

21 Joseph Smith and Translation

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Over the last century, the translation of the Book of Abraham has been the source of major controversy, in the anti-Mormon world and even within the church. [This controversy and scrutiny now extends to the translation of the Book of Mormon]. The Book of Abraham has been the target of critics and anti-Mormons as well as a rationalization for unbelief by some Latter-day Saints ever since its first publication in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842-43. The existing problem for detractors is that the Book of Abraham is still here as well as the Book of Mormon. There are even members of the church who do not understand the spiritual process of translation, and being ill-informed, would like to see the Book of Abraham removed from Latter-day Saint scripture. This is unfortunate because the Book of Abraham stands solidly as proof that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God and inspired in the restoration of scripture, doctrine, priesthood, and even the Church of Jesus Christ. The information found in the Book of Abraham is of such a sacred nature that the unbeliever and spiritually bereft are self-blinded as if staring directly at the sun trying to determine the source of its light. Unable to focus on the spiritual benefits and truths of the Book of Abraham, these detractors are able only to see darkness through the blind eyes of ignorance.

The primary question that is raised about the Book of Abraham is: “Why doesn’t the Book of Abraham translation match up with Egyptologist translations?” Another written objection found ad-infinitum is paraphrased as:

The arguments to defend the Book of Abraham would not stand up to peer review by recognized Egyptologists. The church has had parts of the papyri since 1967 and they have been translated by Egyptologists. They are no more than magical funerary texts, often buried with the dead, and nothing to do with the purported translation by Joseph Smith.

Before this question can be addressed from a scriptural and historical point of view, it is helpful to understand what the word 'translation' means. Many critics focus on the intellectual abilities of Joseph Smith rather than "the gift and power of God" as described by the prophet.

A Spiritual Translation

Every ancient record that the Prophet Joseph Smith provided to the Saints *that was an ancient record at one time*, he called a “translation.” Understanding what a “translation” is will first be discussed as it appears in the scriptures and the works of Joseph Smith.

In the introduction to The Book of Mormon, written by Joseph Smith, he explains that:

The ancient record thus brought forth as the voice of the people speaking from the dust and *translated into modern speech by the gift and power of God.*

The real query here should be: What does that phrase mean, “translated by the gift and power of God?” There are two additional questions connected to this query: First, What does the word

“translated” mean? And Second, in two parts, How and why is the “gift and power of God” connected to translation?

One answer is found in the introduction of section seven of the Doctrine and Covenants:

Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, April 1829, when they inquired through the Urim and Thummim as to whether John, the beloved disciple, tarried in the flesh or had died. *The revelation is a translated version* of the record made on parchment by John and hidden up by himself. (HC 1: 35–36)

The pattern is easily seen in these two examples: the fact that there was an ancient record at one time, Joseph called it a “translation” —even when the translation came by revelation rather than from any intellectual ability he might have had. In other words, rendering a once ancient record into “modern speech”, no matter the mode, constitutes a "translation".

Look at the introduction to the Book of Moses in the *Pearl of Great Price*:

An extract from *the translation of the Bible as revealed* to Joseph Smith the Prophet, June 1830—February 1831.

The Book of Moses comes from a “*translation of the Bible as revealed*” to Joseph Smith. This is commonly referred to as “The Joseph Smith Translation” or “Inspired Version” (IV) of the Bible. **Question:** Did Joseph have access to the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and documents from which he could “translate” the Bible? Of course not. He had a copy of the English Bible. He would read passages in his Bible and “by revelation,” give us an inspired “translation” of the Bible—hence the “Joseph Smith Translation.” Because it was an “*ancient record*” it did not matter if it was in Hebrew, Greek, Egyptian, or reformed Egyptian. The Prophet gave us an English version of an ancient record that was not originally written in English. Therefore, it is a translation.

The term or use of the word ‘translation’ does not have to involve a direct translation from one record in one language to another record. An example, though simple and crude, is worth looking at as an explanation:

Pablo, who only knew and spoke Spanish, needed to communicate information that was written only in Spanish to Bob who only understands English. Pablo found Jose, a ‘mediator translator’ who could speak and understand both English and Spanish. Pablo, reading aloud in Spanish to Jose the mediator translator, communicates the Spanish message from Pablo to Bob in his native tongue, English. Bob then writes down the written message from Pablo through Jose. Bob now has a written translation of a Spanish document. Even though Bob didn't translate it himself he wrote the translation even though it came through a third person, the fact it came through a mediator translator, it is still a translation.

