

Questioning for the Real Quest: A Review of Stan Larson's Latest Work

By Kerry A. Shirts

Stan Larson has written what may very well be the most sophisticated review to date on the Book of Abraham and Joseph Smith Papyri, in his book "Quest for the Gold Plates." [1] This comprises chapter 3 in his book. Now while I acknowledge his fecundity in this chapter, it is not so much his conclusions or research which impress me, but his skill at telling a story, a story different than the LDS scholars have already told time and again in the LDS literature. Larson's skill is in using sources to weave a different story than one the LDS are telling, though he tries to make the reader think he is telling the LDS version of the story.

I feel that Larson would have done better had he left this entire chapter out of his book, and included his information on Thomas Stuart Ferguson in a little paragraph in another chapter. His expansion of information, I believe, is meant to send a message to the Mormons. Here is a serious scholar, and he disagrees and in fact thoroughly documents and refutes the Mormon scholars, so beware, the Mormon scholars are lying to you. That is the impression I receive on reading his material in this book. Here is a more complete use of Hugh Nibley's materials as well as John Gee's material than any other critic has even dared. And because his use of these materials are far more complete than his colleagues, it is obvious that his conclusions are more strong, more realistic, and more accurate than his colleagues and the Mormons. This is the feeling I am getting from reading his chapter on the Joseph Smith Papyri, especially after having checked into many of the sources that Larson himself supposedly has. In other words, I am not impressed with his conclusions based on his research, because I also have looked into many of his sources and do not find them saying and concluding what Larson says they do, whether he states it directly or by implication, or inference. He leaves far and away too much left unsaid with so many of the sources he uses.

I have to admit, I quit reading the critic's materials for their conclusions quite a long time ago, as their conclusions are so obviously negative, as well as the same over and over again. I am more fascinated by their research methods as well as looking into the sources they use and especially in how they use their sources. Stan Larson has written before on facets of Mormon scriptures with rather hastily drawn conclusions. [2] His latest try *Quest for the Gold Plates* is no different, at least, not in his chapter on the Joseph Smith Papyri. If the rest of his book is as, shall I say, clever as this chapter on the papyri is, then it won't offer much. But now it is time to get on with why I am unconvinced by Stan Larson's scholarship and research.

Questioning For the Joseph Smith Papyri

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While Larson is trying to tell the story of Thomas Stuart Ferguson's fall from the Mormon faith, he expands the scholarly details on the papyri beyond anything I have ever read in print. That hardly makes for a truthful end however.

The Abuse, Misuse & Neglect of LDS Scholars' Research: Hugh Nibley, John Gee, John Tvedtnes, Michael D. Rhodes

Rather than go through page by page of Larson's spun and deliberately woven tale, I will approach this from the angle of showing how Larson uses the LDS scholars' research. I will even include, for no extra charge, some analysis of the non-Mormon scholars Larson uses and see just how credible Larson's use of them are. While I do not have access to each and every single reference to Ferguson's personal correspondence, I certainly do have access to the LDS scholars' writings, as well as a host of others which Larson has chosen to leave out (I feel deliberately and will demonstrate why).

Larson claims that Hugh Nibley believed that Facsimile #1, the Lion Couch Scene, Abraham on the Altar of Sacrifice, was the "tangible link" from the ancient world to ours via revelation.[3] This is not what Nibley was saying though. Nowhere does Nibley single out Facsimile 1 as "the tangible link" alone as Larson proclaims. And, Larson says it was the "announcement" of the papyri that Nibley was talking about. No it was not. Nibley in his article "Prologomena to any Study of the Book of Abraham," said clearly and unmistakably that it was the gift of Egyptian papyri, all of the fragments that survived, once owned by Joseph Smith, given back to the church in 1967 that was the "tangible link" to the worlds, and Nibley includes all of the papyri in his photographic reproductions in this article, not just Facsimile #1.[4] That Larson cannot get this straight in a rather small article of Nibley's does not speak well for his scholarship in my opinion. It is, as we shall see, not a small insignificant point by any means.

Larson also comes to conclusions concerning D.J. Nelson's work on this issue, that Nibley did not, even though Larson uses Nibley's view of Nelson. Larson notes "Nibley hailed Nelson's translation as 'a conscientious and courageous piece of work... supplying students with a useable and reliable translation.'" Then Larson says "Nibley had become aware that translations of the papyri were not confirming the Book of Abraham and commented that 'it is doubtful whether any translation [of the Joseph Smith Egyptian papyri] could do as much good as harm.'" Larson in the footnote # 35 after skipping Nibley's entire article except these two brief comments, says Nibley concluded his article saying "to Mr. Dee Jay Nelson goes the credit of being the first to make the plunge."[5]

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First, Larson drops everything else Nibley said other than some supposed positive comments and a total acceptance of Nelson's work. That is the impression we are left with, whether deliberate or not. But I cannot help but think that Larson, of all people, knows better. That he has to go through Nibley's articles to pick through and find only comments that make it appear that Nibley accepted Nelson, and leaves out everything else is simply deliberate, and terribly unconvincing. What Nibley did say is seriously important. Larson is trying, so it seems, to build up a picture of Nibley shying away from translating the papyri while accepting others' translation, of which Nibley has never done, not as a final word on the matter by any means. Nibley did say Nelson's work was a good start. Why? Because Nelson was doing what the Egyptologist Alan Gardiner had said needed to be done, give others a target to shoot at. Nibley also said that "This is the sort of thing that the experts of 1912 should have undertaken but did not." [6] Of Nelson's translation, Nibley also comments (which Larson conveniently left out) "But it is, we cannot too strongly insist, the FIRST step in the serious study of the Pearl of Great Price and NOT the LAST step!" (emphasis in original) [7] Then Nibley enumerates the vast amount of literature one needs to wade through in order to get the full perspective of the Book of Abraham, everything from the Joseph Smith literature, the Egyptian sources, the Jewish sources, the Classical sources, and then Nibley analyzes many Egyptologists and their comments that we simply do not have enough knowledge to even know what the Egyptian Book of the Dead is all about, let alone the actual Egyptian beliefs, whether religious, political, or historical. And, each and every single problem that the Egyptologists have, are the exact areas where critics of the Joseph Smith Papyri claim as having final answers! Nibley does not simply end his article by saying bravo Dee Jay Nelson as Larson claims. What Nibley did say was "Who can say, then, what surprises await the student who at last undertakes a serious historical study of the book? It would now seem that the Latter Day Saints are being pushed by force of circumstance through the door they have so long been reluctant to enter. And to Mr. Dee Jay Nelson goes the credit of being the first to take the plunge." [8]

That is a far different feeling than what Larson is trying to convey. To use an analogy,

Nibley is saying in the 1 mile run, Nelson has got his first step going, not that he completed the race in world record speed. Larson in his study, has falsified the impression that Nibley left. Confirmation of this is in Nibley's article. He notes that in the Book of Breathing, "Though our text is a short one and clearly written, Mr. Nelson, who certainly intends to supply the best translation available, must beg off for the moment: 'I do not attempt a continuous translation at this time.' Instead he is satisfied 'to indicate particularly lucid phrases and passages.' Nibley then shows Dee Jay Nelsons' translation which is really quite staggering for its gross incompleteness(!) and then comments "And that is the story - still a lock without a key." [9] Now that is vintage Nibley, not what Larson is portraying.

