

THE JOSEPH SMITH EGYPTIAN PAPYRI

TRANSLATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

On November 27, 1967, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York presented the L.D.S. Church eleven papyrus fragments, which were once in the possession of Joseph Smith and some of which were apparently used by the Prophet in preparing the text of one of the Church's scriptures, the Book of Abraham. DIALOGUE has been able to obtain translations and identifications of these papyrus fragments (and one additional one recently discovered at the Church Historian's office) by distinguished American Egyptologists; we present them here together with various assessments that have been submitted concerning the significance of the fragments and their translations.

A SUMMARY REPORT

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John A. Wilson is the Andrew MacLeish Distinguished Service Professor of Egyptology at the University of Chicago, a teacher of ancient Egyptian language and history. When the Editors of DIALOGUE asked Dr. Wilson to make a translation of the eleven pieces recently turned over by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to the L.D.S. Church, he agreed to make a preliminary study and report. He expressed the opinion that a full scholarly translation might take as much as a year's time and would require full access to the manuscripts, with the opportunity of examining them minutely and of sorting out and relocating misplaced fragments.

THE DIFFERENT MANUSCRIPTS

The Joseph Smith Egyptian papyri once consisted of at least six separate documents, possibly eight or more. That count may be checked through the

eleven pieces recently transferred from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to the Church of the Latter-day Saints in November, 1967; from the "fragment" preserved in the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City from the early days (*Brigham Young University Studies*, VIII, No. 2, 191-94; *The Improvement Era*, Feb. 1968, 40 A-H); from the illustrations in the Pearl of Great Price; and from copies and mounted pieces of papyrus in a notebook which Joseph Smith labeled, "Valuable Discovery of hidden records" (known to me from the publication, "Joseph Smith's Egyptian Grammar and Alphabet," Modern Microfilm Co., Salt Lake City, 1966). Certainly there were once six different documents. Two other pieces may be additional, or may belong to one or another of the six.

What I shall call Document A is the papyrus fragment which is illustration No. 1 in the Pearl of Great Price and is Photo 1 of the present eleven pieces. That shows a scene of a man lying upon a bed, while another figure leans over him. Beside the scene there are vertical lines of hieroglyphs.

Document B was once the longest papyrus in the collection. It is represented by Photos 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 in the present collection, by the mounted piece preserved in the Church Historian's Office, and by the same mounted piece and two pages of copies in "Valuable Discovery." As we shall see, there were many columns of hieratic writing, all once the property of the same Egyptian lady. Their intermittent character suggests that many columns of writing are now missing, and that they probably were missing when the document was sold to the Church in the 1830's. In its present state the manuscript is exasperatingly jumbled. Apparently it had been cut up and faultily mounted before it was brought to Kirtland, Ohio. Dealers have always known that a number of small pieces bring in more money than a single large piece. We shall study Document B in greater detail below.

Document C consists of a single scene, showing another Egyptian lady in the presence of the god of the dead, Osiris. This appears in Photos 5 and 6 of the present collection.

Egyptologists describe Documents A, B, C, F, and G as copies of the Book of the Dead. Document D is a related mortuary text of late times, the so-called Book of the Breathings, in a hieratic hand coarser than that of Document B. It appears in Photos 10 and 11.

Document E is the hypocephalus which was reproduced as Facsimile No. 2 in the Pearl of Great Price. Another copy is on p. 13 of "Valuable Discovery." A hypocephalus was a cartonnage disk which was placed under the head of a mummy toward the end of ancient Egyptian history. I think that the name of the owner appears as Sheshonk.

Document F is the scene shown as Facsimile No. 3 in the Pearl of Great Price. It shows an Egyptian standing in the presence of Osiris.

Document G is a Book of the Dead carrying the name of its owner as Amenhotep. It appears in copy on pp. 2, 3, and 6 of "Valuable Discovery." Possibly it comes from the same manuscript as F.

Document H is mounted on p. 10 of "Valuable Discovery." It is a papyrus which shows Arabic writing. Of course that writing is much later than the

ancient Egyptian texts, and the handwriting seems to be of a much later type than the last use of papyrus in Egypt. It seems reasonable, then, that a piece of ancient papyrus was used perhaps 150 to 200 years ago to make some jottings. If so, Document H may have been part of one of the other manuscripts. I think that I can detect that the fiber of the papyrus runs vertically, which would make it the back side of a document.