Cannot the Spirit of God or the Holy Ghost provide the words of an ancient text “by the gift and power of God” in any language necessary for the text to still be considered a translation? How did Moses provide the Book of Genesis? Likewise, Joseph Smith was merely the inspired recipient.

As with the Book of Moses, the introduction of the Book of Abraham implies the same revelatory inspiration is behind the translation. Here is what it says in the introduction to the Book of Abraham:

A Translation of some ancient Records, that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt. —The writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus.

This phrase from the introduction: “The writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus,” is a colophon. This is a term that doesn’t mean much to most people, but is important when writing on papyrus, and is often found in ancient scrolls. At the beginning or at the end of a scroll or document there would be a few phrases or paragraphs that would describe the contents of the scroll, allowing the reader to see what the scroll was about without having to open the entire scroll to read it. This is very common in middle-eastern cultures. Even in the Book of Mormon we see Nephi's colophon in the first 3 verses:

1 I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.

2 Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians.

3 And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge. (1 Nephi 1:1-3)

A colophon reveals who wrote the record, what the record is about, and that it is a true record. These first verses in the Book of Mormon follow the same ancient colophon method. The first 4 verses in the Book of Abraham, chapter one, and the last verse of the same chapter are also colophons (see Abr. 1: 1-4, 31). In ancient records or scrolls, this was common practice for identifying the contents of the document. This is something that Joseph Smith could not have known and would not have included were it not an actual record at one time, given to him by the Gift and Power of God.

Joseph calls the Book of Abraham a “translation” because it was an ancient text. Even if the translation was given to him by the gift and power of God, which could include revelation or inspiration, it was *still* a translation. The fact that it was an ancient record that existed at one time made it by definition a “translation” as it was written into English. Joseph Smith, with a fourth grade education, did not have the education to translate from one language into another, as do those trained in ancient languages. He could not have translated as they do. Nor did he claim to have the intellectual ability to do so. His own words verify his lack of ability: He states that it was ‘by the gift and power of God’ that he was able to provide the translations of these ancient records. He was well aware of his lack of education and his limitations. In any case, Joseph would not be able to “translate” the same as one trained in ancient languages if it were a revelation of an ancient text.

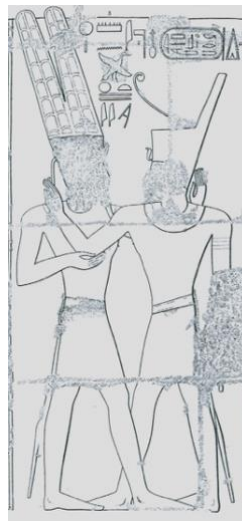
Translation by Education

To translate an ancient record there are a number of steps that one might take to render an acceptable translation. Ancient Egyptian, hieroglyphics can be written from left to right, or right to left, and top to bottom being read right to left or left to right within the vertical column.

Translating an Egyptian text would first require the translator to make sure it was reading from left to right, as that is how the final translation would be printed or discussed. The steps for translation of an ancient text are below. Of course, no matter what the language, a dictionary would be required to render a correct translation.

1. Change from right to left to left to right
2. Create a transliteration of the text into the correct sounds
3. Translate the transliteration into English
4. Provide a grammatical translation

Below a translation was made from one of the columns in the Chapel of Anubis connected to the outside of the Funerary Temple of Hatshepsut. The columns have on each side a vignette that is called the “ritual embrace.” In this ritual embrace, the Pharaoh embraces the deity. The embrace is recognized by the unusual stance and close proximity of the god with the Pharaoh. The feet of each participant are always touching each other, while one hand of the god is touching or resting on the shoulder or head of the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh’s hand is on the shoulder of the god at the same time. The faces are close together with an implied equality as god and man are now foot-to-foot, eye-to-eye and the hands are on the shoulders of each other. This is sometimes called the “mutual embrace.”



To begin the translation of the text that is connected to this ritual embrace, the text written right to left should be turned around to correspond to the English translation.



Now that the text can be read from left to right the next step would be the Transliteration:

mert di ank djed waas snb re mtt jdtt taa

Following the transliteration, would be the first English Translation:

“beloved give eternal life, stability and endurance, power, eternal health, Re, like eternity”

The next step would be the English Grammatical Translation:

“My Beloved, I endow thee immortality, and endurance (through your posterity) I bestow priesthood, and eternal health, like God has for eternity.”