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But Nibley isn't finished yet. He goes on to note "Mr. Dee Jay Nelson is quite right when he tells us (p. 6) that 'to project those thought processes as expressed in written hieratic and hieroglyphic writings into literal English would present a bewildering phraseological maze which would have meaning only to a skilled Egyptian philologist.' But what would they mean to him? Many years ago this writer learned that if he could not make a thing clear to a five year old child it was because he did not really understand it himself. Professional jargon and phraseological mazes are the scholar's refuge from the importunities and the too-searching questions of the layman, but they do have their purposes - they warn the idle onlooker to keep a respectful distance while the research is still going on, and they are a constant reminder to the professional himself that he has not yet got the answers that will make it possible to state the case in clear and simple terms." [10] Now *that* is Nibley with a vengeance. Nibley's conclusion is that the scholars have not finished, though they think they have, but rather, they have just begun, hence Nibley saying Nelson gets the credit of taking the first (note that) plunge. That is the whole meaning of his entire article in fact, which Larson skips through with surgical skill, cutting everything out except what would build Larson's false picture.

It's more of the same when we read "Joseph Smith identified Figure 3 in Facsimile No. 1 as 'the idolatrous priest of Elkenah,' but Egyptologists identified that individual as the jackal-headed god Anubis. Nibley admitted: 'Well, you go so far as to assume without questions that the priest in Facsimile No. 1 should have a jackal's mask. And you are quite right - he *should* have, and the human head is an error.'" [11] And that is all Larson says about Nibley's rather famous exchange with Klaus Baer. The interesting thing is Nibley discussed much, much more than this for over 25 more pages! Now then, Larson stopped far short of Nibley's full thought on this specific issue, as well as ignoring the many others that Nibley noted. What Nibley then said after admitting that there was an error in the drawing (we see no big deal here since Nibley has also noted that "no inspiration is made for the drawings... there is nothing particularly holy about them.") [12] Larson doesn't want us to understand that is Nibley's stance, so it is not nearly as devastating for Nibley to make the claim of error as Larson implicitly assumes. But Larson never completed Nibley's thought here. Nibley also asked "But whose error?" Nibley then went on to demonstrate on the very same page as Larson's quote so it is hard to believe Larson was not aware of this, that "at least three Ptolemaic lion-couch scenes closely paralleling this one [the Joseph Smith lion couch] in which the artist has deliberately drawn the embalming priest without a jackal mask." [13] In fact, in one case the mask had been deliberately erased, hence his conclusion on this matter, and which the Egyptologists did not have a comeback on was "We do not at present know why the Egyptians preferred here to dispense with the mask, but it is at least conceivable that the artist of Facsimile No. 1 had his reasons too. It will not do to attribute to the Mormons everything that puzzles us." [14] Larson has failed to include this relevant context to the idea of Nibley admitting errors, and in fact showing that it could very easily be the ancient Egyptian artist himself who drew the priest without a mask, and hence Joseph Smith restoring it precisely correct. Larson entirely missed this, and I believe deliberately in order to portray Nibley as being wrong.

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Larson's next gaff is also obvious once one takes just an extra minute or two to bother reading Nibley's full information he offers in his various writings on the Joseph Smith Papyri. Larson notes how Klaus Baer concluded that Joseph Smith's explanations did not match the Egyptologists, and so he was using his imagination. "Thus Facsimile No. 1 shows Horus (the owner of the papyrus) in the form of Osiris with his human-headed *ba*-bird above his head being embalmed for the next life on a funerary lion-couch by a jackal-headed Anubis, and not Abraham with an attending angel of the Lord being sacrificed on an altar by the idolatrous priest of Elkenah." [15] Larson notes that Baer also said "In Facsimile No. 1 it is drawn with a falcon's head, and I must confess with some embarrassment that I also 'saw' the falcon's head before reading Nelson's study." [16] Now what makes all this stuff from Larson so fascinating is that in the very same article of Nibley's, "As Things Stand At the Moment" which Larson used so woefully inadequately, Larson nowhere mentions it on this point, yet Nibley certainly did discuss this idea also. Why did Larson ignore him here? Nibley noted to the Egyptologists here that "The most characteristic feature of the

ba

-birds we remember to have seen is the large soulful eye. But here is no eye, no brow, no nose (if that is a nose, anything is!), no mouth, no chin, no neck, no ear." [17] The Egyptologists go on to say if the head was an Egyptian head such a poor job would hardly have been done to it. Nibley then notes "if bad drawing is an argument against an Egyptian bird's head, what does it do to your much worse drawn human head?" The Egyptologists noted that Deveria expected a human head and was disturbed at not finding it as the Egyptologists were. Nibley then notes "Deveria expected a human head, but the good Professor Parker did not:

He

saw not your clearly drawn human head, and he had excellent reason for seeing a bird's head instead. Take the large sampling of lion-couch scenes in Budge's

Osiris

, for example: what do you find there? Men lying on lion couches and flying birds all over the place, but not a single human-headed bird. You must admit that statistics are overwhelmingly in favor of giving the bird a bird's head." [18] After a little bit more sparring the Egyptologists dropped the issue. So it still stands so far as we are aware. A bird-headed bird is statistically in powerful favor of Joseph Smith's rendition. Larson completely skips over this as well. For a scholar who wants to leave the impression that he is meticulous and careful with details, Larson leaves wide yawning gaps in his thesis, which leaves his credibility as a careful scholar dubious at best.

The finale though from Larson is worth its weight in gold, after ignoring Nibley's real thesis on the hawk-headed bird in Facsimile No. 1, Larson then says "In spite of these discrepancies one Mormon writer inexplicably affirmed that 'the Prophet's explanations of each of the facsimiles accord with present understanding of Egyptian religious practices, but such an assertion does not survive scrutiny.'" [19] Now this is interesting. Larson gives Nibley a drubbing for miffing the hawk-headed bird issue (which Nibley did not do, but Larson ignores anyway), the Egyptologists discussing this with Nibley dropped the matter after he demonstrated that a bird-headed bird was precisely correct in Facsimile No. 1, and now Larson utilizes Stephen Thompson as support that this is not correct and will not withstand scrutiny and Thompson *never even*

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mentions the bird in Facsimile No. 1 at all in his study.

What is Larson trying to pull with this?