PHOTO 10

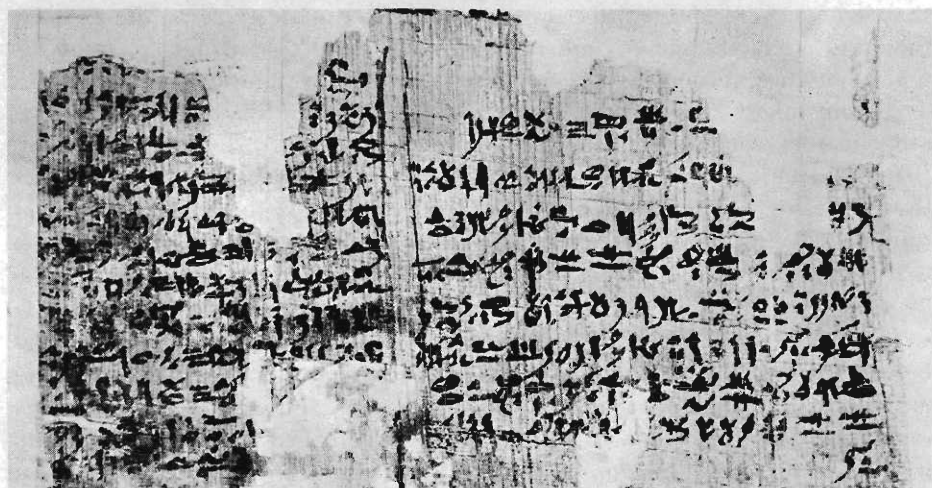


PHOTO 11

No Egyptologist is happy at studying either photographs or copies made by someone else. He wants to see the original. The present photographs are not particularly good: they are small scale and blurred around the margin. Further, although they pick up the black ink, they often fail completely on the red ink (the "rubrics"). The sections of Document B have been mounted with a brusque disregard for handwriting, continuity, or the grain of the papyrus. Pieces of the same manuscript have been wrongly moved in to fill holes, sometimes upside down, and there is at least one patch from another document.

Papyrus is a water reed, with a long and sturdy stem. The stalk was sliced into strips, which were then laid together with an overlap, to build up a sheet. The front side of a document would have these strips running horizontally, the back vertically, to make a strong bonding. It was the natural juice of the papyrus which provided the adhesive for each sheet of this manufactured "paper." Then these single sheets could be gummed together with a paste, to make a scroll. A Book of the Dead manuscript might be a single sheet, or it may have been made up into a roll ten or fifteen feet long.

There are a few experts in the world who operate, not in terms of the written text, as I do, but in terms of the fabric of the papyrus. The fibers show an individual pattern, so that isolated scraps may be mounted into place on the basis of the continuity of grain. Ideally these documents might have been studied by such an objective authority.

THE BOOK OF THE DEAD

With the exception of D and E, all these documents show the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. We continue to use that term, despite its inappropriateness. In contrast to other religions, the Egyptians had no one sacred book, a consistent text, which had become so thoroughly the guiding principle that it became fixed against change. Hardly any manuscript of the Book of the Dead is exactly like any other. They picked and chose their "chapters" — that is another misnomer — as the particular priestly composer pleased. One document might confine itself to chapters 15, 17, 125, and a few others; another manuscript might abbreviate longer chapters down, to squeeze in more than 150 chapters. We continue to use the term Book of the Dead, because it is understood, and because it is clumsy pedantry to be more specific: an unrelated collection of magical spells and religious hymns, intended to promote the welfare of a deceased Egyptian.

The ancestors of the Book of the Dead go back into prehistoric times, and were written down about 2350 B.C. In papyrus form the Book of the Dead begins about 1500 B.C. and continues to the beginning of the Christian Era. At first the writing was a sketchy form of the picture writing, hieroglyphic; increasingly later it was in the more flowing style called hieratic. Since handwriting changes from century to century, manuscripts of the Book of the Dead can be dated by the forms of individual signs or groups. Since the chapters showed changes in content and language as time went on, they may also be dated in terms of substance. All of the manuscripts here are of late times. That clearly means after 500 B.C., and for Document B after 300 B.C.

The Book of the Dead carried illustrations — called "vignettes" in the trade — which were attached to individual chapters. Usually we can see how these vignettes applied to the text. For example, chapter 63 carries the title, "the speech for drinking water and not being parched by fire." The vignette for earlier times shows the dead man receiving water; the vignette for later times, like our Document B, shows him pouring out water beside a fire. Such changes are also a limited criterion for dating.

The vignettes for Documents A and C are a little crude in drawing, as though they had been dashed off by an unskilled artist. However, the little sketches on Document B have a certain abstract elegance. The little lady with the pinched face and skeleton arms emerges as feminine and dignified.

There are two standard publications for the Book of the Dead: E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead. The Chapters of Coming forth by Day*, 3 vols., London, 1898; and T. George Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead, Documents in the Oriental Institute Museum at the University of Chicago*, Chicago, 1960. For our purposes, not only is Allen more recent, but the manuscripts he studies are much closer in time to the Joseph Smith papyri than most of those in Budge. In particular, Allen's Document R is very close to our Document B.

It is fairly easy to translate the Book of the Dead, and the renderings of two practiced Egyptologists will agree very well. It is another matter to understand the terms, allusions, and psychology of another religion. We might try to think of some of our modern hymns if the Old and New Testaments were unknown. An Eskimo might grasp the individual meanings of all the words in "Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest, beneath thy contemplation sink heart and voice oppressed," but he would still be puzzled by the allusions. If your city is of gold, why gum it up with milk and honey? Why have such a city, if it is just going to oppress its inhabitants? We have similar troubles in trying to apply our understanding to the religion of the ancient Egyptians, which dropped out of human ken for more than 1500 years.

Here I limit my preliminary report to Document B, in the hope that the study of that manuscript in relation to other known Books of the Dead will give it a setting and history.

