developed in the stoa, and called it "The authority of antiquity." (p. 551). But Curtius also notes that "...Paul quotes verses by Epimenides, Meander, and Aratus..." (p. 40). Augustine even claimed that using Allegorical exposition in dealing with Exodus 3:22 and 12:35. When they went out of Egypt the Israelites took gold and silver vessels with them, "thus the Christian must rid pagan learning of what is superfluous and pernicious, that he may then place it in the service of truth." (p. 40). The origin of the artes are from Jupiter or perhaps Egypt, "since Moses was a pupil of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22)." (p. 40).

Seutonius in his "De viris illustribus" notes that "The greatest apologists and fathers, in both the Greek and Latin tongues, show thorough knowledge of pagan literature, and that very thing made it possible for them to defend the Gospel victoriously." (p. 447). Clement of Alexandria, we are told, in the period of Early Christian literature - the period when Christianity made peace with Greek philosophy and science - develops an Orphic Christology [!] which is used again and again as an argument of theological poetics. For Origen, another early Church Father, we are told, the alliance between Greek philosophy and the Christian life was a perfect amalgam, "...it was through this alliance that Christianity became a world religion." (p. 551). In fact, "this Hellenized Christianity, which has its last expression in Eusebius 9263-339), is closely linked with Greek thought (Plato - Cf. R. Arnou's article "Platonisme des Peres" in the "Dictionnaire de Theologie catholique", XII, 2 (1935), 2258: "...Aristote, pour eux, est le 'physicien, quand it n'est pas l'athee. Platon est le 'philosophie', un voyant superieur chez qui on se plait a retrouver l'echo des croyances chretiennes"), the Stoa, Posidonius. It is musal and speculative." (p. 551).

But Larson is blithely unaware of all this. He is completely ignorant of the stark fact that Paul also quotes the pagan Aratus (Phaenomena 5) approvingly when teaching the Gospel (Acts 17:28). More impressive still, the Lord Jesus himself quotes a pagan poet to Paul in one of his visions (Acts 26:14 citing Euripedes, "Bacchae" 794-95).

Dr. Joseph L. Saalschutz's "Archaeologie der Hebraer", Konigsberg, 1855 (yes, I have one of the original editions) notes that Hebrew archaeology begins with the Patriarchs, and reaches the high point with the kings and after the Babylonian captivity was contaminated by many foreign elements (manche fremdartige Elemente), from both the Greeks and the Romans, which elements were added into the religion of the Bible (wesen beimischten). Saalschutz later in his section on religion, noted the many foreign elements of human sacrifice in various nations and their influence on the Israelites (Aristomenes von Messene opfert dem Jupiter dreihundert Menschen, unter welchen sich Theopompus, der lacedamonische Konig befand, Dergleichen geschah in den altesten Zeiten bei den Lustrationen und Expiationen haufig. Ausserdem hatte

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Bachus einen Altar in Arkadien, auf welchem sehr viel junge Madchen mit zusammengebundenen Ruthen so lange gebauen wurden, bis sie starben. p. 180, note 3).

The many foreign "Mystery Religions" and their secret rites and formulations and the influences of them onto Christianity from the beginning is just one of the main views expressed in Annie Besant, "Esoterisches Christentum oder Die kleinen Mysterien", Leipzig, 1911.

The discussion of the scientific and religious information passing between the Mediterranean cultures in antiquity and India and Greece, as well as how information on medicine was passed around among the cultures and adapted and expanded and changed is the subject of Dr. Willibald Kirfel, "Die Funf Elemente insbesondere Wasser und Feuer", 1950.

The enormous influence of pagan cultures on the Israelite religion in the Old Testament is discussed in Walter Beltz, "Gott und Gotter: Biblische Mythologie", Auflage, 1975. The influence of the Gnostics on Christianity and the various adaptations, arguments, and fights between the two are found in Wolfgang Fauth, "Oriens Christianus: Hefte fur die Kunde des Christlichen Orients", Band 57, 1973, pp. 78-120. The enormous influence of Gnosticism, Alchemie, the Hermetic literature on the Church through time is discussed by Prof. Dr. Edmund O. von Lippmann, "Entstehung und Ausbreitung der Alchemie mit einem Anhang: Zur Alteren Geschichte der Metalle", Berlin, 1919. The entire pagan influence of Aristotle, and the "Orientalische Einflusse" and its impact on the Renaissance is discussed by August Reikel, "Die Philosophie der Renaissance", Verlag, 1925. The influence and adaptation of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, on Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Occam, Grotius, and on up into our scientific age is talked about in Dr. Johann Sauter, "Die philosophischen Grundlagen des Naturrechts", Wien, 1932. Jakob Burckhardt's, "Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien" is the discussion of the revival of ancient paganism in the Renaissance and the importance of putting man in the center of the "kosmos".