Larson says that Nibley "conceded" that the papyri were connected to the Pearl of Great Price.[20] Conceded? Did Nibley ever say otherwise? Larson's choice of wording is poorly chosen. It assumes that Nibley at one time totally dissociated the papyri from the Pearl of Great Price, but is this true? Nibley in his very first article on the subject, "Phase One" agreed that the papyri were somehow connected with the Pearl of Great Price. What Nibley was contending, and in fact, still contends to this day is that "The investigation of the Book of Abraham has still far to go before we can start drawing significant conclusions." [21] Nibley in his series of lectures on the Hypocephalus in 1990 tape 1 discussed the rather hasty conclusions the Egyptologists have come to concerning all aspects of the papyri, where even up to 1968 one of them concluded that the hieroglyphs on the Hypocephalus were mere chicken scratchings, just unreadable doodles! [22] So long as the scholars are coming up with this type of poppycock, we layfolk, along with scholars such as Hugh Nibley will continue keeping with the notion that we do not have all the returns in yet, and there is yet significant research to be done. Significantly, Stan Larson has completely ignored this source.

Larson has also claimed that Nibley admitted that the characters of the Sensen text and the Book of Abraham indicate a definite relationship, but Nibley was unsure what type of relationship. Larson then says "Nibley later clarified his position that, though the exact connection was unknown, he was sure that 'the relationship between the two texts was never meant to be that of a direct translation.'" [23]

This argument is not precise either. Right behind Tanner and Heward's *Dialogue* article "The Source of the Book of Abraham Identified," Nibley in his article "Phase One" demonstrated he didn't think the symbols were a direct translation. In fact, Nibley's point, nay his strong point in this article, is silently glossed over by Larson. Nibley noted "Those who insist that 'the Egyptian characters cannot conceivably have enough information... to convey the amount of material translated from them,' [Tanner & Heward] are the very parties who do conceive just that, and insist that Joseph Smith actually did derive all that stuff from them. They can't have it both ways. If nobody could possibly get the Book of Abraham out of the Sen-Sen papyrus, then we can be quite sure that nobody did - nobody including Joseph Smith." [24] That has been Nibley's very clear point right from the start. Interestingly, on this point Larson also ignores Nibley's "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," which definitely demonstrate he did not think the Sen-Sen fragment was a translation into the Book of Abraham. [25] Now then, Larson never completed Nibley's thought, and which Larson as well as each and every other critic have singularly ignored. Nibley ended his reason for saying the Sen-Sen was never meant to be a direct translation because "If it were we can be sure that Joseph Smith would have published the Egyptian text along with the facsimiles and the translation." [26] Larson did not disclose

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Nibley's full reasons or conclusion.

Larson, then discussing Ferguson's thoughts notes "Ferguson insisted strongly that the original papyri used by Joseph Smith had been found and competent translations were available, but he predicted that 'of course the dig as to the Book of Abraham must be: *We don't have the original manuscript from which the Book of Abraham was translated.*

' Interestingly Nibley used precisely this argument..."[27]

This is only one of the options which Ferguson entertained. Unfortunately, as Larson portrays Ferguson, he was too quick to draw conclusions without considering all the options. Interestingly, Larson fails to include John Sorenson's analysis and comments on Ferguson, which are simply a must, as Sorenson was actually an one who worked personally with Ferguson, a claim Larson cannot or does not make. What Sorenson says is significant in any conclusions drawn from Ferguson's views. Sorenson notes that Ferguson never studied archaeology professionally, and in fact, "He held a naive view of 'proof,' perhaps related to his law practice where one either 'proved' his case or lost the decision...his associates with scientific training and thus more sophistication in the pitfalls involving intellectual matters could never draw him away from his narrow view of 'research.'... his role in Mormon scholarship was largely that of enthusiast and publicist, for which we can be grateful, but he was neither scholar nor analyst. Ferguson was never an expert on archaeology and the Book of Mormon (let alone on the book of Abraham, about which his knowledge was superficial)."[28] For all his detailed research into Ferguson it is more than passing interest that Larson ignored Sorenson on this, who is actually an eye-witness, nay a colleague who personally worked with Ferguson on Book of Mormon and Book of Abraham archaeology and history. In other words, true to form, Larson again leaves the full context too short. The other thing that informed readers will obviously note is that Larson (as well as Ferguson - at least from how Larson uses him) completely ignored John Tvedtnes and Richley Crapo's "Mnemonic" theory concerning the Book of Abraham, to which we will return. For now I believe this is simply sloppy on Larson's part. Granted he is trying to give us a history of Ferguson, so even though Ferguson may not have familiarized himself with Tvedtnes, Larson should have , since he is obviously trying to show he is looking at the papyri issue from a far more complete order than earlier critics have. Leaving out Tvedtnes' research is simply inexcusable in careful scholarship.

Then Larson tries to note contradictions with several explanations of the process which LDS scholars say the Book of Abraham came about. "Another tactic is to claim that Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham was not a translation of Egyptian papyri but rather is an inspired document produced by revelation from God. Nibley admitted that the Joseph Smith Egyptian papyri contain hieroglyphics, hieratic characters, and pictorial illustrations that have symbolic meanings, but asserted that Joseph Smith in the Book of Abraham 'dealt only with the third type,' that is, with the symbolic pictures. This strategy effectively denies a connection between

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any of the hieratic texts and the Book of Abraham. Nibley ignored Joseph Smith's assertions about translating the Egyptian characters on the papyri and claimed that the Book of Abraham was produced 'by direct revelation.' Ferguson was not impressed with Nibley's arguments." [29]

Since Ferguson went for one and only one option (which Nibley has never done and indeed has usually commented that there are an infinity of views), I see no problem here, from Ferguson, but I do with Larson. He again falls short of indicating Nibley's full view. Nibley did note that the Prophet only dealt with the third type, but Nibley concluded his sentence with the words "though he studied and commented on the other two in private. There need be no direct connection between the three since Egyptian ritual texts and accompanying drawings often have nothing to do with each other (H. Grapow, A. Resch, S. Bjerke)." [30] And quite frankly this is one of the exasperating things about some of Nibley's earlier writings on the papyri, dropping names does nothing, we would have liked to see the sources. However, in an effort of updating I do note that Nibley is exactly correct. In fact, Klaus Baer himself hinted at this in his study of the Joseph Smith Papyri when he noted that "The vignette on P. JS I is unusual..." [31] John Wilson in his study noted that "The accompanying vignette is puzzling..." [32] He also noted that in some of the Joseph Smith Papyri "The vignette of the little bird seems to be out of place." He also notes that "Its normal vignette would show the deceased in a boat, lacking here. The picture of the fluttering bird-soul might appropriately be a vignette for chapter 91 or 92, not otherwise visible in our document." [33] Nibley is also confirmed by the latest edition of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, edited by Carol Andrews. She notes that "Some papyri give proof that the text and illustrations were produced separately without regard to each other, for chapters and their vignettes do not coincide." On one such vignette we read "Vignette incorrectly termed Spell 143 which illustrates Spells 141 and 142." [34] In his commentary on *The Book of Going Forth by Day* Dr. Ogden Goelet, Jr., notes "The text of Chapter 1 introduces us to one of the central problems of interpreting Egyptian religious material - the often puzzling relationship between text and illustration. The entire scene is an abridged representation of Ani's funeral, leading us to believe that the text would describe his burial ritual. The accompanying text, however, alludes to the mythical events surrounding the death, dismemberment, and burial of Osiris..." [35] In commenting on a different chapter Goelet notes that "some manner of copyist's error seems possible," talking about an illustration that does not fit the text. [36] In another instance we read "The text belongs to chapter 10... the column of text to the right of this vignette actually belongs to the next chapter." [37] Again, "The next vignette is a well-known illustration that normally belongs to chapter 126. However, the accompanying text is one of the standard terminal rubrics for chapter 125." [38] And yet again, "Generally speaking, there is not much relationship between the elements of the vignette and the text of chapter 110." [39]