DOCUMENT B — GENERAL

Document B is a Book of the Dead composed for a lady named Ta-shere-Min ("the Daughter of the god Min"), born to the lady Nes-Khonsu ("She Belongs to the god Khonsu"). In the translation we shall abbreviate the "Ta-shere-Min, triumphant, born to Nes-Khonsu, triumphant," down to T-N. If she had any titles which might have given her setting in society, I have not detected them in the extant pieces. She is simply called "the Osiris," that is, in death she has become undying, like the god of the dead. "Triumphant" means that she has been vindicated by the afterlife judgment. Her name and her mother's name are very common in late times. The Greeks heard them as something like Semminis and Eskhonsis. The inclusion in these names of the gods Min and Khonsu might limit the locality to the general area of Thebes, but that cannot be certain.

Because the owner of this scroll was a woman, the vignettes show a female, rather than the usual male dead person.

Document B was once of a handsome length, possibly as long as the twelve feet of Allen's R. We can identify many chapters. On the assumption that there may have been more than one hundred chapters, the nine extant pieces might be only about a third or a quarter of the original roll. Taking

photos 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9, which are within the lot returned to the Church; the Church Historian's fragment, which was already present in Salt Lake City; and pages 12 and 14 from "Valuable Discovery," which can be seen only in old copies, we have both continuity and extensive gaps. With the exception of the continuance of text from photo 2 to 4, and of 4 to 3, the precise relationship of one piece to another is not clear, nor is the amount of loss at the tops and bottoms of the columns clear. If photo 8 shows the usual expansive vignette, there is about as much lost above and below as there is still surviving.

i.) "Valuable Discovery," page 12. The text can be identified from the Book of the Dead as chapters 1, 2, 6, 10(?), 12, 13, 14. Since chapter 1 is already well advanced, it is clear that this was not the beginning of the scroll.

ii.) "Valuable Discovery," page 14. Despite the fact that two or three different fragments had been mounted as if one, the text can be identified from chapters 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, and 13. The vignette showing worshipping apes is the one applicable to chapter 15. The precise relation of ii to i and a part of iii is not clear.

iii.) The Church Historian's fragment (references above; it is also page 9 of "Valuable Discovery") is a jumble of unrelated pieces mounted together. The names of Ta-shere-Min and Nes-Khonsu and the handwriting connect it with Document B. One scrap gives passages from chapters 4 and 5, another from 125. Otherwise, I have not been able to identify the text.

iv.) Photo 7. On the right side appear parts of chapters 53 and 54, on the left 63 and 65.

v.) Photo 9. On the right side appear parts of chapter 57, on the left 67, 70, and 72. The beginning of chapter 72 should lead to vi.

vi.) Photo 2. On the left can be seen the end of chapter 72, then 74, 75, 76, and 77.

vii.) Photos 2 and 4. The lines run connectedly from one photo to another. The top of photo 4 is obscured by an intrusive piece, mounted upside down. Below it come chapters 83, 86, 87, and 89.

viii.) Photos 4 and 3. The lines connect from one photo to another. One can identify chapters 99, 100, and 101. Photo 3 has incorrectly mounted pieces.

ix.) Photo 3, left. In the upper corner a piece in a different handwriting has been mounted upside down, and the center and lower corner are tantalizing messes. However, chapters 103, 104, 105, and 106 can be identified.

x.) Photo 8. This is the vignette for chapter 110. The drawing of the woman's figure ties it to the papyrus of Ta-shere-Min, and its connection can be seen on the left margin of photo 3.

The manuscript runs from right to left. The cadence of the visible evidence is something like this:

iii. x. ix. viii. vii. vi. v. iv. iii. ii. i.

Translations of the listed chapters may be found in Budge and Allen. What follow are my own. If Allen's translation appears too literally narrow, it is closer to our text, while Budge's rendering is out-of-date and over-free. Because I always want to see with my own eyes, I shall limit myself to the six photos and the Historian's fragment, omitting comment on the copied texts which are i and ii above.

In the translations, square brackets inclose what is restored from other manuscripts, to fill out what we see in our pieces. Parentheses inclose my restoration or explanation.



PHOTO 7

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY ON DOCUMENT B

Photo 7

Although photo 7 shows two apparently separate pieces, they seem to be roughly in the right relation to each other. On the right hand side there is a vignette showing Ta-shere-Min seated beside a table holding offerings. She has a cup in her hand. Budge states that in the vignette for chapter 53, "the deceased is seated on a chair with a table of offerings before him, and his left hand, with a bowl therein, is stretched out over it." If we change the sex and

the arm, that fits our vignette. I regret that the first chapter to be translated, 53, has a distasteful subject.

"[The speech for not eating dung or drinking urine in the necropolis. Words to be spoken by the Osiris T-N: 'I am the sharp-horned bull, the guide of the sky, the lord of festivals of the sky, the great] illu[minator, who went forth as a flame,] who honors [length of years, the lion who gave the earth, so that the sun's rays go.] Dung is my abomination. I will not drink [urine. I will not walk upside-down. I am] a possessor of bread in Heliopolis. My bread is at the sky with [Re. My bread is at the earth with Geb. It is the evening-barque (of the sun) which] brings (it) to me from the house of the great god in Heliopolis. I ad[orn my intestines at the landing of the ferryboat. I cross] to the east of heaven. I eat of [that which they eat; I live on that (on which) they live. I have eaten] bread in the room of the possessor of offerings.' "

The newcomer to Egyptology probably reads that text with some sense of affront. The oldcomer is only a little better informed. The Egyptians were buried on the desert margin, which was devoid of life or water and which probably served as a public latrine. They wished assurance that they would eat and drink properly in the afterlife. The magical promise of this text was that they would eat and drink as the gods did.

