

What is "The Book of Breathings"?*

HUGH NIBLEY**

MEET THE FAMILY

Upon their publication in 1967, the Joseph Smith Papyri Nos. X and XI were quickly and easily identified as pages from the Egyptian "Book of Breathings." The frequent occurrence of the word *snsn* provided a conspicuous clue, and, though the last page of the book (the one that usually contains the title) was missing, its contents closely matched that of other Egyptian writings bearing the title *sh'* (*sh'i*, *sh'.t*) *n snsn*, commonly translated "Book of Breathing(s)." A most welcome guide to the student was ready at hand in J. de Horrack's text, translation, and commentary on a longer and fuller version of the same work (Pap. Louvre 3284) which he published in 1878 along with another version of the text (Louvre No. 3291) and variant readings from a half dozen other Paris manuscripts.¹ Thanks to de Horrack, the experts found their work already done for them, and they showed their gratitude by consistently following the readings of the de Horrack's text and translation instead of the Joseph Smith text whenever the latter proved recalcitrant.

A Berlin manuscript of the Book of Breathings was published with a Latin translation, by H. Brugsch as early as 1851,²

*This article is to be, substantially, the second chapter of a forthcoming book to be published by Deseret Book Company. It will be devoted entirely to a study of the Joseph Smith Papyri X and XI.

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¹J. de Horrack, "Le livre des respirations," *Bibliothèque Égyptologique* 17 (1878), pp. 110-137, Plates vii-xiii.

²A recent summary of the literature may be found in G. Botti, "Il Libro del Respirare, etc," in *Jnl. of Egypt. Archaeology (JEA)*, 54 (1968), pp. 223-230; cf. Budge and Chassinat, below, notes 3 & 6.

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Pap. du Louvre N° 3284.
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The above is Professor de Horrock's reproduction of the best-known manuscript of the "Book of Breathing" from *Bibliothèque Egyptologique* 17 (1878) Plates VII-XI. The portions underlined are virtually identical with the surviving parts of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri X and XI and the glued sections on IV (see pp. 161, 169, and 173 below). The broken underline of line 6 on page 2 identifies synonymous wording of both texts. The contents of page 4 are entirely missing from the Joseph Smith Papyri having been either destroyed or never included in the original.

and within a decade of de Horrack's work E.A.W. Budge came out with a magnificent facsimile in color of the "Kerasher" Book of Breathings of the British Museum (No. 9995), accompanied by a transliteration into hieroglyphics and a translation.³ In 1935 and 1936 Georg Moeller published facsimiles of a Berlin "Buch von Atem" (Pap. 3135) as reading exercises for students,⁴ and recently J.-C. Goyon has brought together more exemplars.⁵

Along with our "Book of Breathings," another writing bearing the same name but sometimes designated by the Egyptians themselves as "The Second Book of Breathings," once gave rise to some confusion. It was published in 1895 by J. Lieblein under the mistaken title of *Que mon nom fleurisse*;⁶ at the time over one hundred copies of the work were available, and the most striking thing about it was the liberty displayed by the scribes. "The things reported," wrote Chassinat, "the conceptions presented are identical in all of them [the Mss], but the form in which they are expressed varies almost to infinity. . . . according to the caprice or personal beliefs of the scribe and the resources of the buyer . . ."⁷ The writers of the first Book of Breathings do not take such liberties, and yet the two writings are so closely associated that the ancient scribes "often made no distinction between the two books," giving both the same title,⁷ and G. Botti treats them as subdivisions of the same work.⁸ Just as these writings seem to blend into each other, so they fuse with still other works; like other Egyptian funerary writings, they everywhere betray their dependence on earlier texts as well as their contributions to later ones—Botti suggests that the two Rhind Papyri "are substantially derived from" the Breathing texts.⁸ The effect is that of a spectral

³In E.A.W. Budge, *Facsimile of the Papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerasher and Net-Chemet*, (Br. Mus., 1899), pp. 33-43, and plates.

⁴G. Moeller, *Hieratische Lesestücke* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1935), p. 32, and *Hieratische Paläographie*, 3 (Leipzig, 1936), Taf. XI.

⁵J.-C. Goyon, *Le Papyrus du Louvre No. 3279* (Cairo, 1966, in *Bibliothèque d'Etude*, No. 42).

⁶Discussed by E. Chassinat, "Le Livre second des Respirations," in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1895, pp. 312-314, who provides a translation of one of the texts, pp. 317ff; G. Botti, "Il Libro del Respirare," pp. 226-8, has given a transliteration and translation of another.

⁷Chassinat, p. 314.

⁸Botti, p. 224. After the Amarna Period appeared a spate of freely composed funerary texts, all using familiar materials, but in new forms and combinations. These are designated by A. Piankoff as "The Mythological Papyri," S. Schott, "Zum Weltbild der Jenseitsführer des neuen Reiches," *Goettinger Nachrichten*, 1965, No. 11, p. 168. In the 26th Dynasty the Egyptians "recher-

band of writings that blend imperceptibly into each other and so form an unbroken continuum that in the end embraces the entire funerary literature. Of course, some texts are more closely related than others, but if we attempt to run down everything in the Book of Breathings to its source, or to establish a priority or order of derivation we soon find ourselves going through *all* the funerary texts and finding them all quite relevant to our subject.

For the Book of Breathings is before all else, as Bonnet observes, a *composite*, made up of "compilations and excerpts from older funerary sources and mortuary formulas."⁹ From the Second Book of Breathings, hardly distinguishable from it, it blends off into such earlier writings as "The Book of Passing through the Eternities," the "Amduat," and the "Book of Gates," in which we recognize most of the ideas and even phrases of the "Sensen" Papyrus.¹⁰ Maspero's observation that "The Book of Breathings was a composition of the later period analogous to . . . the Book of Passing through Eternity, the Book of Transformations, and other writings which one finds on Greco-Roman mummies following the example or taking the place of the Book of the Dead,"¹¹ now finds support in E. Hornung's declaration that "The Book of the Dead was in Roman times supplanted by the shorter Books of Breathing."¹²

Since it would seem to be "just more of the same," one is surprised to hear Botti's ringing declaration that "the *Book of Breathing* is without doubt the most important exponent of the funerary literature which flourished especially at Thebes about the first and second centuries after Christ, or, according to Moeller, at the beginning of the first century before Christ."¹³

chaient avec passion" and reproduced accurately texts going back to the earliest times, P. Barguet, *Le Livre des Morts des anciens Egyptiens* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1967), p. 13. Hence though the texts conform to the "Zeitgeist" through the centuries, "der Grundtenor bleibt stets der gleiche," G. Thausing, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch (Papyrus Reinisch)*, etc. (Cairo, 1969, in Schriften des österreichischen Kulturinstituts Kairo, Arch.-hist. Abt., Bd. 1), p. 3.

⁹H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1952), p. 59.

¹⁰W. Wreszinski, "Das Buch von Durchwandern der Ewigkeit," *Aegyptische Zeitschrift (AZ)* 45 (1908), pp. 111ff; Chassinat, "Le Livre second des Respirations," p. 315.

¹¹G. Maspero, "Le Livre des Respirations," in *Bibliothèque Egyptologique* 2 (1893), p. 477; E. Hornung, *Einführung in die Aegyptologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), p. 71.

¹²Hornung, p. 71. The neglected *Demotic* family of "Breathing" texts is also "very close to the other texts of the Book of the Dead," Botti, p. 224.

¹³Botti, p. 223.

What makes it so important? Two things, principally, its timing and its packaging. The Book of Breathing is the great time-binder; it comes towards the end of Egyptian civilization and so wraps everything up, right back to the beginning. The same continuum that passes from one type of text to another without a break also passes from one age to another from the earliest to the latest times. ". . . the ideas and beliefs expressed in it are not new," Budge pointed out, "indeed, every one of them may be found repeated in several places in the religious works of the ancient Egyptians All the gods mentioned . . . are found in the oldest texts."¹⁴ From Thebes, where most of the manuscripts (including the Joseph Smith Papyri) were found, it can be traced back through Memphis (Botti's Turin Pap. Demot. N. 766 is Memphite) to Heliopolis and the beginnings of Egyptian civilization—and indeed the Joseph Smith Papyri, though Theban, refers constantly to Heliopolis. It contains material from every period: ". . . elements taken from the Pyramid Texts, the Book of the Dead, along with phrases and concepts already met with on the steles and sarcophagi of the Middle and New Kingdoms."¹⁵

The lateness of the "Breathing" documents, instead of detracting from their value actually enhances it. For it not only gives them a chance to embrace the entire funerary literature of the past, but places them in that crucial moment of transition in which they are able to transmit much ancient Egyptian lore to early Jewish and Christian circles. The first scholars to study it were impressed by its high moral tone and strong resemblance to the Bible, noting that it "bears the imprint of an essentially religious feeling, and contains moral maxims whose striking agreement with the precepts of the Jewish Lawgiver as with those of the Christ has already been pointed out by Egyptologists."¹⁶ And while its picture of the hereafter differs fundamentally from that of present day Christianity and Judaism, it is strikingly like that of the ancient Jewish

¹⁴Budge, *Facsimiles of the Papyri* . . . , p. 33; Chassinat, "Le Livre des Respirations," p. 315: ". . . this book existed, at least in one of its fundamental parts [i.e., that found in the Pyramid Texts], for long centuries before its complete diffusion." These texts are essentially static, betraying no sense of chronology and no interest in the past, H. Brunner, "Zum Verständnis der archaisierenden Tendenzen in der ägyptischen Spätzeit," *Saeculum*, 21 (1970), pp. 151-5. In the 26. Dyn. princes even made plaster casts of ancient inscriptions to use in their own tombs, *ibid.*, p. 154.