The importance of all this is further demonstrated by Nibley (which again Larson ignores) where he notes "For a demonstration of the strange practice of putting the illustrations to one story with the text of another, we need look no further than the Joseph Smith Book of Breathings itself, where the scene depicted so vividly in the Facsimile is nowhere mentioned in the text that

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immediately follows. Only by matching up the fibers of the writing and the drawing is it possible to show that the two presentations, which at first glance have nothing to do with each other, were actually side by side on the same strip of papyrus." [40] Since Egyptologists were screaming that this is an ordinary Egyptian Book of the Dead and have absolutely nothing to do with Abraham (which issue, of course, Larson *does* sit up and take notice and expand on for pages and pages in his book) it is equally significant that Larson ignores Nibley when he notes "It can easily be shown by matching up the cut edges and fibres of the papyri that the text of the Joseph Smith Breathing Papyrus (No. XI) was written on the same strip of material as Facsimile No. 1 and immediately adjoining it. Though, as we have seen, the two do not obviously go together...the lion-couch scene in Facsimile No. 1...has to do with Abraham's legendary involvement in rituals of royal succession in which he had the honor of serving as a sacrificial substitute for a king or Pharaoh... The situation depicted in Facsimile No. 1 belongs to that type of Egyptian initiatory ordinances which go back to the coronation and creation." [41] The Book of Breathings was placed either on the breast or under the head of the mummy at his funeral (in true hypocephalus fashion) thus bringing in Facsimile No. 2 into connection with #'s 1 and 3. So Nibley concludes that though the Book of Breathings does not contain the text of the Book of Abraham, it does have direct ties with the 3 facsimiles in the Book of Abraham. Nibley notes that B.H. Stricker gave a lengthy discussion to the effect that the Book of Breathings rites are associated with death and resurrection, or the sun god at the Winter Solstice. Stricker then comments "We ask ourselves whether there existed in Egypt institutions comparable to those of the Jews," i.e., with regard to human sacrifice of the firstborn as indicated by "the behavior of Abraham with his son Isaac." Nibley notes the interesting coincidence that the most thorough scholarly studies on the class of documents which the Joseph Smith Papyri belong to "calls attention to a possible relationship between them and the sacrificial activities of one man among the ancients - Abraham." [42] It is, to say the least, significant that Larson nowhere indicates Nibley's thoughts along these lines at all.

Larson does not want us to realize that Nibley, as well as other LDS scholars have left their impression of this whole inspired translation issue quite clear: "Whatever translation comes by the gift and power of God is certainly no translation in the ordinary sense, and Joseph Smith never put forth the translation of the Book of Abraham as an exercise in conventional scholarship." Nibley's concluding thought on the idea of translation was equally unambiguous, "In every case in which he has produced a translation, Joseph Smith has made it clear that his inspiration is by no means bound by any ancient text, but is free to take wings at any time. To insist, as the critics do, that 'translation' may be understood only in the sense in which they choose to understand it, while the Prophet clearly demonstrates that he intends it to be taken in a very different sense, is to make up the rules of the game one is playing as well as being the umpire." [43] Nibley has said time and again how he believes Joseph Smith came up with the Book of Abraham. "We have more than enough material to put the Prophet to the test where he specifically claims revelation without having to rummage through dubious papers which were never meant to be included among inspired writings." [He is calling the Alphabet and Grammar the dubious speculations, while the Book of Abraham is his discussion of an inspired document.] In another article Nibley said "In his comments on the papyri Joseph Smith hails them as a welcome *confirmation* of his own ideas, but never as the source of those ideas. Even

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when 'the principles of astronomy as understood by Father Abraham and the ancients, unfolded to our understanding,' it was by direct revelation and not by reading the text (DHC 2:286)."[44] Nibley stated later on "If there is anything that the Mormons have always cried from the housetops, it is that Joseph Smith did *not* translate after the manner of the scholars...he had neither their tools nor their problems, for he had another method. Consider section 7 of the D&C: 'Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, and Oliver Cowdery at Harmony, Pennsylvania, April 1829, when they inquired through the Urim and Thummim... The revelation referred to is the translated version of the record made on parchment by John and hidden up by himself.' Here we have a

translation

which Joseph Smith did not make - it was

given

to him, and he calls it a

revelation

..."[45] "...the Prophet has saved us the trouble of faulting his method by announcing in no uncertain terms that it is a method unique to himself, depending entirely on revelation."[46] Again, we read from Nibley "Joseph Smith made it perfectly clear that the vital ingredient in every transmission of ancient or heavenly knowledge is always the Spirit..."[47] H. Donl Peterson exhibited one of the largest collections of statements of Joseph Smith and the early Mormons on the Book of Abraham wherein we find John Whitmer saying "Joseph the Seer saw these records and by the revelation of Jesus Christ could translate these records..." and the Nauvoo History of Joseph Smith saying "...and commence the work of translating the Egyptian records, the Bible, and wait upon the Lord for such revelations..." and Wilford Woodruff saying "The Lord is blessing Joseph with Power to reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; to translate through the Urim and Thummim Ancient records & Hyeroglyphics" [sic], and Wilford Woodruff saying again, "The truths of the Book of Abraham are truly edifying great and glorious which are among the rich treasuries that are revealed unto us in the last days", and the Prophet's history under 4 May 1842 saying "I spent the day in the upper part of the store, that is in my private office (so called because in that room I keep my sacred writings, translated ancient records and receive revelations" and finally H. Donl Peterson himself saying "The Book of Abraham too, was translated by divine inspiration."[48] Stan Larson is trying to make contradictions and problems where none exist, and he does this only at the expense of the evidence which destroys his stance.