It can be seen that if Joseph was expected to translate the text from the original text or document he would have to do it based on his education and knowledge. This type of intellectual translation would have to move word for word from text to translation. This he could not do as he was not trained in ancient languages. It was **only** by *the gift and power of God* that he could give us translations of the Book of Mormon, Moses, Abraham, Bible and The Parchment of John. A translation done by the gift and power of God would not even require the translator to look at the text, for it would do no good other than verify the reality of the record. In such cases the papyrus or plates become the catalyst for translated revelation. (More on that below)

There is a precedent for this style of spiritual translation. Bible scholars of all faiths accept the premise that Moses provided the first book of the Pentateuch, Genesis, thousands of years after the fact by that same "gift and power of God". From the creation, to Joseph being sold into Egypt, Moses recorded the events found in the book of Genesis by the same power of inspiration that Joseph Smith received from God to translate Moses, Abraham, The Book of Mormon, the parchment hid up by John as well as the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.

A Law of Revelation

The Law of Revelation, as made plain in scripture and church history is: That revelation cannot precede the prepared question. In coming before God, seeking enlightenment, one must be *as prepared to ask the question as they are to receive the answer*. Knowledge can only come line

upon line and precept upon precept (D&C 98:12). Likewise, light and truth, once received, demands obedience (D&C 132:3).

In Moses chapter five, Adam has been “obedient to the commandments he received offering sacrifices” for “many days” seeking for further light and knowledge. He doesn't know why he is offering sacrifice and seeks greater light and knowledge. He first needed to be obedient to the light and knowledge he had received before messengers were sent from the presence of God. Obedience precedes revelation. And greater light and knowledge then demands a greater obedience to receive more light. (See Moses 5: 5-7)

All revelation requires a catalyst. To Adam, the catalyst was the sacrifice and the desire to know why he was required to make the offerings. God does not, and cannot, reveal knowledge without preparation and a thoughtful and sincere question. Revelatory translations also require a catalyst to open the heavens. An old Jewish proverb in the Talmud states that: There is no stirring above until there is a stirring below. One does not seek or pronounce a blessing on the food until it has been prepared.

The doors of heaven will only open after the door is opened below. A brief look at scripture and church history will show the reality of this principle. Joseph Smith's questions and specific catalysts lead to his revelations and the restoration. Sometimes the question is the catalyst and sometimes the catalyst creates the question. But in the end, the revelation only comes after the preparation and the question. Often, the Lord will put the catalyst in front of the prophet to inspire the question.

The great exhortative challenge in Moroni chapter ten describes the process of revelation in the search for light and truth. Moroni, directing those seeking for truth, teaches that revelation only comes *after* one has been prepared to ask the question.

Moroni 10:3-5

3 Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall

The Catalyst (The Book of Mormon)

read these things,

if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them,

The Preparation and Focus

that ***ye would remember***

how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and

ponder it in your hearts.

4 And when ye shall

The Catalyst (The Book of Mormon)

receive these things, I would

The Question

exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ,

if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask
The Preparation and Focus
with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ,
The Revelation
he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

5 And ***by the power of the Holy Ghost*** ye may know the truth of all things. (Moroni 10:3-5)

This process of revelation is easily seen in the history of Joseph Smith and the events that led to the restoration of the Church and modern scripture. Every revelation begins with a catalyst and question. There is no stirring above until there is a stirring below.

First Vision

“An unusual excitement on the subject of religion” in the area where Joseph lived, became the catalyst that created the question: “Which church is right?” in the mind of the young prophet. Pondering this question and searching the scriptures for answers led him to go into the grove of trees to petition the Lord for an answer to his question. This process led to the First Vision.

The Lord didn’t interrupt the daily life and appear unannounced to an unprepared youth. The revelation and First Vision required a thoughtful preparation, asking in faith, with real intent, and a sincere heart before the heavens were opened. The question and concern became the catalyst that led to the First Vision. Joseph then *acted in faith* by putting forth the effort to go the Lord in prayer.

Moroni

Joseph’s first vision became the catalyst for him to seek further knowledge. Joseph Smith records:

I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him; for *I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one.* (JS-H 1: 29)

Joseph wanted to know if he was still worthy. He had more questions and this focus on the catalyst and prayer resulted in the visitation of Moroni. It was not until he pondered his worthiness and mission as he came before the Lord in prayer that he received the manifestation of Moroni coming into his room. Heaven’s windows were not opened until after Joseph opened his heart and mind.