¹⁵Botti, p. 223.

¹⁶De Horrack, p. 134.

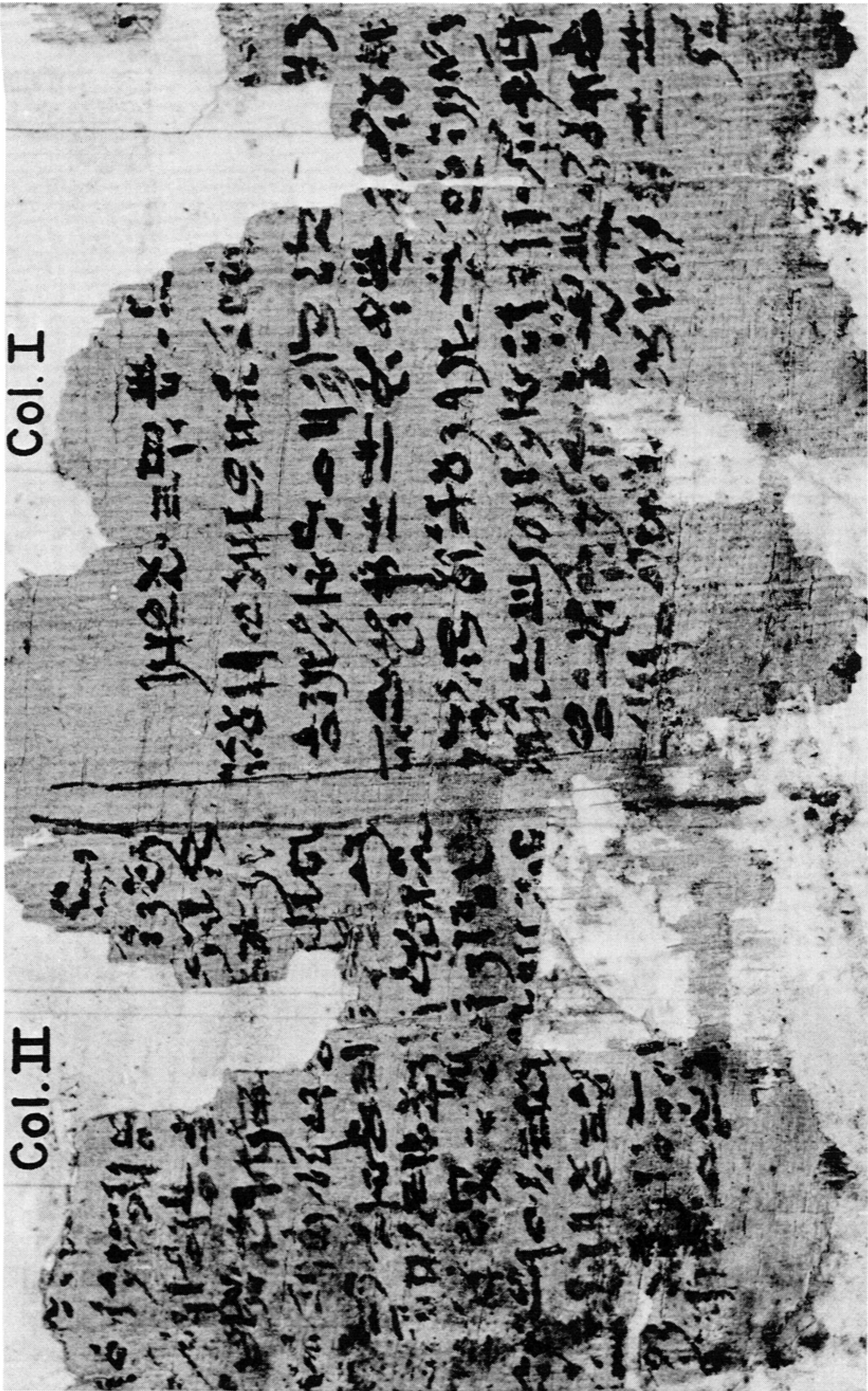
and Christian sectaries as newly-discovered documents are revealing them: "The next world is represented after the pattern of this one," wrote de Horrack, "the life of the spirit is so to speak just another step in human existence, the activities of the elect being analogous to those of men on earth. It is not an existence dedicated to eternal contemplation, a passive state of bliss, but an active and work-filled life, yet one, to make use of M. Chabas's expression, endowed with infinitely vaster scope than this one."¹⁶ Many recent studies confirm this judgment, showing not only that much authentic Egyptian matter was carried over into Judaism and Christianity, but that such Egyptian stuff instead of being the spoiled and rancid product of a late and degenerate age, represented the best and oldest the Egyptians had to offer.¹⁷ L. Kakosy, for example, bids us compare the classic Egyptian descriptions of heaven and hell with those found in an Egyptian Christian grave of the 8th or 9th century A.D., specifically in the Apocalypses of Enoch and Peter, to see for ourselves how little they have changed.¹⁸ Egyptologists can no longer brush such resemblances aside as coincidences, and nowhere are they more striking and more frequent than in the "Breathing" texts and their closest relatives.¹⁹

Of particular interest to us is the close association of the Book of Breathing with the *Facsimiles* of the Book of Abra-

¹⁶L. Kakosy, "Probleme der ägyptischen Jenseitsvorstellungen in der Ptolemäerzeit," in *Religions en Egypte Hellenistique et Romaine* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1969), pp. 59-68. Many others are referred to in our Commentary.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 68; also in *Oriens Antiquus*, 3 (1964), p. 19, where he notes how the 18th-dynasty Book of Amduat carries over into the Coptic Christian Pistis Sophia. M. Philonenko, in *Religions en Eg. Hellenist. et Rom.*, pp. 109-110, finds an Egyptian and Iranian background for the Jewish Secrets of Enoch.

¹⁸E.A.W. Budge, *Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (London, 1913), pp. lxiff, lists twenty Coptic Christian borrowings from ancient Egyptian imagery; cf. O.H.E. Burmester, "Egyptian Mythology in the Coptic Apocrypha," *Orientalia*, 7 (1938), pp. 355-367; E. Hornung, *Altägyptische Höllenvorstellungen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), p. 8, notes resemblances between the Coptic Christian texts and a number of Egyptian writings (Coffin Texts, Amduat, Book of Gates, Book of Quererts), which are all strongly reflected in the Book of Breathings. P. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, p. 19, observes that Chap. 85 of the Book of the Dead (one of the sections included in the Jôseph Smith Papyri) finds earlier expression in Coffin Text No. 307, which contains "letter for letter almost the first sentence of the Gospel according to St. John"; and J.G. Griffith, in *Religion en Egypte*, etc. (above n. 17), p. 51, does not hesitate to compare allegorical expressions in the very ancient Ramesseum Papyrus with the Christian equating of bread with flesh and baptism with resurrection. S. Schott, *Die Deutung der Geheimnisse des Rituals für die Abwehr des Bösen* (Wiesbaden: Fr. Steiner, 1954), p. 6, notes parallels in this Egyptian text (which is closely related to the Book of Breathings) and the Christian sacraments.



Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyrus No. XI

ham. It can be easily shown by matching up the fibres of the papyri that the text of Joseph Smith Pap. No. XI was written on the same strip of material as Facsimile Number 1, the writing beginning immediately to the left of the "lion-couch" scene. The British Museum Book of Breathing, "the Kerasher Papyrus," has both the "lion-couch" scene (Budge, Vignette No. 2b), and a scene resembling our Facsimile Number 3, though representing a patently different situation albeit with the same props and characters (Vignette No. 1). This last stands at the head of the "Kerasher" text, and suggests that our Fac. No. 3 was originally attached at the other end of the Joseph Smith Papyrus, coming after the last column, which is missing.

But what about Facsimile Number 2, the well-known round hypocephalus? From special instructions written on other Books of Breathing it would appear that the written texts themselves, properly folded, could and did serve as hypocephali. Some copies are to placed "on the left hand near the heart" (the Joseph Smith Papyrus is one of these), or else if one chooses "under the head" of the deceased.²⁰ A Book of Breathings studied by Champollion, made for the child Soter, bore the inscription in Greek: *hypo ten kephalen*, "under the head," from which Champollion derived the word "hypocaphalus" by which such round head-cushions as our Facsimile No. 2 are now designated.²¹ As the concluding act of the Egyptian burial ceremony, a priest would read the Book of Breathings standing by the coffin, and then, just as the lid came down, he would deposit the book under the head of the dead person, exactly as if it were a hypocephalus.²² Thus our "Sensen" Papyrus is closely bound to all three facsimiles by physical contact, putting us under moral obligation to search out possible relationships between the *content* of the four documents.

