Church leaves all decisions about the use or non-use of blood to the member or family concerned in consultation with their physician.

RICHARD A. NIMER

BONNEVILLE INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

In 1964 KSL and other Church-owned commercial broadcasting stations and operations were consolidated into Bonneville International Corporation (BIC), headquartered in Salt Lake City. The founding president of BIC was Arch L. Madsen. He was succeeded by Rodney H. Brady in 1985. Historically, its board of directors has included a member of the FIRST PRESIDENCY.

In addition to KSL Radio and Television, Bonneville has acquired and founded several other units: (1) a television station in Seattle, (2) radio stations in Seattle, New York City, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, and Phoenix; (3) Bonneville Media Communications, a full-service production and advertising company located in Salt Lake City; (4) Bonneville Washington News Bureau, in the nation's capital; (5) Bonneville Broadcasting System (BBS), a music programming service in Northbrook, Illinois, that provides "easy listening" and "soft adult contemporary" music programming to radio stations throughout the United States and abroad; (6) Bonneville Satellite Corporation, which was formed in Salt Lake City in 1980 and much of which was sold in 1987, with BIC retaining interest as a limited partner; and (7) Bonneville Entertainment Company, incorporated in 1981.

Bonneville programming reaches an international audience through placement of programs, public service messages, and other services on stations throughout the world, with emphasis on values-oriented programming. Bonneville stations do not proselytize for the Church, and religious programming (generally confined to Sunday morning) includes representation from all major religions. Neither BIC nor its divisions use their facilities to solicit funds for the Church. Bonneville and its divisions are taxpaying, commercial enterprises.

The philosophy of BIC is summarized in this excerpt from the company's statement of "Mission and Commitments": "We are a values-driven company composed of values-driven people. We are committed to serving and improving individuals, communities, and society through providing quality broadcast entertainment, information, news, and values-oriented programming."

BIBLIOGRAPHY


RODNEY H. BRADY

BOOK OF ABRAHAM

[This entry includes five articles:

Origin of the Book of Abraham
Translation and Publication of the Book of Abraham
Contents of the Book of Abraham
Facsimiles from the Book of Abraham
Studies About the Book of Abraham]

The Book of Abraham autobiographically recounts Abraham’s early years and is one of the texts in the LDS scriptural collection titled Pearl of Great Price. The article Origin of the Book of Abraham recounts the discovery and purchase of the Joseph Smith Papyri and events leading up to the publication of the Book of Abraham itself. The article Translation and Publication of the Book of Abraham details briefly both the process by which Joseph Smith produced the text of the Book of Abraham and the history of its appearance in print. The article Contents of the Book of Abraham surveys generally the events narrated in the book, including Abraham’s miraculous rescue from death and God’s covenant with him before he departed his homeland. Facsimiles from the Book of Abraham introduces the ancient Egyptian illustrations that are currently published with the work and assesses their relationship to the text. A review of studies published to date on the Book of Abraham appears in Studies about the Book of Abraham.

ORIGIN OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

In July 1835, while living in Kirtland, Ohio, the Prophet Joseph Smith purchased, on behalf of the Church, four Egyptian mummies and accompanying papyri from Michael H. Chandler, a traveling entrepreneur from Pennsylvania. The price was $2,400. Chandler had acquired eleven mummies in early 1833 and had sold the other seven in the
eastern United States prior to meeting Joseph Smith. Shortly after obtaining the antiquities, Joseph Smith announced that the papyri contained some writings of the patriarchs Abraham and Joseph, both of whom had lived in Egypt (Gen. 12:37, 39–50).

These antiquities had been exhumed by Antonio Lebolo on the west bank of the Nile River opposite the ancient city of Thebes (present-day Luxor), probably between 1817 and 1821. Lebolo, born in Castellamonte, Piedmont (northern Italy), had been a gendarme during Napoleon’s occupation of the Italian peninsula. When Napoleon was defeated, Lebolo chose voluntary exile rather than face imprisonment under the reemerging Sardinian monarchy. He moved to Egypt, where he was employed by Bernardino Drovetti, former consul general of France in Egypt, to oversee his excavations in Upper Egypt. Drovetti also allowed Lebolo to excavate on his own. Lebolo discovered eleven well-preserved mummies in a large tomb. Because Lebolo directed several hundred men excavating at different sites, the exact location has not been identified. The mummies were shipped to Trieste, where Lebolo authorized Albano Oblasser, a shipping magnate, to sell them on his behalf. Lebolo died February 19, 1830, in Castellamonte. Oblasser forwarded the eleven mummies to two shipping companies in New York City—McLeod and Gillespie, and Matlind and Kennedy—to sell them to anybody who would pay an appropriate sum. The proceeds were to be sent to Lebolo’s heirs. Chandler acquired them in the winter or early spring of 1833. He claimed that Lebolo was his uncle, but that relationship has not been confirmed.