Larson points out (almost with glee it seems) that Ferguson simply did not like Nibley nor anything he wrote on the papyri. Ferguson's main problem which Larson fails to clear up is that he was miffed that Nibley never addressed the issue of Joseph Smith's ability to translate Egyptian. Nibley in his *Improvement Era* articles never addressed that issue, so Ferguson thought Nibley's articles "weren't worth a tinker."[49] And Ferguson has a point. I might add that Nibley's articles aren't worth a tinker to help me adjust my car's carburetor either. His articles really are quite worthless for teaching me how to grow Adzuki beans and summer squash as well, how much fertilizer to use, when to water, where to plant the plants (shade or in the direct sun) etc. I can find at least a million issues that demonstrate Nibley's articles are not worth a tinker. The real question that Ferguson ignored was, what was Nibley trying to demonstrate in

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these articles? After all, were the reader to decide what issue the reader thinks a writer ought to be writing on, then the reader can comfortably reject everything a particular writer writes, when that writer fails to satisfy the reader. I can confidently state that Stan Larson's book

Quest

I am reviewing here isn't worth a tinker for showing me what the meaning of Homer's

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is all about, but what would it prove other than I missed the entire point of Larson's book? The interesting thing is that Nibley

did

precisely indicate which issues he was dealing with in these articles, namely the main issue of the Egyptologists of Spaulding's panel in 1912 and their pronouncements. Nibley also has indicated from day one that

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concerning testing the authenticity of the Book of Abraham was to check it against the ancient background of the Abrahamic literature found since Joseph Smith's day and see if the Book of Abraham fits. This is so clear and unequivocal that it is, quite frankly, unbelievably amusing that critics continue to skip over it as if Nibley were doing other things in the last 30 years (that's over 1/3 of Nibley's productive lifetime folks!). I catalogue in the footnote below, Nibley's statements on this,

the only real issue concerning the Book of Abraham that Nibley has consistently noted and researched for over 30 years.

[50]

And Larson has carefully ignored this context of Nibley's by simply refusing to use Nibley's main source of this, namely his article in the *BYU Studies*, "What is the Book of Breathings?"[51] Not once does Larson use this source, and it is the entire context from which Nibley's discussion of the papyri stem from! Now interestingly, Larson brings up Stephen Thompson's article on the Book of Abraham and notes that "The approach taken in attempting to support Joseph's interpretations of these figures is to compare them with figures found in other historical and textual contexts. It is simply not valid, however, to search through 3,000 years of Egyptian religious iconography to find parallels which can be pushed, prodded, squeezed, or linked in an attempt to justify Joseph's interpretations."[52] And Larson adds in his footnotes that Thompson technically did not attribute this supposedly flawed methodology to Nibley, but he used specific works by Nibley to illustrate his contentions.[53]

So it is at this point that the seriousness of Larson ignoring Nibley's article on the Book of Breathings comes up screaming bloody murder. Because in this article, the one article that Larson skipped, Nibley demonstrates, among other things that as we go through the various Books of Breathings to find the sources for them, or establish priority or order of derivations, etc., "we soond find ourselves going through *all* the funerary texts and finding them all quite relevant to our subject."[54] And now we see that perhaps even Stephen Thompson's contention that this is an incorrect methodology is in itself a false statement. Nibley notes that

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Hans Bonnet found that the Book of Breathing is a compilation of many of the older writings of ancient Egyptian literature and thought.[55] Phrases of the Sensen Papyrus are recognizable in the Book of Passing Through the Eternities, the Amduat, and the Book of Gates.[56] What makes the Book of Breathing so important is that it is the great binder of time and thought in ancient Egyptian religious thought, while coming at the end of the Egyptian civilization, "it wraps everything up, right back to the beginning." [57] The Book of Breathing contains materials from every period with elements taken from all the ancient Egyptian literatures, the Pyramid Texts, Book of the Dead, and concepts and formulas taken from steles and sarcophagi of the Middle and New Kingdoms.[58] Nibley then notes that only in the 1960's did Egyptologists begin assembling the various copies of the books of the ancient Egyptians to compare them, and only in the 1960's have they concentrated on the idea of the temple. And now with that the Egyptologists have found that from the beginning, tomb and temple had identical functions! [59] Hence the king from earliest times was considered the god, and went through a long elaborate process of initiation, hence the inscriptions and depictions on the temples throughout the ages are indicating the same type of thing.[60] With these explanations we can now see that both Thompson and Larson are incorrect for echoing each other. Is it any wonder that Larson ignored this, the most significant item in Nibley's arsenal, and is it any wonder that Larson also never utilized it in his using Nibley's book *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, wherein this article is reprinted in a slightly different form? [61]

Larson does little better with John Gee. Larson notes that Gee was wrong in saying the church published color photos when the papyri were given back to the church in 1967, while Charles Larson's uniqueness of his book *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus*, is that he produced color photos of the papyri.[62] So on such a minor point of trivia Larson scores a point. So what? On most essentials concerning significant developments that Gee has discussed Larson is totally silent. Now Larson does give Gee the benefit of the doubt thus trying to show his objectivity when he acknowledges that Gee demonstrated that variations of the identity of the four sons of Horus have variations in his footnote 47 on p. 124, but he then blunders badly with the exchange of Gee and Ashment on the Greek lion couch scene that mentions the name Abraham under it. Larson's selecting of Gee's analysis through three different articles on this "Abraham Lion-Couch" as I'll call it, ignores the comments that Gee has made and ends with Ashment's comments as if Ashment ended the debate concerning the name Abraham associated with a lion couch. However, Larson certainly had access to Gee's comments made in the 1995 *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*

, since Larson didn't publish his own book until 1996. In fact, Larson also has ignored Gee's review in the Vol. 8, No. 2 1996 issue of *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* as well. Gee continued the exchange with Ashment in the 1995 review of Ashment's article that Larson ends on in his own analysis. Gee demonstrates quite clearly that Ashment has missed the mark with egregious errors. Stan Larson has failed to include this relevant information in his selectivity. Gee's refutation of Ashment more than shows that this is not mere nit-picking on my part to mention this at all, and I highly suspect that Larson is aware of this, so he leaves it alone.

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In fact, when Larson had earlier discussed Facsimile No. 1 about whether the figure standing by the lion couch is Anubis or a priest, he uses Wilson and other Egyptologists to show that it is Anubis, hence by implication that Joseph Smith's comments were wrong. Yet here is exactly where Gee demonstrates that Ashment, who also contended that Joseph Smith was wrong about Anubis, that this figure is properly a priest, hence Joseph Smith was correct in attributing that to the figure! That is precisely why it is important to note that Gee continued the discussion.[63] Larson, by leaving Gee's study out of his own, seems to imply that Joseph Smith was wrong, while Egyptologists, and critics are correct, than which nothing is further from the truth, that is, if we allow Gee full contribution to the discussion, which we do, but Larson did not do.