As a "packaging job" the Book of Breathings is a most remarkable performance, "an attempt to include all essential elements of belief in a future life in a work shorter and more

²⁰So Pap. Florence 3662, H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, p. 59. Sometimes the instructions recommend having the Book of Breathings "under the feet," e.g. Louvre No. 3157, in Chassinat, "Livre des Respirations," p. 317.

²¹Chassinat, p. 317, n. 1.

²²S. Schott, "Nut spricht als Mutter und Sarg," *Revue d'Égyptologie* 17 (1965), p. 86. The text states that it is meant "to produce a flame under the head of the Ba" of the deceased, *ibid.*, p. 83, that being the well-known purpose of the hypocephali.

simple than the Book of the Dead."²³ It is, as Chassinat put it, "a sort of synthesis, bringing together in a limited space the current ideas relating to the human situation after death. There one finds just what is strictly necessary to know and say in order to be joined to the company of the gods . . . "²⁴ In short, "the ancient writer has brought together everything that his imagination could find most fitting to procure the means of achieving life after death."²⁵ Why this passion for brevity and compactness? Budge suggests that the Egyptians were fed up with the Book of the Dead "with its lengthy chapters and conflicting statements" that few people understood.²⁶ But since when were Egyptians repelled by long religious texts or contradictory statements, or since when does the process of high-pressure condensation render texts more understandable? Chassinat explains the condensing as an economy measure, to provide funeral texts for poor people who could not afford expensive rolls.²⁷ Why then is the Book of Breathings found on the mummies of important people, princes and priests, who could and did afford much better rolls? Why is it always the poor little breathing text, a few scribbled notes on a roll "about the size of a Tuscan cigar" (Botti), that they clutch to their breasts as their most treasured possession? Plainly it is a document of peculiar significance.

The Book of Breathings is the end-product of a long process of abbreviating and epitomizing which was characteristically Egyptian. From the beginning the Egyptians displayed a genius for attesting great accomplishments by little figures, and after the Amarna period they evinced a growing passion for synthesizing and condensing, of which the Book of the Dead is an excellent example.²⁸ The Book of the Dead itself is only "a supplementary aid," according to Barguet, confined, for all its impressive bulk to stating the absolute minimum and getting by with statements only long enough to be recognizable.²⁹ The progressive compression within the Book of the Dead is illustrated by the 64th chapter, entitled "a formula (chapter) for knowing the other formulas for going out by day in a single

²³Budge, *Papyrus of Hunefer*, etc., p. 33.

²⁴Chassinat, "Livre des Respirations," pp. 316-17.

²⁵Ibid., p. 319.

²⁶Budge, p. 33.

²⁷Chassinat, p. 316.

²⁸G. Thausing, *Das grosse ägyptische Totenbuch*, p. 19.

²⁹P. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, pp. 11-12.

formula.”³⁰ The classic illustration of the process is provided by a writing which very closely resembles the Book of Breathings in content, the *Amduat*. A shortened version of this text, not an automatic condensation but an abbreviated restatement, is designated by the ancient scribes as *shwj*, that being the technical term for a list drawn up to present “a summary of essentials.”³¹ But that is only the beginning; S. Schott has shown how the entire book was recapitulated in a summary flanking the exit walls of the tombs in which the *Amduat* was inscribed, and how this summary in turn was followed by a Table of Contents which in time was accepted as a permanent substitute for the whole book, the mere table of contents becoming thereafter the official text of the *Amduat*.³² Such compound distillation reaches its culmination in the “Book of Journeying through Eternity,” a writing which has actually been identified with the Book of Breathings, and which ends with a desperate attempt to jam together in a few closing lines every conceivable good wish and every indispensable requirement for the dead in the next world.³³ The result is near chaos, but the Book of Breathings itself goes almost as far. In three or four pages it contains the essential elements of the Egyptian funerary rites from the earliest times; nothing essential is missing, so that the book assures us that a knowledge of its contents alone, no more and no less, is exactly what is needed by anyone who wishes to continue to live and progress in the hereafter. We begin at last to see why this brief and unimpressive little scroll is of such great importance to the ancient Egyptian and the modern scholar alike—indeed “a valuable discovery.”

THE MEANING OF “SNSN”

Almost any Egyptian funerary text could safely be called a “Book of Breathing,” since all deal with renewal of life and resurrection of the flesh, which for the Egyptian mean breath-

³⁰Ibid., p. 16.

³¹E. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, Teil 3 (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1967, in *Aegyptische Abhandlungen*, Bd. 13), p. 55; S. Schott, *Die Schrift der verborgenen Kammer* in *Göttinger Nachr.*, 1958, No. 4), pp. 341, 369. The cosmological inscriptions of Edfu “may be regarded as mere summaries or epitomes of the more important parts of the complete myths,” which “preserved only a restricted number of extracts which from the Egyptian point of view were considered as vital,” E.A.E. Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple* (N.Y.: Barnes & Noble, 1969), p. 10.

³²Schott, “Nut spricht als Mutter,” pp. 344, 346f, 354, 365-370.

³³W. Wreszinski, in *AZ*, 45: 122.

ing first of all.³⁴ Some of the most important chapters of the Book of the Dead are entitled "For giving a Breeze to N. in the Realm of the Dead."³⁵ The Egyptian associated life, light, air, breath, and everything good in a single symbol, the *nfr*-sign, showing the heart and respiratory passages,³⁶ including the aesophagus, for the breathing pipes were also the way of nourishment: in a single intake one absorbs life, breath, nourishment, health, vigor—everything good.³⁷ The aim of the mysteries is "to give life and joy through the nose, and joy to the heart with the aroma of *ibr*-ointment, supplying the King with the fragrance of the mighty ones."³⁸ The commonest epithets of divinity depict the deity either as the provider of air, "who causes the heart (windpipe) to breathe," *sqr hty.t*, or as himself wind, air, breath of life.³⁹

The giving of breath is endowment with life in the widest sense. Thus the King is petitioned "to give the breath of life to him who suffocates" and spare the life of a servant, for he is "the creator of the air," whose own mouth "bears breath to humans."⁴⁰ Yet, Posener notes, there is no known representation of Pharaoh bestowing breath- or life-symbols on anyone, while there are thousands depicting gods doing the same. Why is that? Because in his breath-giving capacity the King is wholly divine, absorbed in the person of the life-giving god; he *is* the creator, "Chnum . . . who puts the breath of life in every man's nose,"⁴¹ Chnum, who "created the animals by the breath of his mouth, and breathed forth the flowers of the field . . ."⁴² As the Apis Bull he is also "the living breath" of Ptah the Creator;⁴³ he is Horus of Edfu "who puts breath into the nose of the dead";⁴⁴ he is Re who announces to them in the Underworld, "I bring light to the darkness . . . who sees me shall

³⁴E. Hornung, *Altäg. Höllenvorst.*, p. 11.

³⁵So chapters 54 to 59 inclusive.

³⁶E. Otto, *Gott und Mensch nach den ägyptischen Tempelinschriften der griechisch-römischen Zeit* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1964), p. 54.

³⁷J. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis* (Upsala, 1968, Acta Univ. Upsaliensis, Historia Religionum 3), pp. 186f.

³⁸H. Junker, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien* (Vienna, 1910), p. 2.

³⁹Otto, *Gott und Mensch*, pp. 149ff, 159ff.

⁴⁰These and other pertinent quotations in G. Posener, *De la Divinite du Pharaon* (Paris, 1960, Cahiers de la Societe Asiatique, XV), p. 66.

⁴¹T. Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris, II Teil* (Prague: Orientalisches Institut, 1941), p. 111.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁴³E. Chassinat, in *Receuil de Travaux*, 38 (1938), pp. 44f.

⁴⁴W. Wreszinski, in *AZ* 45: 111, cf. 112, 115-7, 122.

breathe, let him breathe who exalts my appearance!"⁴⁵ To which they reply, "We breathe when we see him, the King N breathes when he sees him . . . we breathe, rejoicing in Sheol (Quererts)." ⁴⁶ Because as Osiris he was brought back to life "as he smells the air of Isis," who as she fans him with her wings says, "I put wind into his nose,"⁴⁷ he is able to restore others to life: ". . . your throats breathe when you hear the words of Osiris."⁴⁸ For he himself is the great breather: "Osiris breathes, Osiris breathes, in truth Osiris breathes, his members have truly been rejuvenated";⁴⁹ then he "breathes out the air that is in his throat into the noses of men. How divine is that from which mankind live! It is all united in thy nostrils, the tree and its foliage, the rushes . . . the grain, barley, fruit trees, etc. Thou art the father and mother of humanity, who live by thy breath."⁵⁰ The Book of Breathings is not to be dismissed, as it has been, as a mere talisman against stinking corpses; it is a sermon on breathing in every Egyptian sense of the word.