The lower right corner is broken. However, the few signs below the vignette do fit chapter 54 of the Book of the Dead. Normally the vignette for this chapter shows a person standing and holding a small sail, which was the hieroglyph for air or breath. Probably our broken scene also showed that.

"[The speech for giving breath to a man in the necropolis. Words to be spoken by the Osiris T-N: 'O Atum, give me the sweet breath of your nostrils! I am that egg of the great honker. I guarded that] great [egg] which separated Geb [from earth. If I live, it lives, and vice versa. . . .] "

This again is a little baffling. One might suggest that the mummy case inside the coffin might be stifling. Magic then related the buried man to the unhatched goose inside some mythical egg. As it was able to breathe, so also the dead man.

In the upper left of photo 7 we have the end of chapter 63. For this the normal vignette showed the dead person pouring out two streams of water, as he stands beside a pot containing fire. Our remains fit that scene.

"[The speech for drinking water and not being parched by fire. . . . 'I shall not be parched; I shall not be baked. I am Ba]bi, [the first son of Osiris, who united to himself every god within] his eye in Heliopolis. I am the first heir [of the great unwrapped one, the weary one.] Osiris and his name have flourished. He has rescued your life by it.'

"[Another version. 'I am that decorated oar] with which Re [rows] and the elders row who lift up [the decay of Osiris,] . . . when he has rowed his marooned one, who has not [become parched. I have climbed the sun's rays. O you who preside over] the sanctuary, seize and behead what is seized, [travelling along this road on which I have gone forth.]' "

The best that can be said for that is that the western desert burial ground

was hot and dry. The magical spell somehow related the dead person to mythological forces who could not be burned up by dryness.

Next comes chapter 65, for which the standard vignette in late times was simply a person walking and holding a staff. On my photograph the title occurs as a rubric over her head, but the red ink does not come out clearly. Enough can be seen to make sure that it corresponds to its wording elsewhere.

“The speech for coming forth by day and having power over one’s enemies. Words to be spoken [by the Osiris T-N: ‘O you who rise as the moon and shine as the moon,] when you go forth [in your throng,] may you release me. [You who are in the sun’s rays,] open up the underworld. [See, I have gone forth on] this [day,] being blessed. [My blessed (relatives) grant to me that I live.] My enemies are brought to me, tied up, in the council. [The spirit of my mother is satisfied with] it, when (she) sees me standing on my two feet, with my staff in (my) hand, of [gold. I cut off] the body of a living one at the thighs of Sothis, a child by [their graciousness.]”

Photo 9

Little remains of the right column on photo 9. However, remains of chapter 57 can be identified. Elsewhere this shows the title, “the speech for breathing air and having control of water in the necropolis,” with a vignette showing both water and air (a sail). More than half of our text is lost. Then comes:

“[A mouth belongs to the Osiris] T-[N. His is a nose which is open in Busiris.] He rests in Heliopolis, [his house which Seshat built for him, and whose wall Khnum set up for him.] If the sky comes [with north winds, he sits in the south. If the sky comes with south winds,] he sits in the north. [If the sky comes with west winds, he sits in the east. If the sky comes] with east winds, [he] sits [in the west. His eyebrows are knitted over his nose, the Osiris] T-[N. He has freedom for] any [place where] she wishes [to sit.]” That “she” where the text previously carried “he” is the scribe’s belated recognition that the scroll was made for a woman.

That is the end of chapter 57. It seems to say that the deceased might breathe freely, sheltered from hot or cold winds. Traces of another chapter are visible below this, but I have not been able to identify it.

The left column starts with chapter 67. The simple vignette of a walking person seems to be normal in the late manuscripts for this chapter.

“[The speech for going outside. Words to be spoken by] the Osiris T-N: ‘The cavern is opened for those who are in the abysmal waters, freed for those who are in the sun’s rays. The cavern is opened (for) Shu, and I have gone out-of-doors. I have been sent in the boat of Re.’” The dead person is not to be pent up in the tomb, but is to have free movement in the open.

The title for chapter 70, which follows, is abbreviated because it continues the series of spells allowing free movement. Here, as elsewhere, it has no vignette.

“Another speech. Words to be spoken by the Osiris T-N: ‘I shall not come to rest, one who is over an abscess, a scribe sound of heart. (Osiris) is satisfied, as he rules Busiris, when I am on his bank. I breathe the east wind

by its head; I grasp the north wind by its hair; I have grasped the west wind by its skin. I have encircled the sky by its shoulder, and the south wind by (its) eyelashes. I (give) breath to the revered ones among the eaters of bread.'

"As for the one who knows this speech, he may go forth by day, while he walks among the living on earth, without his perishing forever."



PHOTO 9

That has a number of corruptions in the text: "abscess" for "court," "head" for "hair," and probably "shoulder." The little commercial tacked on at the end appears, with varying words, after a number of other chapters.