John the Baptist

When Joseph and Oliver were in the work of translating the record, they came across the passages respecting baptism for the remission of sins. On a certain day they went into the woods and began to pray. (DHC, 1:39). John the Baptist appeared to them. The heavens were opened and the Aaronic priesthood was restored (D&C 13).

The Catalyst: during the translation of the plates, the question about baptism for the remission of sins resulted in going into the woods to seek an answer. The Revelation: the heavens were opened again and John the Baptist appeared to Joseph and Oliver. The preparation and asking took place before the revelation.

The Inspired Version of the Bible

Almost sixty percent (60%) of the Doctrine and Covenants was received during the Kirtland Period. It was in Hiram and Kirtland that Joseph was commanded to continue the translation of the Bible. This translation is key to the restoration of the priesthood and temporal organization of the church. During this time, the questions that formed in Joseph's mind about the church organization and Gospel came from the work of the translation of the Bible. A loving God awaits the personal preparation of even the prophets before the heavens are opened. The Lord, awaiting Joseph's personal preparation, counseled and encouraged Joseph multiple times to continue and to finish his work on translating the Bible. Always, He waited for Joseph to ask the question before opening the heavens. In section forty-five of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord explains that much of the restoration is awaiting his questions—questions that cannot be formulated until he is working on the translation of the Bible.

60 And now, behold, I say unto you, *it shall not be given unto you to know any further concerning this chapter, until the New Testament be translated, and in it all these things shall be made known;*

61 Wherefore I give unto you that ye may now translate it, *that ye may be prepared for the things to come.*

62 For verily I say unto you, that *great things await you;*

Many of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants are a direct result of the ‘inspired version’ of the Bible. The questions that arose in Joseph's mind while doing the Biblical translation led the prophet to seek for answers in supplication to God, which led to some of the most important revelations in this dispensation.

The inspired version of Genesis led to a “*translation*” of the Book of Moses. The Gold Plates became the catalyst for the “*translation*” of the Book of Mormon. The inspired version of the Book of John led to the “*translation*” of the revelation of John on the Parchment. Likewise, the Egyptian Papyri served as a catalyst for the “*translation*” of the Book of Abraham and the Book of Joseph.

Speaking of translating ancient records that have ‘been hid up,’ the Lord informs Oliver Cowdery about the preparation of faith that must take place to *translate* by the gift and power of God; or the ‘manifestation of my Spirit.’

1 Oliver Cowdery, verily, verily, I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall *ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive a knowledge concerning the engravings of old records, which are ancient, which contain those parts of my scripture of which has been spoken by the manifestation of my Spirit.*

2 Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.

3 Now, behold, *this is the spirit of revelation...*

9 And, therefore, whatsoever you shall ask me to tell you by that means, that will I grant unto you, and you shall have knowledge concerning it.

10 Remember that *without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith*. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not.

11 **Ask** that you may know the mysteries of God, and that you may translate and receive knowledge **from all those ancient records which have been hid up**, that are sacred; and according to your faith shall it be done unto you. (D&C 8)

Verse eleven is speaking of records that existed and were hid up, but which they did not physically have.

When Joseph acquired the mummies and papyrus from Michael Chandler, he focused on those ancient prophets that were in Egypt: Abraham, Joseph who was sold in Egypt, and Moses. All three were prophets who no doubt kept records, as all righteous patriarchs and prophets have done. Like the Gold Plates, the papyrus becomes that catalyst which leads to the revelation of the Book of Abraham. It did not have to be the actual ancient record for this to be possible. This is the same way that Moses was able to write the book of Genesis and record the words of the patriarchs, for he also translated by the gift and power of God. Joseph Smith did not have the learning or skill to translate ancient languages, especially *Hieroglyphics*; therefore, the *translations* had to come through him by the gift and power of God.

The catalyst: the question (asked in faith) and the ability to focus the mind (with a sincere heart and real intent) are the key elements preparatory for revelation. When a translation comes by revelation, there is no need to physically *use* the “catalyst.” Joseph did not need to look at the Gold Plates to translate them. That’s why Emma could say that when Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon at their table—Martin Harris on one side, Joseph on the other—the plates sat wrapped in a napkin sitting on the center of the table, while Joseph peered at a seer stone (a way to focus) placed in his Hat (a way to block out the world). There are numerous accounts of Joseph translating the record this way, and the remarkable thing is that when he stopped or finished and began again the next day, or the next week or month, he did not ask to see where he left off previously or request the scribe to read the last line of the manuscript so he would know where to begin. He did not need to do that. He would begin with the next word because it was a translation by revelation, not intellectual abilities.