It has become clear that some Abrahamic literature exhibits links with Egypt. For example,
the Testament of Abraham—likely first written in Greek—almost certainly derives from Egypt. Substituting a biblical figure such as Abraham in Egyptian hieroglyphic scenes is a Jewish technique known from the Hellenistic period (Grobel, pp. 373–82). Thus, it is not surprising that Egyptian texts are somehow linked to the appearance of the Book of Abraham.

According to some Egyptologists, the writings of Abraham acquired by Joseph Smith are to be dated to the early Christian era. Such dating is not without precedent. The Testament of Abraham, edited initially by M. R. James in 1892, was described by him as “a second century Jewish-Christian writing composed in Egypt” (Nibley, pp. 20–21).

The identity of the mummies is not known, since there are no primary sources that identify them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

H. DONL PETERSON

TRANSLATION AND PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM
On October 10, 1880, in a general conference, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints voted to accept the book of Abraham as a scriptural work. Several views have been advanced concerning the process whereby the Prophet Joseph Smith produced the work. Although he and his associates began an “Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar” while they studied the papyri, the purpose of that work is obscure. It was not completed, explained, or published by Joseph Smith or any of his successors. However, it is certain that he began working in KIRTLAND, OHIO, on the relevant Egyptian papyri soon after purchasing them from Michael H. Chandler in 1835.

Probably no one in the United States in 1835 could interpret Egyptian hieroglyphics through ordinary translation techniques. When he translated the gold plates of the Book of Mormon from the “reformed Egyptian” text (1827–1829), the Prophet stated that he did it “by the gift and power of God.” Likewise, it was principally divine inspiration rather than his knowledge of languages that produced the English text of the book of Abraham. His precise methodology remains unknown.

On July 5, 1835, the Prophet recorded, “I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham . . . Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth” (HC 2:236). After delays, Joseph Smith appointed two men on November 2, 1837, to raise funds to help translate and print the book of Abraham. But because of further difficulties, he was unable to begin publishing for four more years. The book of Abraham was first printed in three issues of the Times and Seasons on March 1, March 15, and May 16, 1842. These installments contained the entire current book of Abraham, including the three facsimiles. In February 1843, Joseph Smith promised that more of the book of Abraham would be published. However, continued harassment by enemies kept the Prophet from ever publishing more of the record. It did receive considerable notoriety when several prominent eastern newspapers in the United States reprinted Facsimile I and part of the text from the Times and Seasons publication.

In 1851 the writings of Abraham were published in England as a part of the Pearl of Great Price, a small compilation by Franklin D. Richards containing some of Joseph Smith’s translations and revelations. It was this compilation that was canonized in 1880, in SALT LAKE CITY, thereby placing it alongside three other sacred collections or standard works: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants.

In 1856 the papyri were sold by Joseph’s widow to Abel Combs. With the exception of a few fragments returned to the Church in 1967, the present location of the papyri is unknown.

[See also PAPYRI, JOSEPH SMITH.]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

H. DONL PETERSON
CONTENTS OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM 

The book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price consists of an account of Abraham’s experiences with the Lord in four lands: Chaldea, Haran, Canaan, and Egypt. This observation is consistent with the work’s opening phrase, “In the land of.” Except for events chronicled in the first chapter, Sarai (Sarah) shared fully the vicissitudes and triumphs of her husband.

As the work opens, Abraham is living among an idolatrous people in Chaldea (Abr. 1:1, 5–7). But because of severe persecution (1:12, 15) after having preached against their wickedness, he decides to emigrate. Resulting official opposition almost costs Abraham his life, as a human sacrifice (1:12–15). When he prays for divine help, an angel rescues him, promising that he will be led to a new land and receive the priesthood (1:15–19).