These are a few of the sources that speak of the influence and adaptation by Christians throughout the ages of paganism, to the complete contrary of Larson, who blissfully unknowingly declares the "Biblicist Fundamentalist" (to quote Marc A. Schindler) approach to the Bible and history, which Larson has apparently accepted. But the facts are just not on his side in his declaration. He not only misconstrues what the Joseph Smith Papyri are all about, but he misunderstands the Bible, History, and progressive theology from the Church Fathers, through the Middle Ages, into the Renaissance and up into our own times. Larson simply hasn't got a clue....

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New Information as of Oct. 7, 2000 Below:

Charles Larson's misrepresentations of the LDS approaches to the Joseph Smith papyri are legion. For instance, he says of the 1912 work of John Henry Evans and B.H. Roberts that their early work answering and questioning Spaulding's Egyptologists are dated and flawed (Larson, p. 115) But he never once examines the flaws in them at all whatever. Not so much as a nod in their direction. In other words Larson thinks that by merely saying so, then this creates works of flawed character. So what if I merely say Charles Larson is flawed? Would that make it so? Would anyone believe me simply because I say so? Neither do I believe Larson. When Larson moves onto Nibley's 1968-1970 study of the panel of Egyptologists of Spaulding's 1912 attack, he simply says Nibley was goofing around and quotes Nibley as saying he had "frankly skirmished and sparred for time." (Larson, p. 115). But Nibley has always had a self-effacing of his accomplishments and scholarship. Reading his works would show that to one who was interested in his personality. What Nibley felt was a skirmish and a sparring for time, was to Klaus Baer a simply must read for every aspiring student of Egyptology! In other words, the Egyptologist who translated the Joseph Smith Papyri says Nibley's study was absolutely indispensable to read because it is so valuable! (John Gee, "A Tragedy of Errors," in "FARMS Review of Books on the Book of Mormon," Vol. 4, 1992: 97-98). In fact, Gee quotes Baer as saying of Nibley's study "they might be an effective inoculation against the pompous ass syndrome." (Gee, p. 98). No wonder Larson didn't like them much and chose to skip them over with a mere assertion, he obviously hasn't had his inoculation.

Larson then makes a claim that made me laugh completely out loud. He says Nibley's idea that there might be a hidden meaning is "the theory's one major weakness from the very first was simply its sheer improbability." (Larson, p. 116). Larson further notes that "No reputable Egyptologist anywhere was willing to support this theory." (Larson, p. 116)

Why does that make me laugh out loud? Because Larson not only misunderstands Nibley's articles called "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price," from 1968-1970, but Larson also fails to understand not only the ancient Egyptian conception of things, but of Egyptologists understanding also. Instead of merely asserting this, as I would hesitate to appear as assertive as Larson is, I will present a few examples of Egyptologists who declare the exact opposite of what Larson thinks Egyptologists think on the idea of hidden meanings, double meanings, etc.

Anthony Spalinger in his wonderful article "Sovereignty and Theology in New Kingdom Egypt: Some Cases of Tradition," in "Saeculum," 47-48 (1996-1997): 230 notes: "such a depiction [of Nut with her head and arms to the northeast, and her rear to the southwest] serves a dual function naemly [sic], she represents the daily course of the sun as well as its yearly

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(longitudinal) motion." In other words, there can be more than one meaning to an art form or written description of the ancient Egyptian deities, animals, colors, whatever they symbolically and artistically represent on their buildings, in their tombs, sarcophagi, temples, etc. There is not only one meaning per situation, writing, or building in ancient Egypt, and there are plenty of Egyptologists who say exactly this, as Nibley noted so many decades ago, and which Larson, and his followers apparently are completely unaware.