The fact that Joseph did not ask to be reminded of the last thing that he had translated after an extended period of time is a sure indication that the Book of Mormon was not a fictional fabrication nor intellectual translation from Joseph himself, but rather, God’s translation of this ancient record. He could not have done it in any other way. The “translation” is a revelation. Joseph claims over and over that it was accomplished by the gift and power of God. The Book of Mormon, like the Book of Abraham, is a revelatory translation, and as such, Joseph did not have to physically touch or view the plates or papyri (the physical catalysts) to complete the translation.

The papyri Joseph acquired served as the catalyst that prompted Joseph to begin to ask the questions about who was in Egypt. These questions led to the revelation that gave us the translation of the Book of Abraham and the Book of Joseph (ancient records that existed at one time). When the fragments of the Joseph Smith Papyrus were recovered from the New York Metropolitan Museum in 1967, many Latter-day proponents boasted that, ‘finally, the anti-Mormons will now

know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet because the papyrus was found,' in the mistaken assumption that the original Book of Abraham manuscript was found. They were wrong. Again, it was the papyri itself, not the text on the papyrus, that acted as the catalyst that led to the revelation. Without that catalyst, there would be no revelation. Therefore, the scholastic translations should not and will not be the same as the revelatory translations. It had to be revelatory, because Joseph could not have done it any other way.

The Seer Stone

When Joseph received the plates he also received the *Urim & Thummim* to help him learn how to focus his mind for the revelatory process and translation. They were essentially tools to help him learn how to focus and receive revelation. When the *Urim & Thummim* were no longer available after the loss of the 116 pages, he was able to continue the translation by using a similar translucent stone. Placing a seer stone in his hat facilitated the revelatory translation by helping him focus his mind. As Joseph became exercised in receiving revelation, the seer stone was no longer used. This is how personal prayer works too. When we pray we try to focus our minds on the catalysts of the day. The catalysts could be our flocks, our herds, or families. We may not block out the world by placing our face in a hat, but we close our eyes, or retire to a bedroom, closet, or even a grove of trees where we can be alone and away from distractions. The prayerful individual will try to block out the world to focus on the issues (the catalysts) and problems in order for the Spirit to give us them the inspiration or revelation needed. It is the same process.

The Facsimiles in the Book of Abraham

Joseph Smith provided “*translations*” of the ancient records and texts. Included with the Book of Abraham are three Egyptian Facsimiles. These Facsimiles or vignettes are connected to the Abraham text in multiple ways. Abraham uses the Facsimiles, not as “translations” but as examples or “*representations*” to illustrate concepts within the text itself. The first four verses of chapter one explain that this text is a record of Abraham’s desire to receive and bestow what may be called his endowment or the covenants and rights of the fathers with their associated blessings. The Three Facsimiles *represent* this very idea within the Egyptian Religion.

The ancient coronation ceremony had three major components within the kingship rituals. These rituals were copied and ‘earnestly imitated’ from the religion of the earliest patriarchs. The three main elements of this ritual are: 1. The death of the God, 2. The Resurrection and Ascension of the God, and 3. The Enthronement of the God. In ancient Egypt, these elements were required to be in the order listed above in order to convey the meaning of the ritual and initiation into the world of the Gods. It is no coincidence that the Facsimiles presented in the Book of Abraham (representing the blessings and endowment for which Abraham so earnestly sought) are presented in just that order.

The Coronation Ceremony

Research on ancient and modern coronation ceremonies is most enlightening when viewed from an LDS perspective. It becomes evident that the coronation ceremony and ritual evolved from the religion of the patriarchs and the blessings that Abraham desired and then received. These are the

same blessings that Adam, the first man, received from the Lord and then passed down through his righteous posterity (Abraham 1:2-3).

Christ and His sacrifice provided a power to become the sons and daughters of God (John 1:12) that all might become kings and queens and priests and priestesses unto God. As a consequence of apostasy, the ordinances of this ancient endowment of power became the coronation or enthronement ceremony throughout the ancient world. The Book of Abraham is a record of Abraham's endowment as seen in chapter one, beginning in verse two. As with the ancient coronation ceremony, there are three important aspects to the ancient endowment (coronation) that point back to a connection with and relationship to God. (1) The Death of the God, (2) The Resurrection and Ascension, and (3) The Enthronement.