In an indirect way, and on another part of the issue, Larson also fails to give John Gee credit. While discussing the Egyptian Alphabet & Grammar and in demonstrating how various scholars have approached the Alphabet & Grammar, Larson says in his footnote 82, for us to check Joe Sampson's book *Written By the Finger of God: Decoding Ancient Languages, A Testimony of Joseph Smith's Translations*, as "an effort to make sense of the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar." [64] However, John Gee, who is certainly much more qualified to deal with the Alphabet & Grammar than Joe Sampson is, has reviewed Sampson and found him to be seriously lacking in many important fundamentals on Egyptian as well as the Alphabet & Grammar. Why has Larson not noted this? I believe Larson is trying to indicate by implication that Sampson is the best source available for the LDS scholarship on the Alphabet & Grammar, which is simply not true. Now, while Frederick M. Huchel has reviewed Sampson and given him some credit and was cautiously optimistic about Sampson's potential new ways of looking at the Alphabet and Grammar, still it is necessary for us to understand that Sampson, for better or for worse, is not either directly, or by implication, the best scholarship on this subject.[65]

One of the most annoying things about Larson's chapter on the papyri is the sloppiness in the referencing system he used. It is bizarre to say the least. Well along into his chapter you can be reading along and see footnote 118 and then footnote 119 and all the sudden the next footnote is 1! Then 2, then 3, then 4, then 5! What is this? And I never did find footnote 124, instead, after his footnote 5 from footnote 118 of all things, he has footnote 125 and he goes on from there! Yet in his notes, he says footnote 124 is one of Gee's articles.

Larson does note that Gee misquoted an Egyptologist as saying that the papyri were wrongly identified as the Book of Abraham, while the Egyptologist was summarizing Hugh Nibley's argument.[66] Ironically, this is the only item Larson brought up while Gee has gone much, much further. Gee notes that Klaus Baer wrote Hugh Nibley a letter wherein he stated flatly, "Whether the resulting book of Abraham is or is not inspired scripture can... only be told by examining the PGP." [67] This is precisely the contention of Hugh Nibley through the last 30 years, and which critics still will not go for, whether Thomas Stuart Ferguson, as Stan Larson

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has so beautifully demonstrated for us, or Stan Larson himself. And while Stan Larson has described Ferguson's contempt of Nibley's research in his series of articles "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price" in the *Improvement Era*: 1968-1970, John Gee noted that Klaus Baer said of these articles that they are "a delight and [something that] should be compulsory reading for budding Egyptologists." Baer also noted that "They might be an effective inoculation against the pompous ass syndrome." [68] And further, non-LDS Egyptologists have quoted Nibley in respectful Egyptological journals and Nibley's work has been described as "a serious scientific attempt to make full use of Egyptological literature" even if it "shows clear traces of Mormon viewpoints." [69] Larson, of course, has noted none of this in his study, but strives to present Nibley in the most negative light he can, using Thomas Stuart Ferguson as his spring board into launching other polemics against Nibley. Interestingly, other sources that Larson uses, namely Dee Jay Nelson, the Tanners, and Heward, have been described by Dieter Mueller, an Egyptologist, as "amateur," "polemical," with "several gross errors." [70]

Larson's treatment, or rather his lack of treatment on John Tvedtnes's mnemonic article is certainly deliberate as I will explain. For one thing Stan Larson is comfortable using Charles Larson's book *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus* when it suits his purpose. [71] Therein Charles Larson does note (though incorrectly as we shall see) John Tvedtnes' study. [72] Interestingly, Stan Larson uses the same review that John Gee wrote and mentioned John Tvedtnes' response to Charles Larson's lame handling of Tvedtnes' study. It is worth a full reading since Stan Larson has left it out. This is the communication from John Tvedtnes to John Gee, which Gee printed.

Mr Larson, like other critics of the book of Abraham, has cursorily dismissed the work Richley Crapo and I did with the Sensen Papyrus. He dwells on some minor points and ignores the overall work. The one point in which he felt our case was strongest is far from the strongest point in the original article, most of which he keeps from his audience. (He also didn't note the two follow-up articles on the same subject). Larson fails to note that we demonstrated that there was a consistency in the way Joseph Smith separated out Egyptian words from a text in which there are no spaces marking the division between words, and that the meaning of each Egyptian word is consistently reflected in the English text of the book of Abraham to which it was juxtaposed in the book of Abraham manuscripts. Certainly this is evidence that Joseph Smith knew the meaning of those words! Larson presents as an example of the weakness of our case the use of the word "this" in Abraham 1:11. He shows a single occurrence for this word in the verse. The truth is that the word that appears three times in that verse, while its plural equivalent appears once. As Crapo and I wrote, it is not the importance of the word in that verse that matters, but whether it is reflected at all. The fact that the Egyptian words are reflected in the corresponding English text each and every time is statistically significant.

Larson also failed to note that Crapo and I suggested other possibilities for the tie between the

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Abraham story and the Sensen text, including the suggestions that a later descendant of Abraham had worded the story of his ancestor to fit the Sensen text. If this be true, then it doesn't matter when the Sensen text was composed.

Larson's citation of Klaus Baer from Jay Todd's book is irrelevant. A reading of Baer's letter clearly shows that he was talking apples, while Crapo and I were talking oranges. He was thinking about translation, while we were suggesting the use of the Sensen text as a mnemonic device. Baer didn't understand the concept and I complained about his unfair treatment. He later had one of his students personally deliver an apology for his harsh words, though he continued to disagree with the theory we had proposed. Baer's complain about the lack of a systematic mnemonic theory makes no real sense in the light of our study, for we suggested that the Sensen text was used as the basis for the wording of the Abraham story. This means that the Egyptian text placed its own restrictions on the wording of the Abrahamic text, so there could be no system. I demonstrated this in my April 1970 article "The Use of Mnemonic Devices in Oral Traditions, as Exemplified by the Book of Abraham and the Hor Sensen Papyrus." Larson made no reference to the article.[73]

In a phone conversation I had with John Tvedtnes he reiterated these comments and then noted that critics are still trying to make the Egyptologists Baer, and Wilson out as enemies of the faith when in fact, they were very impressed with Hugh Nibley and in fact, praised his work, as we saw above as well. The Egyptologists were impressed with the Pearl of Great Price, not amused, as critics tend to be. Aziz Atiya noted that himself when he was instrumental in getting the papyri back into the hands of the church.

And Gee noted something else that Stan Larson missed, as well as Charles Larson, upon whom Stan Larson depends for some arguments he makes. Gee noted that Tvedtnes demonstrated that:

[Charles] Larson, like so many others (including Latter Day Saints), has misunderstood the nature of Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar. It is not a revelation, but a working paper. Much of what it says is guesswork. But there are some real Egyptian words and names in it, and their meaning is accurately reflected by Joseph Smith. (This is an amazing fact, considering the infancy of Egyptian decipherment at the time the book of Abraham was produced.) But what concerns me most is that Larson has evidently not read my 1970 article "The Critics of the Book of Abraham," [Papers delivered at the Book of Abraham Symposium at the Salt Lake City Institute of Religion, 3 April 1970, pp. 70-76] in which I showed that the terms degree and part in the Alphabet and Grammar were not intended as grammatical terms. Rather, they denote the location of the symbols on the papyri. The "first part" for example, is what we

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call Facsimile 1. The "first degree" of the "part" is the first column of script, while the "second degree" is the second column, and so forth. The "second part" is what Nibley termed the "Small Sensen Papyrus." It is pasted on paper marked with one-inch vertical rulings. The "first degree of the second part" denotes the first of these columns, counting from the right. Much of the Alphabet and Grammar is merely a means of giving "map coordinates" for locating the symbols on the papyri.[74]