When the famine prophesied by the angel comes to Chaldea (1:29–30), Abraham departs with Sarai, his nephew Lot, and his family, with his father, Terah, following the company (2:4). After they settle in Haran, the Lord commands Abraham to continue on to Canaan and reveals to him the founding elements of the ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (2:6–11). Because of famine, Abraham goes to Egypt, where the Lord commands him—a feature absent from Genesis 12:11–13—to introduce Sarai as his sister so that the Egyptians will not kill him (2:21–25).

In the third chapter, Abraham describes a vision that he received through a urim and thummim concerning the worlds created by God, the preeminent spirits of people, and the council in heaven wherein the gods (cf. John 1:1–4, 14; Heb. 1:1–3) planned the creation of the earth and humankind. The fourth and fifth chapters recount the completion of these plans and the placing of Adam and Eve in the GARDEN OF EDEN.

By the book’s account, Chaldea was under Egyptian hegemony during Abraham’s lifetime. Local religion included Egyptian solar worship, the worship of Pharaoh, and human sacrifice. The discovery of the land of Egypt is attributed to Egyptus, daughter of Ham and Egyptus; her eldest son, whose name was Pharaoh, established its first government.

Doctrinal contributions of the book include a fuller explanation of Abraham’s covenant and its relationship to the gospel (2:6–11), and a better understanding of premortal life (3:22–28). Concerning astronomy, it names the celestial body nearest God’s abode, Kolob (3:2–4), and details the creation of the earth by a council of Gods in the fourth chapter. Abraham 1:26–27 has been interpreted by some as the scriptural basis for previously withholding the priesthood from blacks.

Concerning biblical connections, the idolatry of Terah (cf. Josh. 24:2) and the Lord’s rescue of Abraham (cf. Isa. 29:22) are spelled out in the book of Abraham and in other ancient Abraham texts.

Many themes of the book appear in other ancient literatures, including Abraham’s struggle against idolatry (Jubilees 12; Charlesworth, Vol. 2, pp. 79–80), the attempted sacrifice of Abraham (Pseudo-Philo 6; Charlesworth, Vol. 2, pp. 310–12), and Abraham’s vision of God’s dwelling place, events in the Garden of Eden, and preeminent spirits (Apocalypse of Abraham 22–23; Charlesworth, Vol. 1, p. 700). God’s instruction to Abraham to introduce Sarai as his sister is echoed in the Genesis Apocryphon (column 19) as having come through a dream. Abraham’s teaching astronomy to Egyptians (Book of Abraham Facsimile 3) is described in Pseudo-Eupolemus 9.17.8 and 9.18.2 (Charlesworth, Vol. 2, pp. 881–82) and in Josephus (Antiquities 1.8.2).

BIBLIOGRAPHY


STEPHEN E. THOMPSON

FACSIMILES FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

Three facsimiles are published with the text of the book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price. All are similar to Egyptian illustrations known from other sources.

FACSIMILE NUMBER 1. Representations similar to Facsimile 1 abound in Egyptian religious texts. A typical example appears in the 151st chapter of the Book of the Dead, showing the god Anubis embalming Osiris, who is lying on a lion couch. In some details, such as the posture of the reclining figure, Facsimile 1 differs from other Egyptian texts.
Only for Facsimile 1 is the original document known to be extant. Comparisons of the papyrus fragments as well as the hieroglyphic text accompanying this drawing demonstrate that it formed a part of an Egyptian religious text known as the Book of Breathings. Based on paleographic and historical evidence, this text can be reliably dated to about the first century A.D. Since reference is made to this illustration in the book of Abraham (Abr. 1:12), many have concluded that the Book of Breathings must be the text that the Prophet Joseph Smith used in his translation. Because the Book of Breathings is clearly not the book of Abraham, critics claim this is conclusive evidence that Joseph Smith was unable to translate the ancient documents.

In the historical documents currently possessed by the Church, Joseph Smith never described the actual process he used in translating ancient documents. In reference to the Book of Mormon, he said that it was “not expedient” for him to relate all the particulars of its coming forth (HUC 1:220; see Book of Mormon: Translation by Joseph Smith). He did, in several instances, refer to the book of Abraham as a translation (HUC 4:543, 548); and when the installments of the book of Abraham were published in the Millennial Star, it was described as being “translated by Joseph Smith” (July 1842, p. 34). Both Wilford Woodruff (in his journal) and Parley P. Pratt (in the July 1842 Millennial Star) maintained that the translation was done by means of the Urim and Thummim, although Joseph Smith himself does not mention using this instrument anywhere in the translation.