The Berlin Dictionary (usually called simply the *Wörterbuch*—Wb) IV, 171ff, gives a wealth of meanings for the word *snsn*, all of which fall under two related categories. *First* there is the idea of air and breath, No. 2 (in the WB list) being to smell, breathe; (3) to exude an odor; (4) to inhale air or the breath of life; (5) "der Odem," the breath of life itself; (16) the stench of a corpse. In charge of this department is the goddess Mert, identified with Maat, who enjoys considerable prominence in our Book of Breathings. Supervising the functions of aesophagus and windpipe, she supplies both nourishment and breath of life (one actually eats and breathes her), and in that capacity enjoys a relationship of peculiar intimacy with every individual, even as she hangs on the kingly and priestly breast as a pectoral that both embraces and is embraced by the royal person.⁵¹ In this sense "The son of Atum-Re says, He hath begotten me by his nose: I came forth from his nostrils. Place me upon his breast, that he might embrace me with his sister

⁴⁵A. Piankoff, "Le Livre de Quererts," *Bull. Inst. Français d'Archaeol. Or. (BIFAO)*, 43 (1945), pp. 10, 19.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 42 (1944), pp. 33-34.

⁴⁷Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris*, I Teil, pp. 81-85.

⁴⁸Piankoff, "Le Livre de Quererts," pp. 7ff, Tab. i.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁵⁰Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris*, I, 151.

⁵¹J. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, pp. 186, 190, treats this familiar theme.

Maat.”⁵² *Snsn* is the air that infuses and pervades: “Thy nostrils inhale (*snsn*) the air, thy nose breathes (*snsn*) the north wind, thy throat gulps in air, thou incorporatest life into thy body.”⁵³ Isis and Nephthys prevent decay and evil odor by fanning with their wings, but that is also the favorable wind which enables the dead to progress on his journey in the hereafter.⁵⁴

But breathing is only half the story. It is significant that the clear statement of the purpose of the “Sensen” Papyrus as given in its introductory lines makes no mention whatever of breathing! This bids us consider the broader and more venerable ritual background of the word. The rites set forth in the Shabako document, the earliest coronation drama and perhaps the oldest of all Egyptian ritual texts, culminate when the new king “unites himself with the royal court and mingles (*snsn*) with the gods of Ta-tenen.”⁵⁵ The expression for “mingle with,” *snsn r*, Sethe finds also in the Pyramid Texts, and means, according to him, “sich zu jemand gesellen.” He duly notes that “the writing is commonly used in later times for *snsn*, ‘inhale,’ being mistakenly regarded as a reduplication of *sn*, ‘to kiss.’”⁵⁶ Another document going back to the earliest times uses the same word in the same way, telling how “Maat came down from heaven in their times and united herself to those who dwell upon the earth”; (another version): “Maat came down to earth in their time and mingled with (*snsn hn*) the gods,” (and another): “Maat came from heaven to earth and mingled (*snsn.n.s*) with all the gods.”⁵⁷ The word “mingled” (both as *snsn.s* and *snsn.n.s*) Otto renders as “sie verbrüdete sich mit . . .” and indeed in the last sentence the word is written simply with the picture of two men shaking hands.⁵⁷

This picture of Maat mingling freely with mankind in the “Golden Age” before the fall forcibly brings to mind Ps. 85:11: “Truth (*emeth*, possibly cognate with the Eg. Maat) shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness (Maat is the Egyptian word for Righteousness) shall look down from heaven.” But even more relevant is the less familiar verse that pre-

⁵²A. De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Univ. of Chicago, 1938), II, 34-35, Spell 80.

⁵³From the Book of Passing through Eternity, W. Wreszinski, *AZ* 45: 115.

⁵⁴Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, pp. 198-205.

⁵⁵K. Sethe, *Das Denkmal Memphitischer Theologie der Schabakosteine des Br. Mus.*, (Leipzig, 1929), p. 73, line 64.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁵⁷E. Otto, “Das ‘Goldene Zeitalter,’ ” in *Religions en Egypte*, etc. (above, n. 17), p. 103.

cedes it: "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed." For *snsn*, as we have seen, means "kiss." There is nothing more intimate than breath, and one and the same Egyptian word can mean odor, nose, nostril, smell, sniff, breathe, perfume, caress, and love.⁵⁸ The queen of Egypt became pregnant "when the aroma of Amon penetrated all her members."⁵⁹ *Snsn*, then, is indicative of the closest and most intimate association. In the 13th Dynasty King Neferhotep prays "that I may associate (*snsn*) with all the gods . . . ,"⁶⁰ which is quite in order when one remembers that *sn* is the Egyptian word for "brother," and is written with the two-pronged harpoon or spear (Gardiner T 22), being also the common root for "two" in the Semitic languages (cf. our twain, twin, etc.; the one-pronged harpoon was always the sign for "one"). The reduplicate *snsn* makes a verb of it and also acts as an intensive, like the second form in Arabic. This idea of twinship or brotherhood is apparent when a god comes down to his temple and his Ba fuses(*snsn*) with his "form," i.e., his image in the temple.⁶¹

According to the *Wörterbuch*, *snsn*, written either with the "bolt-s" or the two-pronged harpoon, can mean (6) to join a company, unite with a group (formed by reduplicating the word *sn*, "brother"; (15) to unite, fraternize, become a friend of; hence, (7) to join the company of the gods (said of the dead), (12) to reach heaven and mingle with the stars; (13) to enter a bond of brotherhood, to marry with; (8) to unite oneself with the King, or (1) to praise or honor a king or god—hence praise, honor; (9) to unite oneself with one's image (said of a god coming to his temple); (10) to unite oneself with the light. The two main ideas of *snsn*, breathing and joining, meet and fuse in such meanings as (10) "fragrance, light, air, as joining themselves to something"; hence (11) adornment, things adorning the body; (15) to invest another object or fuse with it, as of a person with the stars, a god with his image, crowns or vestments; incense suffusing the body, or crowns joining together to make one. The Pyramid

⁵⁸The word *khn*, examined by V. Loret, in *Rec. Trav.*, 14 (1892), pp. 106-120.

⁵⁹Discussed by Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis*, Pt. I, p. 46.

⁶⁰M. Pieper, *Die Grosse Inschrift des Königs Neferhotep in Abydos* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929), p. 10.

⁶¹C. de Wit, "Inscriptions dedicatoires du temple d'Edfou," in *Chroniques d'Egypte*, 36 (1961), pp. 96-97.



Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyrus No. X

Text designation of *snsn* as a consuming fire calls forth the vivid image of the Pharaoh or the blessed spirit invested and suffused with flames which carry him up to heaven.⁶²

Snsn is thus seen to be a very flexible word which remains none the less remarkably true to its basic meaning. This can be seen in a passage from the Book of Wandering through Eternity (the companion-piece to the Book of Breathings, as we have noted): "Thy nose breathes (*snsn*) the Northwind . . . thou kissest (*snsn*) Osiris in the great Golden House, . . . thou passest the gates of the gods of the Qrtj.w (chambers of the Underworld) and unitest thyself to (*snsn m*) the company of the saved . . ." ⁶³ Here breathing, embracing, and fraternizing are all expressed by the same word.

How these concepts persisted down into Jewish and Christian times can be seen in the remarkable parallel between an episode from the Coffin Texts (cir. 2000 B.C.) and a Coptic Christian liturgy. In the former we read: "My *snsn* was with me in his nose, I came forth from his nostrils; he clasped (*dwd.n.f*) me to his bosom, he would not let me be separated from him. My name lives: Son of the Lord of the Preexistence. I live in the members (*bsn.w*, "purifying substances"?) of my father Atum. Created by Atum . . . when he sent me down to this earth . . . when my name was changed to Osiris son of Geb. My father Atum then embraced (*snsn*) me as he came forth from the eastern horizon; his heart was pleased (satisfied) when he saw me . . . He established me in the flesh and gave me dominion over it . . ." There follows (II, 42) a catalogue of birds, animals, and fishes including also the grain-eating human race, all of whom live "according to the command of Atum. I lead them, I cause them to thrive (live); the breath (*sn*) in my mouth is the life in their nostrils; I lead them while the breath of life is in their throats. I sustain them (lit. "tie on their heads") by the Hw (authoritative utterance) which is in my mouth; my father Atum has caused me to give life to the fishes and the worms upon the back of Geb (the earth)." ⁶⁴ The short spell that follows this one reads as if it came right out of the Book of Breathings (though 2000 years older/), but we wish to call attention here to Spell 80 be-

⁶²W. Barta, "Zum Goldnamen der ägyptischen Könige," in *AZ*, 95 (1969), p. 88.

⁶³W. Wreszinski, in *AZ* 45: 115, 119.

⁶⁴De Buck, *Coffin Texts* (C.T.), II, 40ff (Spell 80).

cause of its remarkable resemblance to the Coptic Christian text, which reads: "I adjure thee by the first seal placed upon the body of Adam . . . by the second seal placed upon the members of Adam; I adjure thee by the third seal, sealing the heart and loins of Adam, who lieth in the dust until Jesus Christ shall stand proxy for him between the arms of the Father. The Father hath raised him (Adam) up, he hath breathed upon his face, he hath filled him with a breath of life. Send to me thy breath of life, even to this believer (*pithos*)."⁶⁵ In this Christian Book of Breathings the initiate instead of being designated by the usual code-name of Osiris, is called Adam.

The whole funerary literature of the Egyptians has a strangely familiar ring to those Latter-day Saints who ever get around to looking at it, and it should be cause for much searching of monuments and documents. The whole picture is undergoing drastic alterations at the present moment, and this fact should not be overlooked, as it has been, by the critics of the Book of Abraham. Let us take a quick look at the situation.