Chapter 72 follows. The accompanying vignette is puzzling. The dead woman should be facing either a funeral chest or a table upon which two gods sit. The chest or table seems to be present, but I cannot make head or tail out of the triangle perched on it.

"The speech for going forth by day and opening up the underworld in the west. Words to be spoken by the Osiris T-N: 'Hail to you, those lords of truth, free from falsehood, who remain alive forever, (to) the limits [of eternity]! . . .'"

The end of chapter 72 appears on photo 2.

Photo 2

The upper part and lower corners of photo 2 are torn and badly photographed. Where the right column is clear, the lines are nearly complete, lacking only a half dozen signs at the outer margin. The first visible text shows the continuation of chapter 72. Careful study of the original would extract more of this than my photograph shows.

“ . . . [I go upstream or downstream as I wish.] I go downstream to the Field [of Reeds. I go upstream to the Field of Offerings.] I have joi[ned] the Two Truths. [I am the Double-lion god.]’

“[If] this scroll is [put on earth] for him, or is set in writing upon his coffin, [it is a speech] (whereby) he goes forth by day in any form [which he wishes,] as well as entering his house without being checked. [There are given] to him bread, beer, and a large piece of [meat from] the altar of Osiris. He [goes forth to] the Field of Reeds. [There are given to him] barley and wheat there. So [he continues to thrive as] he did on earth, [and he does all that he wants] like those gods who are therein. (A charm) with true value a million times.”



PHOTO 2

The lengthy commercial guarantees both mobility and a full belly.

Chapter 74 follows. The vignette is the usual one of late times: the dead woman stands beside a two-legged serpent, a symbol of earth, since snakes live underground.

“The speech for stretching the legs [and going forth from earth. Words to be spoken] by the Osiris T-N: ‘You will do what you should do [against him,] O Sokar, Sokar, who is in his cave, who is the obstructor in the necropolis. I shine as the one who is over this district of heaven. I climb upon the sun’s rays, being weary, weary. I have gone, being weary, weary in the necropolis, upon the banks of taking away their speech in the necropolis. My soul is triumphant in the house of Atum, lord of Heliopolis.’”

Thus it seems that even Sokar, god of the necropolis, cannot restrain Tashere-Min from free movement outside of the tomb.

Chapter 75 follows. The vignette shows the dead person standing beside a column, which is the hieroglyph for Heliopolis (the On of the Bible).

"The speech for going forth to Heliopolis and taking a place there. Words to be spoken by the Osiris T-N: 'I have gone forth from the underworld. I have come from the limits of the earth. I shine upon the water. I understand about the entrails of a baboon. I have taken the ways to the holy gates. I occupy the places [of the pure ones] who are in [shrouds.] I break into the houses of Remrem. I have reached the seat of Ikhsefi. I have penetrated the sacred areas upon which Thoth stepped in pacifying the two warriors. I go, I go to Pe; I come to Dep.'"

Certainly the magic for enabling the deceased to have a place in the sacred city Heliopolis seems reasonable. His ending up in Pe and Dep, two parts of the sacred city Buto, can only be explained on the assumption that he has the freedom to go anywhere.

The next spell is chapter 76, for which the normal vignette is simply a walking person. Chapter 76 is the first of a baker's dozen of spells for transformations. It would have been intolerable that the dead person should be forced to remain an inert mummy throughout eternity; he should be enabled to assume any temporary form he pleased — a falcon, a lotus, a snake, a swallow, or a crocodile. This was not transmigration of souls; this was the power to make powerful or pleasing transformations.

"The speech for going into [any] form [that he wishes. Words to be spoken by] the Osiris T-[N]: 'I have passed] by the palace. It was the fowler [who brought me]. Hail to you who flies to heaven, [who illuminates the] stars, the protected white crown. He is in you, united [to you. O great god], make a way for me, so that I may pass by you.'"

I should be happy if I could explain how this spell gave the deceased the power of infinite transformation.

Chapter 77 follows, with its customary vignette of a falcon holding a scepter, the symbol of rule.

"The speech for taking the form of a falcon [of gold. Words to be spoken] by the Osiris T-[N]: 'I have appeared as [a great] falcon which came forth from his egg. I have flown as a falcon [of four cubits across] his back, while the wings were of greenstone [of Upper Egypt, who came forth from the hold of the] evening-barque. (My) heart has been brought to me [from the eastern mountain.] I have trodden in the [morning]-barque. There come to me those who are among the prime [val beings of them, bowing down] and kissing the ground. They give me praise [as I] appear . . .'" The rest is lost at the bottom of the column. A falcon was a god of rule in ancient Egypt, and the king was the falcon-god Horus. This then was a transformation for power.

Photos 2 and 4

Whoever cut this papyrus up into sections ignored the columns of writing and the empty margins between columns. Here we have connected text running from the left side of photo 2 onto the right side of photo 4. Then somebody mounted an intrusive fragment of text upside down in the upper right corner of photo 4. Its handwriting is the same as the rest of Document B. I have not identified it. We lack clear context for about three lines from the

top. Then we begin to see chapter 83, one of the spells for transformations. Its normal vignette would have shown a crested heron, serving as the phoenix.