One must consider, however, what Joseph Smith meant by translation. Section 7 of the Doctrine and Covenants offers one standard measure. Here, the Prophet, using the Urim and Thummim, translated a “record made on parchment by John the Revelator.” Although it is not known whether Joseph Smith actually had this document, he provided a translation of it. Since it is not known just how Joseph Smith translated, it is reasonable to postulate that, when studying the Egyptian papyri purchased from Michael Chandler, Joseph Smith sought revelation from the Lord concerning them and received in that process the book of Abraham. He might then have searched through the papyri in his possession to find illustrations similar to those he had learned by revelation. This forms one possible explanation of how drawings done about the first century A.D. were used to illustrate the book of Abraham.

Facsimile Number 2. Egyptologists call Facsimile 2 a hypocephalus (Greek for “under the head”), and numerous examples are preserved in museums around the world. Their stated purpose was to keep the body warm (i.e., ready for resurrection) and to transform the deceased into a god in the hereafter. Joseph Smith explained that Facsimile 2 contained representations of God, the earth, the Holy Ghost, etc. His explanations are, in general, reasonable in light of modern Egyptian knowledge. For example, the four standing figures in the lower portion of the facsimile are said by Joseph Smith to represent “earth in its four quarters.” The Egyptians called these the four sons of Horus and, among other things, they were gods of the four quarters of the earth.

Facsimile Number 3. Facsimile 3 presents a constantly recurring scene in Egyptian literature, best known from the 125th chapter of the Book of the Dead. It represents the judgment of the dead before the throne of Osiris. It is likely that it came at the end of the Book of Breathings text, of which Facsimile 1 formed the beginning, since other examples contain vignettes similar to this. Moreover, the name of Hor, owner of the papyrus, appears in the hieroglyphs at the bottom of this facsimile.

Joseph Smith explained that Facsimile 3 represents Abraham sitting on the pharaoh’s throne teaching principles of astronomy to the Egyptian court. Critics have pointed out that the second figure, which Joseph Smith says is the king, is the goddess Hathor (or Isis). There are, however, examples in other papyri, not in the possession of Joseph Smith, in which the pharaoh is portrayed as Hathor. In fact, the whole scene is typical of Egyptian ritual drama in which costumed actors played the parts of various gods and goddesses.

In summary, Facsimile 1 formed the beginning, and Facsimile 3 the end of a document known as the Book of Breathings, an Egyptian religious text dated paleographically to the time of Jesus. Facsimile 2, the hypocephalus, is also a late Egyptian religious text. The association of these facsimiles with the book of Abraham might be explained as Joseph Smith’s attempt to find illustrations from the papyri he owned that most closely matched what he had received in revelation when translating the Book of Abraham. Moreover, the Prophet’s explanations of each of the facsimiles
accord with present understanding of Egyptian religious practices.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


MICHAEL D. RHODES

STUDIES ABOUT THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

DOCTRINAL COMMENTARIES. Doctrinal studies of the book of Abraham have usually been components of general commentaries on the Pearl of Great Price without focusing on the book of Abraham in particular. George Reynolds and Janae Sjodahl’s Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City, 1965) is a typical example. The most comprehensive study of this sort is Doctrinal Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City, 1969) by Hyrum Andrus.

HISTORICAL STUDIES. In 1912 the pamphlet Joseph Smith, Jr., as a Translator by F. S. Spaulding, Episcopal bishop of Utah, attempted the first formal non-LDS study of the book of Abraham. It contained letters from eight leading Egyptologists concerning the three book of Abraham facsimiles and commenting on the "accuracy" of their interpretation by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The scholars unanimously agreed that the Prophet was wrong. At the time, no Latter-day Saint scholar was capable of refuting their claims. It was not until 1936 that J. E. Homans, a non-Latter-day Saint writing under the pseudonym R. C. Webb, published Joseph Smith as a Translator, defending the Prophet's abilities as a translator, but not directly addressing the points that were made by the Egyptologists.

In 1967 eleven fragments of the Egyptian papyri once owned by Joseph Smith were rediscovered by Aziz S. Atiya and were then presented to the Church by the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. Several pieces were determined to be from an Egyptian religious text known as the Book of Breathings. Three noted Egyptologists soon made translations of and commentaries on the fragments, which resulted in new attacks on Joseph Smith's "inabilities" as a translator. The critics argued that the Book of Breathings bore no relationship to the book of Abraham, which Joseph Smith apparently claimed to have translated from these very papyri. Indeed, the Book of Breathings is a late text, originating about the first century A.D., some 2000 years after the time of Abraham. Against criticisms such as these, Hugh Nibley has consistently and ably defended Joseph Smith, maintaining that the book of Abraham should be evaluated on the basis of what it claims to be—Abraham's own account of his life. Nibley's research has shown that a significant number of links exist between the book of Abraham and ancient texts related to Abraham. These similarities seem too numerous and subtle to be attributed to mere coincidence.