ESCAPE FROM THE CATACOMBS

Professor Zandee begins his very useful book on the Egyptian view of death with the observation, "that the Egyptians have answered the question of the relation between life and death in two ways." The one concept is the natural human recoil before the fact of death as "the enemy of life"; the other looks upon death as the great moment of transition to greater things beyond, as nothing less than "the foundation of eternal life, life in its potential form."⁶⁶ But if the Egyptians themselves had two ways of looking at the hereafter, the Egyptologists until recently have had only one, and have tolerated no discussion that might challenge the views of natural science.⁶⁷

⁶⁵S.-P. Girard, in *An. Serv.*, 27 (1927), pp. 62-68.

⁶⁶J. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy* (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 1, citing especially Kirstensen as the champion of the optimistic view.

⁶⁷It is interesting that Zandee mentions only one meaning of *snsn*—to stink! *ibid.*, p. 59. After all is said, what the Egyptian felt towards death was only pessimism and terror, according to H. Kees, *Totenglauben u. Jenseitsvorstellungen der alten Aegypter* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1926), pp. 450ff; as early as the Heracleopolitan period the funerary literature takes on a "gloomy and eery character" which remains permanent, E. Lüddeckens, in *Mitteilungen der deutschen Inst. Kairo*, II (1943), p. 171; hence an Egyptian museum "gives the ordinary visitor an impression de tristesse et d'ennui," G. Maspero, in *Biblio-*

The easiest way to forestall any such speculation has been simply to refer everything to the necropolis. In Egyptian almost any word or expression designating a place or state not of this world *can* be equated with "necropolis," and so the disciples of Erman (who frankly confessed that he found the Egyptian religion as repellent as an Egyptian would find his)⁶⁸ have always had an easy time conducting their readers to the necropolis and leaving them there—that is the end of the trail, there is no more, and to look for more is to be guilty of the two things which Erman monotonously and automatically charges against all who disagree with him, "Romantik" and "Fantasie."

And so the general public has always thought of the Egyptians as people with a graveyard fixation. Nothing could be more misleading according to the newer studies that are now appearing faster than ever. Professor Brunner now assures us that "Erman is much too taken with his own times and their viewpoint" to serve us as a guide today.⁶⁹ Wherever the Egyptian character finds expression, according to Miss Thausing, one theme is always dominant: "Life! Life at any price, here and beyond! There is no death, no end, for death is only the birth into a new life."⁷⁰ As Barguet's recent work on the Book of the Dead shows, the funeral march to the graveyard was only a preliminary to an *immediate exit* from it, "the coming

theque Egyptol., I, 35f. But who arranged the exhibits? According to S. Morenz, *Aegyptische Religion* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1960), pp. 198-200, because the Egyptian desperately wanted life, he found death nothing but repellent; he loathed the "awesome and grizzly symbol of the mummy, the living corpse," and viewed the mortuary rites as "a very dubious Ersatz" for life; the euphemisms he used "only show his terror at the very name of death." He clung to the rituals as a drowning man to a straw with little enough confidence in them, A.H. Gardiner, *The Attitude of the Egyptians to Death and the Dead* (Cambridge Univ. 1935), pp. 7ff. On the other hand, Lüddeckens notes that this was not always so (*deutschen Inst. Kairo*), and Gardiner that the Egyptian still continued to hope that "if all the precautions taken should prove successful, then physical death might be a mere transition from one life to another," *ibid.*, p. 13. S. Schott, "Das schöne Fest vom Wüstentale," (Wiesbaden: Fr. Steiner, 1952), p. 91, finds that feast of the dead to be a truly gay affair, as witnessed by its modern survival. The consensus, however, has been that "the whole funerary literature of Egypt is a literature of fear of death . . . a limited, worried point of view," as "each newly formed security disintegrates by the apprehension of a new danger." H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ., 1948), pp. 116-120.

⁶⁸A. Erman, *Mein Werden und mein Wirken* (Leipzig: Quelle u. Meyer, 1929), pp. 279f, 76.

⁶⁹H. Brunner, in *Saeculum*, 21 (1970), p. 156.

⁷⁰G. Thausing, *Der Auferstehungsgedanke in ägyptischen religiösen Texten* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1943), p. 1.



Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyrus No. IV. The outlined sections which were glued onto this Papyrus fit into Papyri X and XI to supply substantial parts of the damaged lines.

out into the day; the rebirth as a triumphant Sun."⁷¹ One finds the very same situation way back in the Old Kingdom, as a number of recent studies makes clear.⁷² Not only are the cults of Egypt simply saturated with the idea of "a continuation of life elsewhere as it was lived on earth," as Dr. Speleers noted with strong disapproval,⁷³ but "separation between life and death," as W. Czermak puts it, "is altogether un-Egyptian."⁷⁴ "The ancient Egyptian," wrote Prof. Wilson, "saw the phenomena of his existence as being of a single substance, banded in one continuous spectrum of blending hues."⁷⁵ And he saw no reason why the band should not be extended beyond the limits of death and birth, his own existence being part of "a well-arranged and well-planned whole," in which nothing had been overlooked.⁷⁶ Hence the surprising fact, now being pointed out by Egyptologists, that the Egyptians really cared very little about the past, and in their writings concerning man's place in the universe are not concerned at all "with burial and life after death."⁷⁶ Passing from one state of existence to another is never without its terrifying aspects, and in the Egyptian initiation rites the candidate underwent a ritual death-experience which was altogether too realistic to be comfortable.⁷⁷ Terrified by the unknown, he was nonetheless sustained by the conviction that there was something there, a sense of possibilities which, as Whitehead put it, is the whole appeal and power of the Bible itself.

In all of Egyptian literature it would be hard if not impossible to find another document more thoroughly imbued with the positive, optimistic Egyptian view of death than our

⁷¹P. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, pp. 55ff, and in *Rev. Hist. Religions*, 177 (1970), p. 67: "En fait, il semble bien que ce qui est un point d'arrivee est en meme temps un point de depart."

⁷²Below, note 101.

⁷³L. Speleers, "La resurrection et la toilette du mort," *Rev. d'Egyptol.*, 3 (1938), p. 37; *Textes des Cercueils* (Brussels, 1946), pp. xlvii, lxxviii-lxxi.

⁷⁴W. Czermak, "Zur Gliederung des I. Kapitels des ägypt. Totenbuches," in *AZ* 74 (1940), p. 11. "There is a doubt whether the Egyptian funerary stelae mean to speak of their possessors as still living or dead," A.H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1957), p. 284, #367.

⁷⁵J.A. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 81.

⁷⁶E. Otto, *Gott u. Mensch*, p. 59; H. Brunner, in *Saeculum*, pp. 159, 161.

⁷⁷M. Eliade has shown that the idea behind all initiation is "a new birth of the individual initiate, preceded by a decomposition of his personality, its reimmersion into a state of chaos (disorganization), followed by its integration at a higher level of existence," according to A. Brelich, in C.J. Bleeker (Ed.), *Initiation* (Leiden: Brill, 1965, *Numen*, Suppl. No. X), p. 224. Cf. H. Nibley in *Improvement Era*, 72 (July, 1969), pp. 97ff.

Book of Breathings. Even de Horrack noted with wonder that there seemed to be nothing "funerary" about it, but that on the contrary it spoke only of resurrection and exaltation.⁷⁸ And yet it has been the fate of this remarkable book to be studied and criticized solely by the most dedicated disciples of Erman, the last people in the world to concede anything which the *école de Berlin* would not accept. Their most magnanimous concession to the Egyptians is an indulgent shrug of the shoulders as if to forgive those simple children of nature who know not what they do.

The standard procedure of investigation which has proven most fruitful in Egyptology has been the routine gathering together of all known examples of the object under study, and placing them side by side for comparison, to determine what is essential and what is merely incidental. Thus when scholars were puzzled by a growing category of texts which Champollion had designated as "The Ritual" and which Lepsius labeled the "Todtenbuch," they decided at the Congress of Orientalists meeting in London in 1874, to commission Eduard Naville to bring together and publish side by side all the main exemplars of that document, and as a result the nature of the Book of the Dead first became clear.⁷⁹ Later Sethe and others by the same method of collecting and comparing documents showed the true nature of the Pyramid Texts, and in the same way all the funerary books, from the Coffin Texts on, have been "discovered."

One would assume that so obvious and rational a procedure would by now have accounted for and neatly packaged every category of Egyptian document, but such is far from being the case. Only very recently did S. Schott for the first time examine and compare all versions of the important "Festival of the Valley" (1952); and those documents which make up the book of "The Repelling of Evil" (1954); did E. Otto bring together all the known examples of the controversial Opening of the Mouth ritual (1960); did P. Derchain gather up accounts of the early royal sacrifices (1962); did E. Hornung publish all the "Writings of the Hidden Chambers" which make up the book of Amduat (1963); did C. J. Bleeker run down all the accounts of the Sokar festival (1967); did W. Helck photo-

⁷⁸De Horrack, *Bibliothèque Egyptol.*, 17, 116.