Two (non-LDS) works stand out as the accepted sources for ancient coronation ceremonies: the research of Tor Irstram¹ and A. M. Hocart.² Irstram's research focused on sixty-two coronation ceremonies in various parts of Africa. Hocart looked at Kinship Rituals that included ancient and contemporary traditions around the world. Each came to the conclusion that there were common elements found in every ceremony. In fact, in the lists of the common elements of each author, an astounding theme becomes visible.

Provided below is an explanation of the events taking place along with the lists containing the numbers and letters of Irstram and Hocart's works on the ancient and modern coronation ceremonies. These rituals were and are connected to the temple and ordinances and teachings performed there. Nimrod and Pharaoh were descendants of Egyptus and Ham, and being unable to hold the priesthood, took the endowment of which they were familiar and turned it into a public ritual to justify their kingship over mankind. Just as the real endowment will make the participant a king and priest unto God, these imitated ceremonies legitimized the king and his position in the eyes of the people by portraying him as the son of God on earth. To better understand the endowment of Abraham and the ancient coronation ceremony, below is a table showing Hocart's, Irstram's and the author's explanation of the common elements found in almost all enthronement rituals.

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
1. The coronation must symbolize (1) the Death of the God, (2) the Resurrection and Ascension, and (3) the Enthronement. These are the fundamental meanings of Facsimiles 1, 2, and 3 of Abraham	(1) Ceremonies that symbolized the King's death and rebirth.	A. The theory is that the king (1) dies; (2) is reborn, (3) as a god.

1. Irstram, Tor, *The King of Ganda: Studies in the Institutions of Sacral Kingship in Africa*. (Stockholm, 1944).


2. Hocart, A. M., *Kingship*, (London 1927).

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
2. Participants must have an invitation or Recommend. See Psalms 15 and 24. "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?"	(19) Not all were allowed to be present at the most important ceremonies.	C. (1) Persons not admissible to the sacrifice are not allowed to know anything; (2) an armed guard prevents prying eyes.
3. Must wear the robes and clothing of the Gods. The witnesses are the Angels and Gods.	(23) Those taking part dressed themselves as gods.	X. Those taking part in the rites are dressed up as gods. Y. Which may be those of animals.
4. Must be ready to continue both intellectually and spiritually.	(4) Entrance dialogue and proclamation.	B. By way of preparation he fasts and practices other austerities.

Facsimile # 1 - The Death



5. Must descend below all things in order to rise above all things.	(22) The King was made the butt of the people	H. The people indulge at one point in obscenities, or buffoonery.
6. The battle of good against evil, light and darkness, death and resurrection, Christ and Satan.	(5) Ritual fight.	E. The King must fight a ritual combat (1) by arms, (2) by ceremony, (3) come out victorious.
7. The death of the God or King was often portrayed by a human substitute King during the ritual combat. The substitute could be the sacrifice of the King's enemy	(24) Human sacrifices.	
	(25) The King's brothers were killed.	

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
or those who may present a threat to the throne.	(26) Substitute King is killed	
Abraham was a substitute for Nimrod, as Christ became the infinite and eternal sacrifice for all the world and the substitute for Caesar during the coronation rituals.		
Facsimile # 2 - Resurrection and Ascension		
		
After the symbolic combat and death of the King, he must go into the basement of the Temple for three days representing being in the world of the dead.		
8. The King (god) must go into the world of the dead for three days. This becomes a time of chaos before the recreation when darkness reigned upon the face of the deep. All fires are to be extinguished for the three days	(6) The King went into retirement for a certain period. (3 days)	D. A kind of Sabbath is observed; The people are silent and lie quiet as at a death.
9. During the three days there is no light, no creation chaos reigns.	(17) All fires are extinguished	
While in the Basement of the Temple or the World of the Dead, the King must prepare himself for the glorious resurrection.		
10. The King must be cleansed from evil to come forth in the resurrection as the anointed King and God.	(8) The King was washed or baptized with water	
11. The anointing is an ordinance of the resurrection as those parts of the body are anointed to function proper and perfect	(12) The King was anointed with oil.	K. He is anointed with oil,

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
12. Robes are changed to show the progression toward King and God.	(2) The King was dressed in special robes.	I. The King is invested with special garments.
13. Every new life, or station requires a new name to signify the new creation and new creature. In exaltation you receive a new name that only the recipient knows.	(3) The King received a new name.	U. He receives a new name
14. The ritual and sacral meal. Life comes from death, sustenance and nourishment to both body and spirit comes from the sacrifice, death and resurrection of the God.	(7) The King receives a Communion or Sacrament	G. He receives communion

Coming out of the Temple or underworld after three days, order is now established. Life and light may continue. The New King now represents the Son of God on earth having participated in the ordinances and rituals of the Firstborn and Son of God.