Another excellent example of this is Janet Johnson and Robert K. Ritner's study, "Multiple Meaning and Ambiguity in the 'Demotic Chronicle'" in "Studies in Egyptology: Presented to Miriam Lichtheim, Vol. 1, Jerusalem 1990: 494-506. These two Egyptologists say of various statements written in the Demotic Chronicle, that "...the author or compiler of the Chronicle chose a word which had more than one meaning where two (or more) of the meanings are appropriate in the given passage." (p. 497). They give examples of religious imagery and words which have both a "basic" meaning, and an "extended" meaning. (pp. 498-499). It is of more than passing interest to note these two Egyptologists agreeing that the verb the chronicler used has "several meanings." (p. 505). Their conclusion is important for those who would critique the idea that hidden meanings are not really what is going on in ancient Egyptian writings: "Thus, here it is within a passage with historically ambiguous references that the author or compiler of the Demotic Chronicle chose to use a word for both its basic and its extended meanings. The multiple meanings of the word blend well with the ambiguity of the historical reference; the text reflects careful craftsmanship." (p. 506).

Finally, one last example which astonished me to no end because of its repeated and insistent declaration that ancient Egyptian art clearly had multiple meanings, hidden meanings, ambiguous meanings, etc., is Richard H. Wilkinson, "Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art," Thames & Hudson, 1994. This lavishly illustrated book deserves more attention than it has gotten. A truly remarkable read, especially for critics against the Joseph Smith Papyri who don't believe there can be multiple meanings in ancient Egyptian thought. Wilkinson is the perfect cure for such hopeless myopia.

He opens up his book with a big bang of a statement: "Symbols themselves are often ambivalent. They frequently have several meanings and may openly contradict themselves in their expression, yet therein lay their value for the ancient Egyptians." (p. 8). Contradictions do not necessarily prove something is wrong in other words. Contradictions are part and parcel of the several meanings the ancient Egyptians had in their symbols, whether in writing, art, buildings, or otherwise. Wilkinson demonstrates this again and again and again and again and again! And I am not exaggerating one bit either. Wilkinson the Egyptian theology was fluid and allowed and encourage free association of ideas. (p. 11). This is vitally important to understand as we approach the Joseph Smith Papyri. "...in a given work a good many symbolic dimensions may be present. Different aspects may be stressed in different words." (p. 11). Our particular

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problem in studying ancient Egyptian symbolism is that it is a vast subject which has literally been illustrated and used in the Egyptians buildings, the landscape, writings, colors, numbers, materials, locations, forms, hieroglyphs, actions, and gestures, just to name a few of the areas Wilkinson analyzes.

Sir Alan Gardiner in his great book "Egypt of the Pharaohs," (Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), p. 216 shows this idea of multiple meanings and multiple symbols for one deity, to be especially prominent. "The instability of form shown by some of the deities was extraordinary; Thoth was indeed as a rule an ibis or had in ibis head on a human body, but he might also be a cynocephalus ape, or else manifest himself in the moon." I honestly think that it is precisely this ambiguity, this contradiction and multiple meanings which cause the critics against the Joseph Smith Papyri so many headaches in trying to understand what the LDS understanding is. Wilkinson further declares that "Symbols in Egyptian art may also exhibit different meanings in different contexts in the same period of time." (p. 12). So there are all sorts of ways to understand the ancient Egyptians, not just one as our critics pretend to present as "the truth," about the papyri. Wilkinson warns "While we may select a specific interpretation that seems best to fit the context, other symbolic associations may also be involved." (p. 12). This is what critics, including Larson, ridicule when the LDS scholars say this exact same thing. Wilkinson's comments will flat out astonish critics against the papyri then! "The basic principle by which an object or representation suggests the form of something of symbolic significance is found in hundreds of different contexts across this spectrum." (p. 16). He shows how symbols can be interpreted on a basic level, and further interpreted and extended on a subtle level with added meaning given. (p. 21).

Larson's contention about Facsimile #3 needs updating as well. He notes "Variations of the scene shown [Fac. 3] are probably the single most common form of Egyptian funerary scene known – the deceased being led into the presence of the Court of Osiris, god of the underworld. Eventually the major elements became standardized into chapter 125 of the "Book of the Dead," and the particular version in the Joseph Smith Papyri is from a later, simplified text." (p. 108).