⁷⁹Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, p. 13.

graph and publish all the ritual scenes from Ramses II's outer wall of the temple at Karnak (1968); did E. Winter do the same at the Philae (1970); did Mrs. Reymond bring together all the founding legends of the Egyptian temples (1969). All these sources and many more are now being studied thoroughly for the first time, though they have been well known to Egyptologists for over a hundred years. What interests us particularly is that all have direct bearing on the understanding of our Book of Breathings. Why have the experts neglected to give them the only treatment that pays off? Helck answers that question in the preface to his important study. The reliefs he examines have all been sketched, photographed and described countless times; yet "systematic publications even for the great Temple of Karnak are almost completely lacking."⁸⁰ Why?

In the first place, according to Helck, the ritual scenes in the reliefs didn't *look* particularly significant. Taken alone, each one looks perfectly ordinary and familiar—the student or tourist has seen that sort of thing a thousand times, so he yawns and moves on. Yet when the same scenes were brought together and the detailed photographs placed side by side "a recognizable order and meaning at once appeared," an order and meaning that had completely escaped generations of Egyptologists.⁸¹ Then again, Helck observes, they were ignored because they were *religious* compositions, and the experts were convinced that they had taken the measure of Egyptian religion and found it sorely wanting in the solid historic and scientific content they were looking for.⁸¹ But the greatest block of all was that "the numerous sacrificial scenes in the temples were regarded as stereotyped compositions . . . from which it was believed no really significant data were to be had."⁸¹ The fact is that they *are* stereotyped, and look enough alike to convince any casual observer that "when you've seen one you've seen 'em all." E. Winter has found the same situation at Philae, perhaps the most photographed and studied temple in Egypt, where the inscriptions "give the impression of being monotonous, tedious, and empty," in fact "almost as unattractive" as the reliefs, which the scholars find positively "repellent . . .

⁸⁰W. Helck, *Die Ritualszenen auf der Umfassungsmauer Rameses' II. in Karnak* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1968, in *Aegyptologische Abhandlungen*, Bd. 8), p. 1.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 2.

having nothing to say.”⁸² But upon closer examination at the present time “elements heretofore viewed as stereotypes of Ptolemaic temple decoration turn out . . . to be exceedingly important elements in understanding the ‘Grammar of the Temple.’ ”⁸² There it is again—important documents overlooked because they gave the impression of being mere stereotypes. It is the same thing with the texts: “Curiously enough,” Bleeker notes, “many Egyptologists do not seem to realize that well-known words must have had a sacral shade of meaning,” and so, disdaining further investigation, simply “deny the existence of certain religious notions or elements of religious truth,”—especially those of which they happen to disapprove.⁸³ Indeed Brunner notes that the late lamented Sigfried Morenz was one of very few Egyptologists “who took religious phenomena seriously”—and how many religious phenomena can be understood unless one does take them seriously?⁸⁴ Erman confessed at the end of his life that after studying Egyptian religion for fifty years he knew nothing whatever about it and had only a strong antipathy for it.⁸⁵ Today Egyptologists are beginning to see that there is no more serious obstacle to the progress of their science than the illusion that “well-known” objects are also well understood, simply because they are boringly familiar; they would not be boring or “repellent” if they were understood.

This digression has been necessary as a reminder to students of the Book of Breathings that the very same experts who contemptuously thrust aside the Joseph Smith Papyri and dismissed the Facsimiles after a glance, are the same men who overlook all the documents mentioned above, considering them mere shoddy, repetitious stereotypes “from which nothing significant is to be learned.” Only the last ten years have begun to show how wrong they were and are, and how much might be learned from an honest and thorough study of documents which they disdain to notice. But their delinquency does not excuse us, and we must not be intimidated by a haughty and authoritarian manner.

⁸²Reviewed by H. Brunner, in *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 23 (1970), pp. 118-9; Otto, *Gott u. Mensch*, p. 84, notes that highly stereotyped scenes and texts can be given a variety of interpretations and have rich “Anwendungsmöglichkeit.”

⁸³C.J. Bleeker, *Initiation*, p. 55.

⁸⁴Brunner, *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 23:223.

⁸⁵E. Erman, *Werden u. Wirken*, pp. 279f, cf. 292f.

Two of the most important new directions in Egyptology, according to Brunner, are (1) the study of the temple inscriptions, and (2) the examination of the nature and function of the Egyptian temple itself.⁸⁶ Surprisingly enough, to this day there has appeared no *complete* publication of the inscriptions of *any* Egyptian temple.⁸⁶ From the inscriptions, the reliefs, the structure of the temple itself and the written records in general, the meaning and function of the temple can be determined. The primary purpose of a temple, according to Bleeker, was to "serve for the celebration of a cultic mystery."⁸⁷ Or, says Brunner, to provide "a 'cultic stage' for daily and special services," while the architecture of the building conveyed "a mythical realisation of the Cosmos."⁸⁸ Built according to the cosmic pattern prescribed in a divine book sent down from heaven in the beginning,⁸⁹ it was at all times the center of every civilized and civilizing activity, the delightful resting-place of majesty and divinity, the throne of universal dominion, place of the heavenly Marriage and of the Great Council, monument of victory over the powers of chaos and darkness, the holy city, etc.⁹⁰ The dedication of the temple, periodically repeated forever afterward, was itself the repetition of the creation of the earth, and as such was celebrated simultaneously in the temple and in heaven.⁹¹ For "the basic theme of cult activity in Egypt," as Bergman puts it, was "the participation of the gods and the King in renewing and preserving the creation."⁹² Every Egyptian temple claimed to be "the first sacred place in which the Creator dwelt with his fellows before he had created the world," and thus to provide the proper setting for the creation drama that regularly took place there.⁹³ All time, like all space met at the temple, where the hourly rites were no mere fleeting reminders of the great events of human existence, but "contain in themselves," according to Junker, "the performance of all to which they refer."⁹⁴ "The vital element in the constitution

⁸⁶Brunner, *Arch. f. Orf.*, 23:118.

⁸⁷Bleeker, *Initiation*, p. 52.

⁸⁸Brunner, *Arch. f. Orf.*, 23:118.

⁸⁹A. Moret, *Du caractere religieux de la Royaute Pharaonique* (Paris, 1902), pp. 130ff; A. Blackman & A.H. Fairman, in *JEA*, 28 (1942), p. 36.

⁹⁰A good summary is given in the dedicatory inscription of the Temple of Edfu, C. de Wit, in *Chron. d'Egypte*, 36 (1961), pp. 96-97.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 84, 87, 277ff.

⁹²Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, p. 165.

⁹³E.A.E. Reymond, *Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, p. 104.

⁹⁴H. Junker, *Stundenwache*, p. 6.

of the Temple," according to Mrs. Reymond, "was the preservation of the close link with the Ancestors and their cults."⁹⁵ In short, everything in the temple goes back to the beginning and everything is kept in the family.

The plurality of temples in Egypt bothered no one, since the ancient doctrine was that after the founding of the first temple, coinciding with the creation of the earth, its founders, special messengers commissioned by the great Creator to carry out certain phases of his work, "sailed away" to found other temples and create other worlds in the immensity of space.⁹⁶ Strictly speaking, what was dramatized and celebrated in the Temple was not *the* creation, but another creation, this world being organized, to use Mrs. Reymond's striking expression, "after the manner of what had been done in other worlds."⁹⁷ Our "Sensen" Papyrus often refers to four holy places, Heliopolis, Busiris, Abydos, and Hermopolis, the four great prehistoric centers of the Egyptian temple rites; and de Horrack already noted that in the Book of Breathings everything takes place in two spheres, one above and one below.⁹⁸ Which bids us ask before we go any farther, What has the Book of Breathings to do with the Temple?

TOMB AND TEMPLE

The answer is, Everything. Long ago, A. Moret noted that from all of Egypt's glorious past only two types of monument remain—tombs and temples,⁹⁹ and went on to demonstrate that in Egypt, tomb and temple in form and function are virtually identical.¹⁰⁰ Recently a number of independent studies have re-examined the well-documented rites performed in the chambers and passageways beneath the pyramid of Unas, the last king of the 5th Dynasty. The ceremonies were not exclusively mortuary, for the inscriptions that describe them on the walls of the rooms and corridors are often the same as those found in the temples, whose own rooms and corridors, moreover, correspond

⁹⁵Reymond, *Mythical Origin*, p. 277.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 180, 187-8; Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, p. 89.

⁹⁷Reymond, p. 275. In all of this there is no allusion to the *Underworld*, p. 183.

⁹⁸De Horrack, *Bibliothèque Egyptol.*, p. 114; cf. Facsimile No. 2.