“[The speech for taking the form of a phoenix. I am the fruit of every god, who knows the requirements of] their bodies. I am [this yesterday of] these [four uraeus-serpents,] as a form [in the earth, the elder Horus, who illuminates within his body,] as this god Se[th, Thoth being between them in the trial of him who] presides over Letopolis, [together with the Souls of Heliopolis, water being between] them, as I come [today, having appeared among the gods. I am Khon]su.’”



PHOTO 4

Out of that tangle of myth, I can only say that the deceased became very flexible in form, just as the phoenix was supposed to change.

Next comes chapter 86, for which we have more visible text. It shows its normal vignette of a swallow perched upon some object.

“The speech for taking the form of [a swallow. Words to be spoken by the Osiris T-JN: ‘I am a swallow; I am a swallow. I am really a scorpion, the daughter of Re. O gods, how sweet is the fragrance [of you, the fire] which went up from the horizon. O you who are in the city, I bring him who guards his district. Give me your hand, as I spend the day in the Island of Flaring-up. I went on an errand; I returned with a report. Open for me, so that I might tell what I have seen. Horus is the controller of barques. The throne of his father has been given to him. That Seth, the son of Nut, is in fetters, when he would act against me. I have taken stock of what is in Letopolis. I have folded my arms for Osiris. I went on an errand; I returned to tell. Let me pass so that I may report the errand. I am one who goes in accounted and numbered by that gate of the Supreme Lord. I have become pure in that

great district. I have driven away my evils. I know no falsehood. I have completely dispelled my evils which were on me. O doorkeepers, make a way for me. I am indeed one like unto you. I come and go [on foot, having] control of the course of the sun's rays. I know the secret ways and the gates of the Field of Reeds, so that I may be there. See, I have come. I have completely overthrown my enemies. My corpse is buried.'

"As for the one who knows this scroll, he may go forth by day in the necropolis and go back in after he has gone forth. If this speech is not known, he will not go back in after he has gone forth, being unable to go forth by day."

It seems as though a swallow might be a messenger of the gods, being released from sin for his services.

Chapter 87 and then chapter 88 follow. The vignette has combined the illustrations for these two into a single picture, with a human-headed snake and a crocodile-headed human. As we noted above, the serpent slept underground. Thus he is here called "son of earth," written with the picture of a snake following those words.

"The speech for taking the form of a son of earth. Words to be spoken by the Osiris T-N: '[I am a son of earth,] long of years, who sleeps and is reborn every day. I am a son of earth [at the ends of the earth,] as I sleep, am reborn, become new, and become young [every day.]'"

Then comes chapter 88. Sobek was the crocodile-god.

"[The speech for] taking the form of a crocodile. Words to be spoken by [the Osiris] T-N: 'I am Sobek [in the middle of his terror.] I am a crocodile, when his soul returns from his people. I am Sobek who carries off by robbery. I am [the fish of Horus] here in Egypt. I am the possessor of obeisance in Letopolis.'" That confers awesome power.

Chapter 89 then abandons the series of transformations and seeks to empower the dead man's soul to attend his corpse. The Egyptians pictured the soul as a bird, sometimes with a human head as in the vignette here, sometimes as a bird only, as on photo 1.

"[The speech for causing that] the soul of a man join his corpse in the necropolis. [Words] to be spoken [by the Osiris] T-N: '[O you who bring, O] runner who is in his hall, O great god, may you let [my soul come to me from any place where it may be.] If there be delay in your bringing [me my] soul [from any place where it may be, you will find the (sacred) Eye standing against you like those watchers over the sleeper in Heliopolis. Land] by the thousands belongs to the one who joins [to him.] . . .'" No more is visible in this column.

Photos 4 and 3

The continuity of photos 4 and 3 is marred by some of those disorders about which I have expressed such annoyance. The vignette of the little bird seems to be out of place. Above it is a piece upside down. In the upper left corner of photo 3 a piece upside down seems to be in a different handwriting, possibly that of photos 10 and 11. The center of 3 and its lower left are mere mishmash. Nevertheless, one can establish the continuity.

What we see first belongs to chapter 99, elsewhere entitled: "the speech for fetching a ferryboat in the necropolis." 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. Before we can read context we are well along in chapter 99.

"[. . . Hail to you, good of person, lords of truth, who continue to live forever to the limits] of eternity! I have access [to you.] . . .'" After that one sees scattered traces, but it is difficult to fit them into the text as known from other papyri.

Book of the Dead chapter 100 follows. Its vignette normally shows the deceased poling a boat, with or without gods as passengers. In our case the passenger is the sun-god Re, while the god Ptah watches from the shore.

"The speech for [causing that the soul of a blessed one be satisfied and for causing] that he go down into the barque of Re, together with his retinue. [Words to be spoken by the Osiris T-N]: 'I have ferried the phoenix over to Abydos, Osiris to Mendes. . . . [I have joined those who are among] the worshipping baboons. It is I, one of them. I have formed [the companion of Isis. . . . As I am strong] the Sacred Eye is strong [and vice versa. As] for him who keeps me away [from the barque of Re, the egg and the *abdu*-fish] are (thus) kept away.'