Facsimile # 3 - The Enthronement






15. Part of the ritual dress to "trod upon the footstool of god" having your feet shod with the gospel.	(13) The King put on shoes as part of the coronation	P. He puts on shoes as part of the Coronation
16. The scepter, or "wa'as" scepter signifies the authority and power to rule and reign as king and the son of God on earth.	(14) The King received certain regalia. (emblems of authority)	Q. He receives other royal regalia such as a sword, a scepter, and a ring.

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
17. The covenant making process must take place accompanied with the oath formulary, as with Abraham.	(11) Admonitions and promises.	F. The King is (1) admonished to rule justly and (2) promises to do so.
18. The crown signifies the acceptance of the King from the gods and the masses. It is an earthly and heavenly crown.	(16) The King was crowned.	O. The King is crowned
19. The throne is the “mercy seat” where justice and judgment are rendered. The throne is the primordial mound, the center of creation.	(15) The king sat on the throne.	R. Sits upon a throne.
20. The King cannot be crowned without a Queen. Ascension and exaltation can only come to the righteous pair.	(27) The Queen was crowned at the same time as the King.	The Queen is consecrated with the King. W. So are the vassals or officials.
21. The rising sun on the primordial mound. A new day, and a new creation as light fills the earth.	(9) The King mounted a hill	S. The King takes three ceremonial steps in imitation of the rising Sun
22. Only the King can plant, prune, harvest and dispense the fruit from the tree of life.	(10) The King planted his life tree.	
23. With the new King comes the New Creation, as all creation sings the creation hymn (poem). The heavens and the earth rejoice.	(21) Festivities were held.	N. A feast is given.
24. Blessings are given to the masses signifying that all life and health, prosperity, and fertility is dispensed by the King and god, as the multitudes scramble for the blessings. Christ sweat drops of blood: the gift of mercy.	(18) The King scattered beans, etc. among the people.	M. The people rejoice with noise and acclamations.
25. As Abraham traveled around his God-given inheritance, so the King must see and accept his kingdom as the kingdom accepts him.	(20) After the coronation the King traveled around his domain and received homage.	T. He goes the round of his dominion, and receives the homage of the vassals.

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
Commencement is progression traveling up the scale or ladder of exaltation, being found true and faithful in one level and then progressing to the next. From Telestial to Celestial.		Z. The King may be consecrated several times, going up each time in the scale of kingship.

The Three Facsimiles in the Book of Abraham not only belong there, but they are in the proper order and place in the printed text. Abraham was trying to explain why and how he received the ‘blessings of the fathers’ by his using the Egyptian records and religion as “representations” (Abraham 1:12). Abraham himself explains that the facsimiles are “representations”, not the text or a translation. In Egypt, the ‘representations’ refer to the same aspects of Christ’s life as in the myth of Osiris and the religion of Egypt. Osiris the God Son is slain and sacrificed by an evil brother and then ascends into the world of the Gods and becomes a God as a resurrected being. He then becomes the God and power of exaltation, with whom all Pharaohs identified themselves in their quest for, and claim to, the Divine son-ship of deity and their eventual enthronement in the heavens as a God.

The Death of the God	The Resurrection and Ascension	The Enthronement
		

Purpose of the Book of Abraham

The Book of Abraham is a record or journal account, as is all scripture, about his receiving his covenant and blessing from God. The opening verses of the book explain what the book is about and why Abraham is writing the record.

2 And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, ***I sought for the blessings of the fathers***, and the ***right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same***; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and ***to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace***, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, ***I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers***.

3 It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, **even the right of the firstborn,** or the first man, who is Adam, our first father, through the fathers unto me.

4 I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed. (Abraham 1:2-4)

Abraham explains that his record is an abridgment of other records and all was written for the benefit of his posterity.