Wilkinson notes however that "representations of seated kings may likewise reveal a number of symbolic variations in meaning." (p. 34). Critics always want to call everything involving the papyri as common, ordinary run of the mill stuff. But that does nothing to proving anything against the papyri or how Joseph Smith interpreted it. In light of the fact, that Wilkinson states "if a wide range of different symbolic forms may suggest a common meaning, so small variations in the same form may sometimes hold different symbolic connotations." (p. 22). Facsimile #3 may be a common depicted scene, but it is like no other, as all pictures of this type have variations, differences, etc. Hence, they all do not by any stretch of Larson's imagination represent the exact same thing. Sir Alan Gardiner in his interesting study, "The Baptism of Pharaoh," in the "Journal of Egyptian Archaeology," 36 (1950): 6 notes that "somewhat similar

representations" can "belong wholly to a different set of ceremonies," which only the inscriptions written with the scenes can describe for us. Hugh Nibley in his study, "Abraham in Egypt," Deseret Book, 1986: 122, notes that the Egyptologist Ph. Derchain says "to grasp even the simplest situations," requires comparison of all possible parallel texts, rigorous analysis of every detail and an intimate dictionary knowledge of each word! Larson certainly has done none of this with the papyri as Hugh Nibley has at least attempted to do in his articles "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price," and his book "The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri," and his book "Abraham in Egypt," and his series of lectures, which will come out in book form, "One Eternal Round." What Larson makes fun of in Nibley's research, is actually what Egyptologists are saying MUST be done in order to understand the SIMPLEST of situations. I see anti-Mormons doing none of this... ever.... Yet. I'm not holding my breath to see if they actually will do the honest thing either.

The great Egyptologist, Eric Hornung, notes that the little clay figurines in ancient Egypt have a "wide variety of uses and meanings..." ("The One and the Many: Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt," Cornell University Press reprint of "Der Eine und die Vielen," 1996: 102.) To simply refer to them as ceremonial magic misses the other significant and multiple meanings they have. So things are wide open still in studying ancient Egypt, and Charles Larson is simply not a good guide to read in order to realize this. Hugh Nibley knows this, and John Gee knows this, but Larson displays no awareness at all that this is the real situation, and not his own tissue of fantasy he creates. Hieroglyphs themselves, according to Wilkinson, have information of two types, not just one possible way of reading and understanding them. (p. 155).

Rudolf Anthes, the powerful Egyptologist throughout the 1900's, in his magnificent not to be missed study, "Egyptian Theology in the Third Millenium B.C.," in the "Journal of Near Eastern Studies," demonstrates how Horus can be MANY heavenly bodies, all at once! (p. 185-186). What he says about Egyptologists can more than ever be directly applied to Larson, with his terrible understanding and handling of the three facsimiles! Anthes says directly, "One goal of the present paper is to make it clear that we, the Egyptologists, should no longer regard mythological concepts as fictional tales and ideas resulting from more or less baseless speculation." (p. 194). Now the reason this is important is because Larson (p. 138), contends that Nibley is wrong in declaring the entire field of Egyptology in a state of flux and reappraisal. But it is Larson who is grossly incorrect here! For instance, just today, I read Chris Reintges study, "Pyr. 426a Revisited," in "Zeitschrift fur Aegyptische Sprache," 123 (1996): wherein, during his philological analysis he demonstrates how Egyptologists are continually translating ancient Egyptian words and thought differently. (p. 140). John Anthony West, the Egyptologist of fame for re-examining the Sphinx and its meaning (see? It also is being re-appraised and different....far different interpretations being given it as well) has shown how Egyptologists R. O. Faulkner, Kurt Sethe, Louis Speleers, and Paul Barquet are all translating the ancient pyramid Texts differently and describing their translations differently, thus coming to no unified conclusions at all yet. (See West's fine book "Serpent in the Sky," Quest Books, 1993: 137-151 for an excellent analysis).

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And with this in mind, I think it more than interesting that Wilkinson declares "Visual metaphor: This subtle variety of hieroglyphic expression operates through the use of a sign to suggest something else by means of the extension of meaning. Thus one thing is used to suggest another with which it is somehow associated." (p. 165). Can you say Mnemonic?! Can you say Hidden Meanings?! Can you even go so far as to say super-cryptogram?! All of which Larson ridicules, but which actual Egyptologists recognize as being of fundamental reality when dealing with ancient Egyptian thought. In fact, John Anthony West demonstrates that hieroglyphics themselves "contain within a single sign a complete hierarchy of meaning from the literal to the most abstract. But this is what hieroglyphs do." ("Serpent in the Sky," p. 28) And I might add, as I am making my way through another book, this is shown absolutely crystal clear. The book I am working through is Mark Collier and Bill Manley, "How to Read Egyptian Hieroglyphs," Univ. of Calif. Press, 1998.