⁹⁹Moret, *Royaume Pharaonique*, p. 116.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 122-130.

to those in the tombs.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the King in his underground world was thought to be "participating in the rites of Heliopolis, which are transferred to heaven," the Temple at Heliopolis being the best-known link and common meeting-ground between the worlds above and below.¹⁰² In his remarkable studies on the royal washing and anointing, A. Blackman has shown how the funerary version corresponds exactly to the daily temple ordinances. In discussing a papyrus which scholars relate very closely to the Book of Breathings, he writes: "That representations of the lustration undergone by the dead should be approximated by those of the ceremonial sprinkling of Pharaoh in the temple-vestry is only to be expected; for both ceremonies were supposed to imitate the same performance, i.e., the sungod's daily matutinal ablutions."¹⁰³ The rites of awakening, washing, dressing, etc., of the king, carried out during the ceremonies of mumification by way of preparing the dead to arise refreshed in the next world, "closely resemble the *daily* service performed in *all* Egyptian temples in historic times."¹⁰⁴ A. Moret had already noted that there is "a perfect resemblance between the funeral rites, the temple rites, and the daily toilet of the Pharaoh,"¹⁰⁵ which Blackman proceeded to illustrate in detail, pointing out how "all five rites, viz. the daily temple liturgy, the ceremonial toilet in the House of the Morning, the preparation of the king's body for burial, the daily funeral liturgy, and the Opening of the Mouth resemble one another in their main features," all having in common a ritual washing, anointing, robing, bestowing of insignia, and sometimes a sacral meal.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹J. Spiegel, "Das Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide," *Annales du Service*, 53 (1956), p. 341: It is evident "dass die Themen, die in den einzelnen Abschnitten des Tempelkultes berührt wurden, in der Tat die gleichen waren wie in den entsprechenden Räumen des Pyramideninneren, und dass die im Tempelritual . . . verwendeten Sprüche . . . inhaltlich ähnlich und streckenweise gleichlautend waren." After Pepi I, the inscriptions of the entrance and so-called "Waiting-room" the (Annex) of royal tombs are definitely those of the temple-ritual, *ibid.*, p. 346.

¹⁰²H. Kees, *Totenglauben*, pp. 289f. The tomb of Osiris was originally in the Temple, according to Helck, *Ritualszenen . . . Ramses II.*, p. 108. The King was crowned and enthroned in the coffin-chamber before leaving the place to assume his throne in heaven, Spiegel, pp. 367-371.

¹⁰³A. Blackman, "The Skrine Funerary Papyrus," *JEA* 4 (1917), p. 124.

¹⁰⁴A. Blackman, "The House of the Morning," *JEA* 5 (1918), p. 162, *italics added*. Helck, *Ritualszenen*, p. 20, notes that the services in the Totentempel could also be performed in *non-funerary* temples.

¹⁰⁵A. Moret, *Le rituel du culte divin journalies . . .* (Paris, 1902), p. 78.

¹⁰⁶A. Blackman, "Sacramental Ideas and Usages in Ancient Egypt," *Rec. Trav.*, 39 (1921), p. 48.

Thus the information conveyed in funerary texts is by no means confined to the funeral situation; these particular documents happen to be preserved for us because they were carefully buried away in tombs, but they faithfully report what went on in the temples as well. Even the Coffin Texts were not all funerary; many contain formulas reserved for the living or of value to both the living and the dead, as their titles proclaim. The ordinances in tomb and temple were not only the same, but had the very same objective—eternal exaltation. The instant King Unas and his cortege reach the coffin chamber, the lowest point on their journey and the end of the road in the necropolis, a surprising thing happens: the sad and impressive funeral operation suddenly shifts into reverse, all at once everything is moving in the opposite direction and the thrust of the whole undertaking is to get the King *out* of the tomb and Pyramid and into the sky as quickly as possible.¹⁰⁷ This dramatic reversal of direction is demonstrated by the Sun at the solstice, whose miraculously abrupt turnabout can be most clearly witnessed and predicted from the shadows of those great standing stones (Benben, obelisk, pyramid, pylon) which, as Breasted discerned, attested the common prehistoric origin of tomb- and temple-cult in solar rites.¹⁰⁸ For the Pharaoh, from the earliest to the latest times, always goes through the same solar routine: “. . . at the beginning the king is born: he rises from the Watery Abyss of the Nun; he travels in the barge of Re (the Sun) in the sky, he is identified with the gods and leads a cosmic life in heaven.”¹⁰⁹ The purpose of the tomb is not to lock him in cold obstruction, but to help him on his way; the temple architecture, which requires that the ordinances be performed progressively from room to room until one reaches the roof, shows “a profound and essential association between the rites prescribed by the cult and the rhythm of the universe,” its structure being “inserted into the very order of the cosmos.”¹¹⁰ The stairways, ramps, passages, courts, and gates com-

¹⁰⁷Spiegel, *Annales du Service*, pp. 361ff.

¹⁰⁸Breasted's interpretation was assailed by L. Speleers, “La signification des Pyramides,” in *Melanges Maspero* (Vol. 66 of Mem. Inst.), pp. 603-621, and defended by A. Moret in the same volume, pp. 623-636.

¹⁰⁹A. Piankoff, cited by H. Altenmüller, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 26 (1970), p. 61; so also M. de Rochemonteix, in *Bibliothèque Egyptologique*, 3: 233ff; P. Barguet, in *RHR* 177 (1970), p. 67.

¹¹⁰F. Daumas, “Sur trois représentations de Nout a Dendera,” *An. Serv.*, 51 (1951), pp. 399-400.

mon to tomb and temple are reminders that the Egyptians in their endless rites are always on the move—the one thing that must never happen is the stopping of the royal progress.¹¹¹

THE CROWNING EVENT

In Egypt all eyes focused on the King, “the only point of contact between man and God.”¹¹² The mortal chosen for this awesome position had to be set apart from and recognized and acclaimed by his fellows on a special occasion and by a special procedure—the coronation, a drama presented at a very special time (the New Year, the day of Creation, the universal birthday) and place (the center of the universe, the Navel of the World, etc.).¹¹³ The regular Egyptian temple-rites were nothing but “a small concentrate of the Coronation ceremonies,”¹¹⁴ which were celebrated every year, every month, and every day in the temples, like the king’s birthday, marking “a complete new beginning for the universe.”¹¹⁵ What the temple reliefs of Karnak amount to, according to Helck, is “a symbolic repetition of the coronation,”¹¹⁶ for it is in the Temple that the coronation takes place, the royal party moving from chamber to chamber during the rites,¹¹⁷ thus inaugurating the “royal progress”—since prehistoric times “the central act of the assumption of rule, as P. Munro observes, was a ritual circumambulation performed by the King, having “the symbolism of taking possession of ‘the world’. . . .”¹¹⁸ In his beneficent and victorious progress through the world the King was following the example of his father the Sun,¹¹⁹ his appearance being everywhere hailed by his subjects as a joyful sunrise, a blessed parousia.¹²⁰ Foucart has pointed out that Egyptian kings and gods alike, far from maintaining a majestic repose, constantly “pass through their domains as if they wanted to in-

¹¹¹Thausing, *Das grosse Totenbuch*, pp. 19-22; see below, note 121.

¹¹²Wilson, *Culture of Anc. Egypt*, pp. 45-49, 69ff.

¹¹³For a recent study, J. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, pp. 92-120. We have treated this theme in a number of studies.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹¹⁵P. Munro, “Bemerkungen zu einem Sedfest-Relief . . .” *AZ* 86 (1961), p. 73.

¹¹⁶Helck, *Ritualszenen . . . Rameses’ II.*, p. 74.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 77f.

¹¹⁸Munro, *AZ* 86, p. 71.

¹¹⁹C. de Wit, *Chron. d’Eg.*, 36: 78f, 81; on the victory motif, Munro, pp. 71-73.

¹²⁰Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, pp. 101-2.

spect them or relax at some of their seats."¹²¹ It is the familiar royal progress, which we have discussed elsewhere,¹²² it is also the theme of the royal funeral rite, which carries on the drama of the royal progress into the next world. The classic presentation of the *descensus* of the Sungod to the underworld to bring light and relief to those who sit in darkness as he passes from chamber to chamber in his nocturnal journey, is found in the "Writings of the Secret Chambers" of the kings of the 18th and following dynasties, known as the Book of Amduat. And the Book of Breathings might well be described as a thumbnail version of the Amduat. Any serious study of our "Sensen" Papyrus must take this aspect of its teachings into account.

Also since the coronation, timed like the temple festivals to coincide with the beginnings and endings of cosmic cycles, solar, lunar, and astral, as well as the seasonal cycles of life and vegetation, also dramatized the creation,¹²³ we must recognize that the important rites and ordinances of the Egyptians can never be divorced from each other. If the creation story is, as Brunner has stated, the "perpetual source of vitality for Pharaonic Egypt,"¹²⁴ and if the purpose of the temple cult was "to preserve and renew the Creation and thereby secure and transmit the established order of the universe" through the co-operation of divinity and royalty, as Bergman sums it up,¹²⁵ it is not surprising that the study of one ritual text if conscientiously pursued leads us inexorably to the study of all the rest, for all tell the same story.

Moreover, everybody gets into the act. Though everybody knows that in Egypt the King was all-in-all, and that the temple and funeral rites alike were originally meant only for him,¹²⁶ yet even in the Old Kingdom Speleers finds "the door already half open" to let others in.¹²⁷ For one thing, the King had to have assistants, and could not always be present on the scene, and so we always find deputies and proxies taking his place.¹²⁸ During various rites for the living and the dead "persons or

¹²¹G. Foucart, in *BIFAO*, 24 (1924), p. 1.

¹²²H. Nibley, "Tenting, Tool, and Taxing," in *Western Polit. Quarterly*, 19, (1966), pp. 609-612.

¹²³P. Barguet, in *RHR*, 177: 67; Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, pp. 88f.

¹²⁴H. Brunner, in *Saeculum*, 21 (1970), p. 159.

¹²⁵Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, p. 165; Otto, *Gott u. Mensch*, p. 84.

¹²⁶S. Schott, in *Nachr. Ak. Wiss. Göttingen*, 1958, No. 4, pp. 350, 370.