The reason this is important, is because Stan Larson never mentions this comment of Tvedtnes in Gee's research, which Larson did cite elsewhere. Larson's discussion of the Alphabet and Grammar is woefully inadequate and incomplete.[75] He tries to do maximum damage to the Alphabet and Grammar by citing I.E.S. Edwards comments on the Alphabet and Grammar that they are "largely a piece of imagination and lacking in any kind of scientific value." Larson also notes that Richard Parker commented that "the interpretation of signs purported to be Egyptian have no resemblance to the meanings ascribed to them by Egyptologists." [76] In the footnotes, Larson noted that Edwards also said "the whole document [the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar] reminds me of the writings of psychic practitioners which are sometimes sent to me." [77] We have no evidence though, that Edwards was aware of Tvedtnes and Crapo's study of the mnemonic device idea, which certainly demonstrated a one to one correspondence not on some of the juxtapositions of Egyptian and English words, but on each and every one of them. Without the mnemonic device theory, Edwards would be correct so far as we can tell. The Alphabet and Grammar is certainly a difficult subject and the papers are not in any particular order nor are all the Egyptian signs utilized or even translated as Hugh Nibley demonstrated in his article "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," in the *BYU Studies*. [78] And it is not the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar that determines whether Joseph Smith was accurate with the Book of Abraham anyway, but it is the book of Abraham itself that we ought to test, something Larson, nor Ferguson ever got or gets around to doing. They are still harping on the preliminary information.

Larson just mentions in passing Michael D. Rhodes work on the facsimiles and their interpretations. Larson, once again, sets up the classic argument against them utilizing the information from the 1960's standpoint, failing to update at all. Here is how Larson comments on Rhodes work:

Klaus Baer concluded that the papyri "neither say nor depict what Joseph Smith claimed they did... they were damaged and Joseph Smith supplied restorations, apparently from his imagination in some cases. Thus, Facsimile No. 1 shows Horus (the owner of the papyrus) in the form of Osiris with his human-headed ba-bird above his head being embalmed for the next life on a funerary lion-couch by a jackal-headed Anubis, and not Abraham with an attending angel of the Lord being sacrificed on an altar by the idolatrous priest of Elkenah. In spite of these discrepancies one Mormon writer [this is Rhodes Larson is talking about here] inexplicabl

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y affirmed that "the prophet's explanations of each of the facsimiles accord with present understanding of Egyptian religious practices," but such an assertion does not survive scrutiny. [Larson then cites Stephen Thompson here].[79] And Larson fails to cite any of the other work Rhodes has done, except this one article in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*.

I will return to a detailed examination of Rhodes work when I deal with Stephen Thompson's discussion against him and Nibley and Gee.

My main problem I have with critics such as Stan Larson is their sloppiness in working with the LDS scholars' research. Now, because I am contending that critics are misusing LDS research does not imply that that proves the LDS research is accurate though. I am not arguing that since Larson muffs it, the LDS are correct. Not at all. I am arguing that if critics cannot use in proper context the LDS writings, then the critics refutations against the LDS stance cannot be accurate. Whether the LDS version of things is correct or not remains to be seen.

Endnotes

1. Stan Larson, *Quest for the Gold Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson's Archaeological Search for the Book of Mormon*, Freethinker Press, 1996. (Hereafter cited as *Quest*).
2. Stan Larson, "The Sermon on the Mount: What its Textual Transformation Discloses Concerning the Historicity of the Book of Mormon," in *Trinity Journal*, 7 (1986): 23-35; Cf. John W. Welch's rebuttal, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount*, Deseret Books/FARMS, 1990. Also Stan Larson, "The Historicity of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi," in Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, Signature Books, 1993, Ch. 5. See reviews and the shoring up of Larson's weaknesses in John Gee, "La Trahison des Clercs: On the Language and Translation of the Book of Mormon"; Royal Skousen, "Critical Methodology and the Text of the Book of Mormon"; John W. Welch, "Approaching New Approaches," all three reviews in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 6, #1, FARMS, 1994, Chapters 3, 4, 5.
3. Larson, *Quest*, p. 86.

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4. Hugh Nibley, "Prologomena to Any Study of the Book of Abraham," in *BYU Studies*, 8 (Winter 1968): 171.

5. Larson, *Quest*, p. 94, footnote 35 on p. 123.

6. Nibley, "Getting Ready to Begin: An Editorial," in *BYU Studies*, IX (Autumn 1968):247.

7. Nibley, "Getting Ready to Begin," p. 247.

8. Nibley, "Getting Ready to Begin," p. 254.

9. Nibley, "Getting Ready to Begin," p. 249.

10. Nibley, "Getting Ready to Begin," p. 252f.

11. Larson, *Quest*, p. 99f, quoting Nibley "As Things Stand at the Moment," *BYU Studies*, 9 (Autumn 1968): 98.

12. Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 74.

13. Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 98.

14. Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 98.

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15. Larson, *Quest*, p. 100.

16. Larson, *Quest*, p. 125, footnote 57.

17. Nibley, "As Thing Stand," p. 85.

18. Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 86.

19. Larson, *Quest*, p. 100, referring the Michael D. Rhodes "Facsimiles from the Book of Abraham" in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 1992, vol. 1:136f; also referring to Stephen Thompson "Egyptology and the Book of Abraham," *Dialogue*, Spring 1995.

20. Larson, *Quest*, p. 101

21. Nibley, "Phase One," in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 3(Autumn 1968): 99.

22. Hugh Nibley, *One Eternal Round: The Significance of the Egyptian Hypocephalus*, FARMS, 1990, 12 lectures from June 27 - Sept. 26, 1990; Tape #1.

23. Larson, *Quest*, p. 104.

24. Nibley, "Phase One," p. 101.

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25. Hugh Nibley, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," in *BYU Studies*, 11(Summer 1971): 350-399.

26. Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 102.

27. Larson, *Quest*, p. 112f.

28. John Sorenson, "Addendum," in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4, 1992, pp. 118f.

29. Larson, *Quest*, p. 115.

30. Nibley, "Fragment Found in Salt Lake City," p. 192.

31. Klaus Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hor: A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham," in *Dialogue*, Autumn (1968): 117.

32. John Wilson, "The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: Translations and Interpretations," in *Dialogue*, Aut (1968): 76.

33. Wilson, *Ibid.*, pp. 80f.

34. Carol Andrews ed., *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Raymond Faulkner translation, University of Texas Press, 1993, pp. 14, 131 respectively.

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35. Ogden Goelet, Jr., "A Commentary on the Corpus of Literature and Traditions which Constitutes *The Book of Going Forth by Day*," in Eva von Dassow, ed., *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day*, Chronicle Books, 1994, p. 157.