And Wilkinson also provides numerous examples of all of this stuff. The one example is simply too darn good to pass up without noting its serious importance for one of Joseph Smith's actual descriptions. Wilkinson clearly and continually throughout his book demonstrates how the number four relates to the four cardinal points or directions of the earth. Numerous ancient Egyptian examples exist showing this, from the orientation of buildings, to the four arrows shot in the four directions demonstrating Pharaoh's universal rule. Again and again Wilkinson shows this, i.e., pp. 63, 94, 133, 144, 176, 186. Joseph Smith, likewise understood this importance of the four cardinal points of the earth when he described the four sons of Horus, as "this earth in its four quarters." (explanation of Fac. 2, figure 6). Daniel C. Peterson in his study, "News From Antiquity," in the "Ensign," January 1994: 18, also shows that these figures represent the four quarters of the earth as Joseph Smith said. The Egyptologist John Gee's entire Masters Thesis was on the Four Sons of Horus. There he noted that their original function was being equated with the four stars of the Big Dipper, the pan shape stars, not the handle, (John Gee, "Notes on the Sons of Horus," Master's Thesis Partial Requirement, FARMS, 1991: 35.) Gee also notes how in the 21st Dynasty, Ramses III exploited the relationship of the four sons of Horus with Horus for his own purposes, legitimizing his claim to the throne of Egypt. "This serves as an example of how in the New Kingdom the Sons of Horus come into their own as part of the coronation ceremony representing the four quarters of the earth over which the king has been made ruler." (Gee, p. 29) Hugh Nibley showed long ago that the summons arrow of ancient times was almost a world wide institution and symbol and mentioned in the "Olaf-Tryggvason Saga," among other ancient literatures, were sent in the four directions. In the American Indian Ghost Dance, the four arrows were shot in the four directions to symbolize conquest of the earth by the tribe. (Nibley, "The Arrow, The Hunter, and the State," in "The Ancient State," Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, Vol. 10, Deseret Book/FARMS, 1991: 5-6.) In ancient Egypt this was shown by the King's name also being written in the cartouche, the oval ring around his name. Gardiner notes that this shows "the king as ruler of all that which is encircled by the sun." (Gardiner, "Egyptian Grammar," p. 74).

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And once again, we see extensive meanings with this imagery of four. For instance, in E.A.W. Budge's translation of the Book of the Dead, the Papyri of Ani, we read, "The four quarters of Ra [are] the extent of the earth." (Budge, "The Egyptian Book of the Dead," Dover, 1967: 171.) But we also read on page 124 of the Introduction of the same book, that "originally they [the four Sons of Horus] represented the four pillars which support the sky, or Horus. Each was supposed to be lord of one of the four quarters of the world, and finally became the god of one of the cardinal points.. Hapi represented the north, Tuamautef the east, Amset the south, and Qebhsennuf the west." Here we find Joseph Smith right on the mark exactly. Larson presents none of this, implying that nothing is correct in the facsimiles, they are drawn wrong, and interpreted wrong.

As far as Larson claiming that Nibley is wrong in stating that Egyptology is in a constant state of flux, I also found the same situation using entirely different Egyptologists than Nibley did to come to this conclusion also! I wrote my review of James White's analysis of the papyri and facsimiles in "FARMS Review of Books," Vol. 11, #1 (1999): 197-238. In fact, one of the actual Egyptologists who translated the papyri in the first place, John Wilson declares things are constantly changing! I found many ideas on this in his very fun to read book "Thousands of Years: An Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt," which I highly recommend you read. I have another dozen references on page 201 in footnote 9, which I might take a moment here to complain originally, before it was edited down, had over 100 references! ALL of them from the 1990's which I had were included. I had them ranging from 1960- 1995. Sooooooo, I have demonstrated quite enough, even for a die hard skeptical person, that Larson is not a good book or a reliable guide, neither concerning the LDS view of the papyri, nor the view about what is really happening in Egyptology today. Hence my reason for saying his book is a flop.