31 But the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore, a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me. (Abraham 1:31)

Joseph Smith provided this ancient record through inspiration using the papyrus that was bought from Michael Chandler as the catalyst. This revelatory record led to the instruction and ordinances that comprise the endowment in the Latter-day Temples. As discussed above, the papyri, like the plates, acted as a catalyst and became an integral part of the ‘gift and power of God,’ since they initiated the *revelatory process of the translation* of an ancient text of Abraham. Since the time of Joseph Smith there have been other texts discovered that are attributed to Abraham that verify the translated information and concepts found in the Joseph Smith Abraham.

Discovered and translated after the death of Joseph Smith, two texts are found in Volume One of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by James H. Charlesworth. One being the “Testament of Abraham” (considered an Egyptian text in origin) and the other being the “Apocalypse of Abraham.” Each of these texts, unavailable to Joseph Smith, have many of the same concepts: the creation, Abraham seeking further light and knowledge from God, the blessings of the Fathers, and angels taking him away, as depicted in the Facsimile 1 explanation. The Apocalypse of Abraham also contains a discussion of the spirits before the world was created and how some were more prepared to become the leaders on earth after the creation of the earth. In 1975 Janet H. Johnson translated and published a newly discovered Greco Egyptian vignette depicting an individual on a lion couch identified in the text to be Abraham.³



What all this means to latter-day saints is this: The actual age and content of the papyri that Joseph Smith acquired does not matter. Again, the papyri became the catalyst for the revelation that became the Book of Abraham. Because there existed an ancient text of Abraham, the Book of Abraham could be translated by revelatory process rather than intellectual means.

The few fragments of papyri that the church has would easily fit on the top of an ordinary desktop. Joseph recorded that the papyri he acquired from Michael Chandler “covered the floor of the parlor of the Mansion House,” indicating that today the church may only have about a tenth of what was

3. Johnson, Janet H. OMRM 56(1975): 44-45, col I, ll. 1-5, 12; and E.N. O’Neil (ll. 140-45) following Preisendanz, PGM XII. 474-79

originally in the possession of Joseph Smith. The fact remains, Joseph could not translate ancient Egyptian by intellectual means; it could only be done by the Gift and Power of God and was therefore revelatory in nature, as was the Book of Mormon, the Book of Moses, the Inspired Version of the Bible and the parchment hid up by John.

Many will use Facsimile #2 as a point of contention, declaring that the translation by Egyptologists do not agree with the explanation provided by Joseph Smith. According to Hugh Nibley, when Klaus Behr, an Egyptologist, looked at Facsimile # 2, he stated, as other Egyptian scholars have: “I can tell you what it says, but I cannot tell you what it means.” Joseph did not call the facsimiles translations; he called them “*explanations*.” In other words, Joseph is stating within the text, “I can tell you what it means—but not what it says.” Translating hieroglyphs is easy work compared to revelation, while explaining the meanings of the Facsimiles and Egyptian traditions is a more difficult task. Joseph is not providing a *translation* but an *explanation*, as stated at the head of each Facsimile. Within the text, Abraham calls them “*representations*”, which means they are not meant to be used as a translation; but a symbol to convey meaning. Although, when Facsimile # 2 is translated, it has much to do with the text and message of Abraham. This facsimile is an ordinance of resurrection and ascension through the heavens as a ‘justified’ or redeemed person that becomes an Osiris or an exalted Son of God in the temple of God. It is stated in the hieroglyphics of this facsimile that the person has become “so exalted and so glorious...a mighty God in the first Temple of God.” This was the goal and blessing that Abraham sought for as described in his record.

Those that seek to discredit the church and Joseph Smith because of the Book of Abraham do not understand the revelatory process. This record of Abraham, like the Book of Mormon, becomes a testament of its own reality. Joseph Smith could not create either book of his own accord or intellectual knowledge. The prophet never claimed an ability to translate intellectually, but recognized that it was the “gift and power of God” that gave him the ability to produce this scripture. The test of a classic is internal. Inspiration is revealed in the fruit, rather than living in the intellect. Despite his lack of education, Joseph became an instrument in the hands of God to begin a process that led to a spiritual and scriptural restoration of the church and gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul talks of the men that are used by God to fulfill His will:

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: (1 Corinthians 1:26-28)

The test of truth is within the text, not in Joseph Smith and his abilities or lack thereof. For “all things are possible with God.”