36. Goelet, p. 163.

37. Goelet, p. 164.

38. Goelet, p. 168.

39. Goelet, p. 169. Cf. Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, Deseret Book, 1976, p. 3. (Hereafter cited as *Message*)

40. Hugh Nibley, *Message*, Deseret Book, 1976, p. 3.

41. Nibley, *Message*, p. 13.

42. Nibley, *Message*, p. 14.

43. Nibley, "As Things Stand," p. 71.

44. Nibley, "Fragment Found in Salt Lake City," in *BYU Studies*, 8(Winter 1968): 193. Richard P. Howard of the Reorganized Church, "A Tentative Approach to the Book of Abraham," in *Dialogue*, Autumn (1968): 88f noted that John Whitmer who was closely associated with the ancient

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Egyptian records with Joseph Smith noted Whitmer claimed "Joseph the Seer saw the records and by the revelation of Jesus Christ could translate these records which gave an account of our forefathers. Much of what was written by Joseph of Egypt who was sold by his brethren. Which when all translated will be a pleasing history and of great value to the Saints." As found in "The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment." MS, p. 76. In the Archives, Department of History, The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri. Cf. Benjamin Urrutia, "The Joseph Smith Papyri," in

Dialogue,

Autumn (1968): 134 where he is utilizing James R. Clark, Pearl of Great Price Conference, Dec. 10, 1960 wherein the idea is clearly presented: "How did Joseph Smith translate? Well, Wilford Woodruff said he translated with the Urim and Thummim. Parley P. Pratt said he translated with the Urim and Thummim. Orson Pratt said he translated with the Urim and Thummim. He translated with a divine instrument." The point to understand is that without divine aid Joseph Smith could not have given us the Book of Abraham.

45. Nibley, *Message*, p. 50. This chapter was also reprinted in Robert L. Millet, Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture: The Pearl of Great Price*, Randall Book Co., 1985, Chapter 15.

46. Nibley, *Message*, p. 53.

47. Nibley, *Message*, p. 54.

48. H. Donl Peterson, "The History and Significance of the Book of Abraham," in Robert L. Millet, Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture: The Pearl of Great Price*, Randall Book Co., 1985, pp. 167, 169, 171, 174.

49. Larson, *Quest*, p. 115.

50. Hugh Nibley,s first article on the subject of the papyri, "Phase One," p. 102 - "There is really very little new here to shed light on the Book of Abraham [discussing the relationship of the papyri Book of Breathing and Tanner's and Heward's arguments]. We must look elsewhere for further light and knowledge." And then from p. 103-105 Nibley starts talking about whether the Book of Abraham fits into an ancient genre and if so how? What astonishes me is how the

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critics for the last 30 years have ignored his manifold statements on just this area! He writes in another article, "Fragment Found in Salt Lake City," that "the question then, is whether these present fragments of Egyptian writing give support to Smith's ideas, as he claims they do. We think they do." (p. 193). In "As Things Stand at the Moment," Nibley noted that the question again "is not whether Smith was inspired or not, but whether his writings may be checked against those of the real world of Abraham." (p. 72). In his "Getting Ready to Begin: An Editorial," we read "The philological and historical questions raised by the Book of Abraham are legion if one takes that book seriously." (p. 247). We further read that "The presences of the papyri now shows beyond doubt that Joseph Smith did possess genuine Egyptian documents - how he got them is interesting but quite aside from the main issue, which is whether his story of Abraham in Egypt is true or not." ("Getting Ready" p. 248). And we read on, "We must never forget that the Pearl of Great Price is supposed to be telling its story through the mouths of ancient Hebrew patriarchs. There is a rich and for the most part but recently published literature of Abrahamic legends and traditions in Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Syriac, Coptic, etc., which contains very old stories astonishingly like the Abraham history in the Book of Abraham, even to small details...How do these traditions relate Abraham to Egypt? How do they relate Pharaoh to other lands, especially Canaan? Here are things that bear looking into." ("Getting Ready," p. 250). "The Book of Abraham attributes certain rites and customs to the Egyptians to which the Classical writers, especially the Greeks, furnish an important commentary." (p. 250). Nibley even noted what Ferguson had objected to, namely why he didn't translate the papyri, and goes on to explain the problem with Egyptology, using several Egyptologists and their very tentative nature of understanding anything about ancient Egypt! ("Getting Ready," pp. 251-254). Nibley showed the critics their problem when they proclaim they have found Joseph Smith's notes, and since they don't make sense, the Book of Abraham is phony. The answer to the question of the critics, "Can the writer [Joseph Smith] of those notes possibly have known anything about Abraham in Egypt?" To which Nibley again unerringly shows them the right way to test that, "...the answer is to be found not in psychological imponderables but in the pages of the Book of Abraham." ("Getting Ready," p. 254).

51. Hugh Nibley, "What is the Book of Breathings?" in *BYU Studies*, 11(Winter 1971): 153-187. Hereafter cited as "Breathings."

52. Larson, p. 116, quoting Thompson.

53. Larson, p. 131, footnote 132.

54. Nibley, "Breathings," p. 158.

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55. Nibley, "Breathings," p. 158.

56. Nibley, "Breathings," p. 158.

57. Nibley, "Breathings," p. 159.

58. Nibley, "Breathings," p. 159.

59. Nibley, "Breathings," pp. 175-182.

60. Nibley, "Breathings," pp. 182-187.

61. Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, Deseret Books, 1976, pp. 3-16.

62. Larson, *Quest*, p. 114.

63. John Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, FARMS, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1996, pp. 79-82.

64. Larson, *Quest*, pp. 127f.

65. Frederick M. Huchel, in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, FARMS, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1994, pp. 150-155. Incidentally, Larson also ignored Huchel's review as well. For Gee's review of Sampson, see *Review*

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of Books on the Book of Mormon,
FARMS, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1995, pp. 219-228.

66. 67. Larson, *Quest*, p. 130f, footnote 126.

68. John Gee, "A Tragedy of Errors," in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, FARMS, Vol. 4, 1992, pp. 114f.

69. Gee, "Tragedy," p. 97.

70. Gee, "Tragedy," p. 98. Also footnote 17.

71. Larson, *Quest*, p. 125, footnote 67, p. 130, footnote 122, 125, p. 131, footnote 135, discussing the various LDS theories concerning the papyri.

72. Charles Larson, *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus*, pp. 116-119.

73. John Gee, "A Tragedy of Errors", *Review*, FARMS, Vol. 4, 1992, pp. 109-110. Tvedtnes and Crapo's study was reproduced in Jay M. Todd's book, *The Saga of the Book of Abraham*, Deseret Book, 1969, pp. 380-387, along with Baer's remarks.

74. Gee, "Tragedy," p. 114, footnote 59.

75. Larson, *Quest*, pp. 104-108.

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76. Larson, *Quest*, pp. 107-108.

77. Larson, *Quest*, p. 129, note 93.

78. Hugh Nibley, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," *BYU Studies*, 11(Summer 1971): 350-399.

79. Larson, *Quest*, p. 100.