¹²⁷L. Speleers, "La reurrection et la toilette du mort," *Revue d'Egyptologie*, 3 (1938), p. 37.

¹²⁸A. Blackman, in *JEA* 31: 512f.

properties of the cult during the changing phases of the ritual could take different roles."¹²⁹ As in nature, where a creature can completely change its form, from tadpole to frog or from caterpillar to butterfly, while remaining the same individual, so a human being could assume various forms or modes of being (*hprw*) in the next life, even as he does in passing through the "seven ages of man" in this one.¹³⁰ One might think that an Egyptian would draw the line at taking upon himself the very form and identity of Pharaoh, but if he could be Osiris there was no reason why he could not be the King as well: Thus we find a special honor bestowed by Amon upon Osiris being handed down from Osiris to the Pharaoh at his coronation, and then, wonder of wonders, resting upon the head of an ordinary citizen: "... this decree, laid away with the commoner Nesichonsu in his coffin was believed very literally now to apply to him."¹³¹ Another commoner identifies himself entering his tomb with Pharaoh entering the Temple of Heliopolis in majesty—showing how the rites of temple and tomb were identified in the priestly mind.¹³² Human presumption could go no farther, yet the Egyptians seem to take it for granted.¹³² One important document, "The Purification of Pharaoh," very closely related to the Book of Breathings, was originally a text instructing the Pharaoh in the manner of presiding over certain temple ceremonies, in which the King was to wash himself as the Creator washed himself after finishing the Creation;¹³³ and the same ritual of purification was to be performed in the temple, at the coronation, and at the funeral of the king.¹³⁴ As a funeral text it was adapted to general use, and we find one important exemplar after being used as a model for copyists in a shop, in the possession of an ordinary businessman, and finally thrown together into a mummy case with a lot of Greek

¹²⁹Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, p. 83, n. 2.

¹³⁰L.V. Zabkar, "... on T.G. Allen's, Book of the Dead," *Jnl. of Near Eastern Studies*, 24 (1965), p. 83; G. Roeder, *Urkunden zur Religion des alten Aegypten* (Jena, 1915), pp. 220, 225: "... when he was thirsty he became the Nile; when he was cold he became fire..."

¹³¹G. Daressy, "Un Décret d'Amon en faveur d'Osiris," *An. Serv.*, 18 (1919), pp. 218-224.

¹³²H. Kees, *Totenglauben*, p. 322. By the Middle Kingdom a noble could speak of himself as coming forth from *his* residence and going down to *his* cemetery, exactly as if he were the King, H. Goedicke, in *Orientalia*, N.S. 24 (1955), p. 239.

¹³³S. Schott, *Abwehr des Bösen*, pp. 13, 15, 18.

¹³⁴S. Schott, *Die Reinigung Pharaos in einem memphitischen Tempel* (Berlin P 13242), *Nachr. Ak. Wiss. Göttingen*, 1957, No. 3, p. 67.

documents.¹³⁵ Though the content of the text clearly shows that it was meant for the King alone, instead of bearing the name of a particular king it refers only to "Pharaoh," indicating that it was a stereotyped text that any old king could use,¹³⁶ or for that matter anybody else, since private owners of such texts sometimes put their own names right inside the cartouche reserved at all times for the king's name alone!¹³⁷

The gods of Egypt are now being studied in the light of this strangely fluid nature of individual identity. We find that divine epithets were freely passed around among the gods, who fused with each other just as easily as they fused with their earthly representatives.¹³⁸ With syncretism "a basic part of his (the Egyptian's) spiritual makeup" from the earliest times,¹³⁹ it would now appear that the gods of Egypt "were not unique personalities" at all, "but variously interpreted (*vieldeutige*) representatives of powers which stood in the closest relationship to each other and could be widely substituted for each other;"¹⁴⁰ they fuse and break up like colonies of cells, with "complete indifference" to maintaining their individual peculiarities.¹⁴¹ In fact, E. Winter maintains that the "Grundtypen" of the gods are so few and so colorless that without inscriptions to guide us we would be at a loss to identify various gods and kings in the temple reliefs, or to discover what they were supposed to be doing.¹⁴²

The best hold on such slippery stuff lies in the study of rites and ordinances, which are visible and tangible. It is remarkable, for example, how much Egyptian ritual can be treated under the heading of *initiation*. Miss Thausing has gone all out for the Book of the Dead as a guide (*Wegweiser*) to the Initiate, both in this world and the next, both in the temple and the grave, where everything is "but the symbol of the way of initiation."¹⁴³ As she puts it, "The way of the soul in the other world corresponds to the steps in an earthly initiation through

¹³⁶Cf. Schott, *Abwehr des Bösen*, p. 9.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹³⁷Schott, *Reinigung Pharaos*, p. 8.

¹³⁸Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, pp. 166, 70, n. 2.

¹³⁹H. Bonnet, "Zum Verstandnis des Synkretismus," in *AZ* 75, (1939), p. 41.

¹⁴⁰E. Otto, *Gott und Mensch*, p. 87.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

¹⁴²E. Winter, "... ägypt. Tempelreliefs in der gr.-röm. Zeit," in *Religions en Egypte* (above n. 17), p. 121. All of this was noted by de Rochemonteix long ago, in *Bibliothèque Egyptologique*, 3: 211, 206, 208, etc.

¹⁴³Thausing, *Das grosse Totenbuch*, pp. 7f, 19, 21.

which the hierophant had to pass in the temple during the years of his training."¹⁴⁴ "How can a mortuary ritual be an initiatory ritual?" asks Prof. Brandon, and assures us in reply that "the paradox disappears on analysis," since "a mortuary ritual may serve to initiate . . . into a new form of life."¹⁴⁵ Whatever the reason, the Egyptian in his funeral rites was certainly treated as a candidate for initiation: He was tested for purity, had to stand judgment in a court, had to demonstrate special knowledge by answering specific questions, identifying objects and giving certain code words at a succession of gates or doors, etc. In fact, the Egyptian word for burial means "to initiate one into the mysteries."¹⁴⁶ As his ultimate objective, the dead requests "permission to enter into the Holy of Holies of the Temple of Heliopolis," on the grounds that as an "Elder" he has been "initiated into the deepest secrets of the Temple," and knows the stories that explain the various institutional aspects of the cult.¹⁴⁷

Barguet, defending the traditional view against the rising tide of "initiationism," insists that there is nothing in the Book of the Dead to indicate an initiation for the *living*.¹⁴⁸ Well, that is hardly where one would expect to find such, and yet Barguet himself is quick to add in a footnote, ". . . That is not to say that there was no initiation in Egypt; on the contrary, the formulas of Chapters 112-115 prove" that there was. He calls attention to chapters in the Book of the Dead plainly describing rites performed by the living and for the living,¹⁴⁹ but explains that the living initiates, since they were required to possess special knowledge (as all initiates are), must have been priests. But the question is not about the rank of the hierophants, but only whether the living were initiated into the ordinances. From the Egyptian and Mormon point of view of the question is an academic one, since all ordinances are meant to be of eternal validity and to apply both in this world and the next. After all, the fundamental purpose of ordinances is to bridge the gap between the worlds; all are in a

¹⁴⁴G. Thausing, in *Mel. Maspero*, I, 40.

¹⁴⁵S.G.F. Brandon, in C.J. Bleeker (Ed.), *Initiation*, p. 41.

¹⁴⁶Bergman, *Ich bin Isis*, p. 231; cf. C.J. Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), p. 45.

¹⁴⁷K. Sethe, "Sprüche für das Kennen der Seelen der heiligen Orte," *AZ* 57 (1922), p. 11; B.D. Ch. 114-6.

¹⁴⁸P. Barguet, *Livre des Morts*, p. 24; on the general opposition, Thausing, *Gr. Totenb.*, p. 6.

¹⁴⁹Barguet, p. 25, n. 47, citing B.D. Chapters 18, 19, 135, 163.

sense *rites de passage* with a foot in either camp. That the Egyptian rites were for the living as well as for the dead becomes clearer every day.

The purpose of this preliminary chapter is to prepare the reader to view the Book of Breathings with an uncommitted eye, feeling under no obligation to stake his eternal salvation on the Egyptology of another day, or of any day. These things are always changing. If our own Book of Breathing turns out to be something very different from Professor Baer's "Breathing Permit," it is not because we presume to question his work as far as it went, but because it is high time to point out, with all due respect, that students of the Joseph Smith papyri have necessarily overlooked a great deal of very important evidence, much if not most of which has come to light only since they did their work.¹⁵⁰

Today scholars are becoming aware of an elaborately interlacing mesh of ancient writings from various far-flung centers of culture and religion, which were formerly thought to be completely independent and disconnected productions. These support and explain each other in strange and surprising ways, and right in the center of the great complex is the Book of Breathings. The reality and significance of this phenomenon, the importance of which can not be over-estimated, we hope to make apparent in the commentary which follows.

¹⁵⁰Among others insisting that intensive study and reevaluation of these subjects is long overdue are P. Munro, in *AZ* 86:74; G. Thausing, *Gr. Totenb.*, p. 3; H. Brunner, in *Archiv f. Orientforschung*, 23: 118; W. Helck, *Ritualszenen*, etc., p. 1.