"[Words to be spoken over] a sheet [of papyrus,] upon which this speech [is written, together with a picture of this god, which has been drawn] with the powder of green fayence, mixed [with myrrh, and placed on this blessed one at his feet, without letting it come near his body. Ennobled is] this blessed one over his breast, and caused to join the gods who are in the retinue [of Re, when he has illuminated the Two Lands in the presence of] them. He goes up into the barque of Re each and every day. [Thoth takes account of him. With] true value a million times."

Here the deceased is empowered to join the never-dying boat of the sun, as it sweeps the sky day after day. The instructions at the end give the ritual for the dead woman's priest, telling him where he is to place the written spell with its vignette, before he recites the charm.

Next comes chapter 101, for which our vignette corresponds to the standard scene: the sun-god Re in his barque.

"The speech for [protecting] the barque of Re. Words to be spoken [by the Osiris T-N]: 'O stri [der over the water, who comes forth] from the floods [and sits on the stern of this barque, go to your position of yesterday. . . . O Re, in this your name of Re,] if you pass by the Sacred Eye [of seven cubits, its pupil of three and a half cubits, then you shall make me sound. I am a blessed one,] excellent . . .'" The vignette shows the Sacred Eye twice, although it hardly seems to match its claimed length of twelve feet. That is all I can identify in this column.

Photo 3

One would like to work at the left hand column of photo 3 with a pair of tweezers, to remove the intrusive pieces. Meanwhile, a lot can be gained in identifying the text which is in place.

I do not know whether the traces partly visible at the top show the end of a preceding chapter or the beginning of 103. At any rate, when we do have visible context, the chapter is 103. The usual vignette, the deceased before the goddess Hathor, is not visible.

“[The speech for being beside Hathor. Words to be spoken by the] Osiris T-N: ‘I am the one who passed by, pure. O Ihi, Ihi, [I shall be in] the retinue of Hathor.’” Ihi was the music-playing son of Hathor.

Chapter 104 shows a normal vignette of the deceased sitting with the gods.

“[The speech for sitting among] the great gods. Words to be spoken [by the Osiris] T-[N: ‘I sit among] the great gods. [I] have passed [by] the house of the evening-barque. It is a butler, the porter of Horus, son of Isis, who comes to me on business of Re. Food and sustenance are at the proper place, to provision the offering-bread for the great gods. It is a fowler whom he has brought.’



PHOTO 3

“As for the one who knows this speech, he sits among the [great] gods.”

Chapter 105 is unfortunately much obliterated. The vignette is clear, Ta-shere-Min standing in adoration beside a table heaped with offerings, which are framed by upraised arms, the hieroglyph for the *ka* or guiding spirit.

“[The speech for satisfying the spirit of a man] in the nec[ropolis]. Words] to be spoken by [the Osiris T-N: ‘Hail to you, my spirit, my lifetime! See, I have come to you. . . . I have brought to you natron and] incense, so that (I) might purify you with them, and purify [your spittle with them.] Overlook that evil arguing and the evil [speech] which I have spoken and this evil arrogance which I have shown, without giving me over to them. I am really this green papyrus-amulet which is at the throat of [Re, which was

given to those who are in the horizon. As they flourish] I flourish. As they flourish my spirit flourishes. As they flourish my lifetime flourishes, like unto them. The provisioning of my spirit is like unto theirs. O weigher of the scales, truth is as high as the nose of Re by day. O my spirit, you should not make a head which you weigh in yourself(?). Mine is an eye that sees, my ear hears. I am not really a bull of the sacrifices. From me there will be no mortuary offerings to those who are over Nut.' ”

There Ta-shere-min makes offerings to her own guiding spirit, in the expectation that she will thereby live and not become a sacrifice herself. The text was enlivened by ancient Egyptian puns: *ka*, “spirit,” *ka*, “bull,” and implicitly *kau*, “food”; *wadj*, “green,” *wadj*, “amulet,” and *wadj*, “to flourish.”

Then comes chapter 106. In late times its vignette shows the deceased offering to the god of Ptah. Here she extends the hieroglyphs for “offering” to that god.

“[The speech for giving offerings] in Memphis. [Words] to be spoken [by] the Osiris T-N: ‘O great one and elder, lord of provisions, O great one presiding over the upper houses, may you give me bread and beer! My breakfast [is a joint of meat, together with cakes. O ferryman of the Osiris T-N] in the Field of Reeds, [bring me these loaves of bread to your district, as to] your father, the great one who went [away in the ship of the god, going forth by day after coming to rest.]’ ”

No more is visible on photo 3.