In his explanation of Facsimile 2 in the book of Abraham, Joseph Smith maintained that certain information contained therein was not to be revealed to the world, "but is to be had in the Holy Temple of God." Studies of Egyptian temple ritual since the time of Joseph Smith have revealed parallels with Latter-day Saint temple celebrations and doctrine, including a portrayal of the creation and fall of mankind, WASHINGS AND ANointings, and the ultimate return of individuals to God's presence. Moreover, husband, wife, and children are sealed together for eternity, GENEOLOGY is taken seriously; people will be judged according to their deeds in this life, and the reward for a just life is to live in the presence of God forever with one's family. It seems unreasonable to suggest that all such parallels occurred by mere chance.

A number of pseudopigraphic texts purporting to be accounts from the life of Abraham have come to light since Joseph Smith’s day, such as the Apocalypse of Abraham and the Testament of Abraham, documents that exhibit notable similarities with the book of Abraham. For example, in chapter 12 of the Testament of Abraham there is a description of the judgment of the dead that matches in minute detail the scene depicted in Facsimile 3 of the book of Abraham and, incidentally, chapter 125 of the Egyptian Book of the Dead. In fact, parallels to almost every verse in the book of Abraham can be found in the pseudopigraphical writings about Abraham.

In summary, the numerous similarities that the book of Abraham and associated Latter-day Saint doctrines share with both Egyptian religious texts and recently discovered pseudopigraphical
writings may confirm further the authenticity of the Joseph Smith translation known as the book of Abraham. A major question about its authenticity continues to revolve around whether Joseph Smith translated the work from the papyrus fragments the Church now has in its possession or whether he used the urim and thummim to receive the text of the book of Abraham by revelation, as is the case with the translation of the scroll of John the Revelator, found in Doctrine and Covenants section 7, or the book of Moses, which is excerpted from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible and is also found in the Pearl of Great Price. From these examples, it is evident that for Joseph Smith it was not necessary to possess an original text in order to have its translation revealed to him. In his function as prophet, seek, and revelator, many channels were open to him to receive information by divine inspiration.

[See also Book of Abraham facsimiles.]

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Homan, J. E. Joseph Smith as a Translator. Salt Lake City, 1936.

MICHAEL D. RHODES

BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS
The Prophet Joseph Smith and a council of high priests collected the Prophet's early revelations in November 1831, into the Book of Commandments. They originally decided to print 10,000 copies of the book at Independence, Missouri, but later reduced this number to 3,000. As editor of the Church's newspaper called The Evening and The Morning Star and of the Book of Commandments, William W. Phelps also printed some of the major revelations in that paper during 1832–1833.

Publication plans were frustrated when a mob destroyed the printing establishment on July 20, 1833, when Phelps had printed only five 32-page signatures. These 160 pages contained sixty-five revelations, the last of which was not completely typeset. Although fire destroyed most of these uncut pages, Church members salvaged enough to put together about a hundred copies, only a few of which survive today. The revelations in the Book of Commandments became part of a larger collection titled the Doctrine and Covenants, first printed in 1835.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ROBERT J. WOODFORD

BOOK OF JOSEPH OF EGYPT
See: Joseph of Egypt: Writings of Joseph

BOOK OF LIFE
In a figurative sense, the book of life is the complete record of one's life, the sum total of thoughts, words, and deeds written in the soul, of which the Lord will take account in the day of judgment (Rev. 20:12; Alma 12:14).

The scriptures also speak of a book of life, or "the Lamb's book of life," as "the record . . . kept in heaven" (D&C 128:7) in which are written both the names and deeds of the faithful. It is also the heavenly register of those who inherit eternal life (Heb. 12:23; Alma 5:58; D&C 76:68), "the book of the names of the sanctified, even them of the celestial world" (D&C 88:2; cf. Mal. 3:16–17).

In the Bible, the phrase "book of the living" appears first in Psalm 69:28, and the notion of a heavenly ledger is alluded to often (Ex. 32:32–33;