Photo 8

Some chapters of the Book of the Dead have larger vignettes, which may occupy two or more columns all by themselves. Chapter 125 usually has the major scene of the dead person being introduced into the presence of Osiris — like Document C — while his heart is being weighed in the balances against the symbol for truth. The vignette for chapter 110 is also a large one, depicting “the Field of Reeds,” their Fields of Paradise. These happy areas are

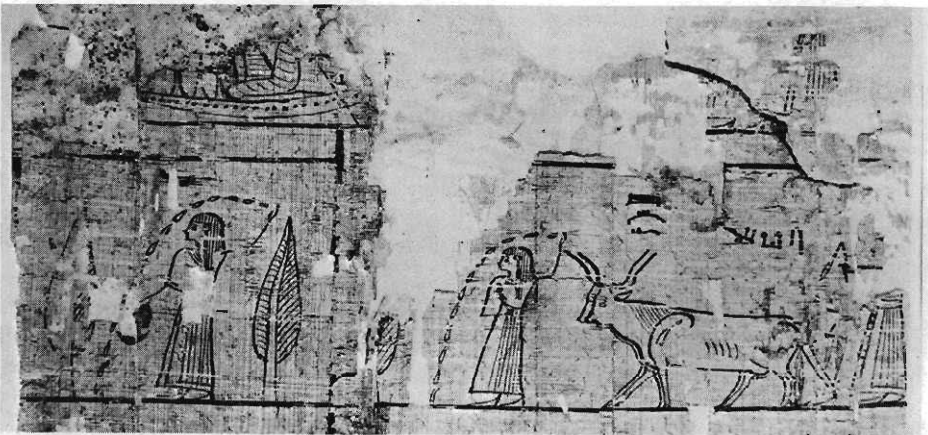


PHOTO 8

divided into three or four horizontal zones by channels of water. Thus in the early Papyrus of Ani in the British Museum, the top register shows Ani making offerings to various gods and poling a boat; the second register shows him reaping grain and driving the cattle who are treading out the grain; the third register shows him plowing; and the bottom register has simply watery convolutions through the Field of Reeds. In the top register of Allen's Document M the deceased makes an offering; in the second register he plows and reaps; in the third register his cattle tread out the grain; and the bottom register shows him poling a boat along twisted channels. Allen's Document R has only three registers: making offerings and poling a boat; offering, treading out, reaping, sowing, and plowing; and watery convolutions. These scenes are accompanied by hieroglyphic texts, which tell us that the barley of these fields is seven cubits high — about twelve feet. So the labor of cultivating is richly rewarded.

Our fragment shows the lower part of one register and most of another. It probably is only about a third of the total scene. Above, Ta-shere-min is poling a boat and standing beside something which may be a pile of offerings. Below, she is twice shown sowing grain and once plowing. Over the cattle are two legends. One simply says "Plowing"; the other says of the Fields of Paradise: "The sky is its length." Within these activities the little lady is as coolly erect as she appears elsewhere.

An illustration of our photo 3 appearing in *The Improvement Era*, Feb. 1968, page 50-D, shows more of its left margin than visible elsewhere. It makes it clear that the left side of photo 3 joined the right side of photo 8.

THE CHURCH HISTORIAN'S FRAGMENT

This is not one of the eleven pieces recently returned to the Church, but apparently has been in the archives indefinitely. It appeared as a page in "Valuable Discovery." It is a hodge-podge of unrelated scraps, but the names of Ta-shere-Min and of her mother Nes-Khonsu are visible.

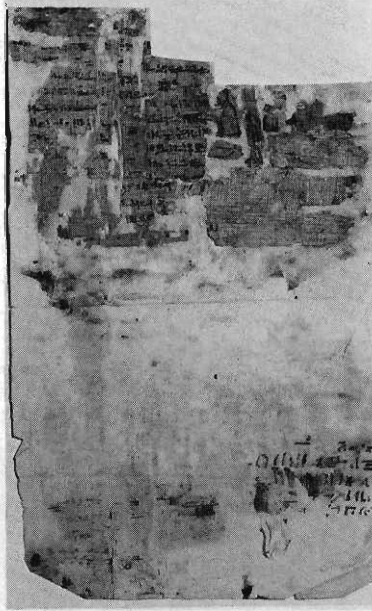
Near the top one scrap shows two consecutive statements from the so-called Negative Confession in chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead. As the dead person stood before his judges in the court of the dead, he made a formal denial of any wrongdoing in his lifetime, addressing about forty disavowals to an equal number of divine jurors. We see here pieces of his eighth and ninth "negative confessions."

"[O Fiery-of-Face, who came forth from Heliopolis, I have not] stolen the property of a god! "

"[O Breaker-of-Bones, who came forth from Heracleopolis, I have not told] a lie! "

Below that another piece shows parts of chapters 4 and 5. From chapter 4 one sees the words: "[I am one . . . who judged] the two [companions.] I have come that I might give the fields [to Osiris]." Under that, from chapter 5, one sees: "[I am the seeker of the weary one, who came forth from] Hermopolis, who lives on the entrails [of baboons.]" I can determine the relation of this scrap to what I listed above as piece ii.

Probably more exhaustive — and exhausting — research would identify further pieces of the Church Historian's fragment.



CHURCH HISTORIAN'S FRAGMENT

That is what a preliminary study shows for Document B. The lengthy chapter 125 is represented by only two phrases. The lengthy chapter 15 is indicated only by part of a vignette showing worshipping apes. The lengthy chapter 17 does not appear at all. Further, there are more gaps in the series of chapters than we should expect in a late Book of the Dead. Probably there is more missing than is present — much more. One sincerely hopes that some of the missing pieces may return to Mormon possession.

As for little Ta-shere-Min, we may know something about the terrors which she felt for the next world and about the great dreams which she had for eternal life. In the course of several weeks one has become quite fond of her. She had a manuscript which once showed careful craftsmanship and which presented her as a person of cool distinction. The Church may well be proud to have such a text.