

Title: *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary, Studies in the Book of Abraham*, vol. 2

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The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary is volume two of the series Studies in the Book of Abraham produced by The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies. The other two volumes in the series are titled: Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant by Gee and Hauglid; and Traditions about the Early Life of Abraham by Tvedtnes, Hauglid and Gee, is the first and third volumes respectively, in this series.

Michael Rhodes is an associate professor of Ancient Scripture at BYU. Before BYU he worked for the U. S. Air Force working as a linguist in German and Russian, an intelligence officer and an electrical engineer. Rhodes has done graduate work in Egyptology at John Hopkins University, the Freie Universitat Berlin, and Oxford University. Rhodes has also done graduate work in archeology at University of Utah with digs in Giza, Egypt and Petra, Jordan.

I will admit, I am completely taken by this volume. My hope is that this excitement will be contagious and all of you will go out and buy this wonderful book. Students of Mormonism are being given a wonderful collection of primary source volumes and The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary is one of these books. Rhodes has provided an understandable commentary, beautiful color and grey scale photos, and a translation from Egyptian hieroglyphics to English.

Sometime between 1818 and 1822 Antonio Lebolo discovered a number of mummies with papyri near the Egyptian city of Thebes. After Lebolo's death eleven of these mummies with the accompanying papyri were sent to New York City. After their arrival a promoter named Michael Chandler acquired the mummies with the accompanying relics. In July 1835 Chandler sold four mummies, a hypcephalus (facsimile #2) and fragments of three separate papyri rolls to Joseph Smith and the Church. The papyrus fragments are known to include the Hor Book of Breathings, a part of chapter 125 Book of the Dead belonging to Neferirtneb and parts of a Book of the Dead belonging to Tshemmin (pp. 1-2). At Kirtland the ancient artifacts were placed in Joseph and Emma Smith's home, the John Johnson Inn, and the Kirtland temple. In Nauvoo the artifacts were displayed on the second floor of Smith's log house, Lucy Mack Smith's cabin and the

Mansion House. The Saints went to great effort to preserve and protect these artifacts; and they were held as sacred relics by Joseph Smith and the early Mormons.

On May 26, 1856 Emma Smith and others sold the collection to a man named Abel Combs. Combs sold some of the collection to a St. Louis museum. This museum closed and the collection was moved to a Chicago museum. The famous Chicago fire of 1871 destroyed the museum and this part of the collection. After Combs died in 1892 his nurse received the papyri fragments. In 1947 Edward Heusser, the husband of the nurse, sold these artifacts to the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. At different times people recognized the importance of the papyri, but never made their find public. In the spring of 1966 Dr. Aziz Atiya, who was a professor at the University of Utah, was made aware of the papyri and contacted President N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency. From the spring of 1966 to the fall of 1967 Dr. Atiya worked as liaison between the Church and the Metropolitan Museum in facilitating the transfer of ownership.

A survey of this history along with substantial documentation is H. Donl Peterson's *The Story of the Book of Abraham*, Deseret Book Company, 1995. Rhodes uses Peterson's work as his main source for detailing this history.

To give a feel for the importance of the papyri and the Rhodes volume I will quote from two letters written by the leaders of the Church and an account written by Dr. Atiya.

In an Improvement Era article written for the Church, Dr. Atiya wrote about his experience with President Tanner in setting up the acquisition of the papyri: "I met directly with President Tanner, who said the Church was very, very interested and would do anything or pay any price for them. Since that time, we worked quietly on the possibility of their transference to the Church." On November 7, 1967 in a letter sent by President Tanner to Thomas P. F. Hoving, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tanner wrote: "It is impossible for us to express in words our appreciation for the very generous action on the part of the Metropolitan Museum in giving the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints a group of Egyptian funerary papyri formerly in the possession of Joseph Smith, one of which is illustrated in the Pearl of Great Price." A November 29, 1967 letter sent by the First Presidency to Dr. Atiya signed by David O. McKay, Hugh B. Brown, N. Eldon Tanner and Joseph Fielding Smith includes the following: "This collection is most significant in that it ties so closely with the early history of the Church, and supports completely the claim made by the Prophet Joseph Smith. These meaningful documents, which we appreciate so much having in our possession, will be treasured and preserved and will assist in future research and give further evidence of the authenticity of the Pearl of Great Price." Joseph Smith himself was progressive when it came to the mummies, the papyri and the relics. Smith saw these ancient items as sacred, just as the Egyptians held them sacred. The preservation and protection of these artifacts was always important to Smith.

Eleven papyri fragments came from the Metropolitan Museum to the Church. These fragments originally came from three separate papyri rolls: the Hor Book of Breathings and two different Books of the Dead. Three of these fragments are the focus of Rhodes book (p.1).

The Hor Book of Breathings is an Egyptian Funeral text and one of twenty nine known examples of the "Book of Breathings Made by Isis." It comes from the Theban region in Egypt (p.13) and is from a family who belonged to the cult of Isis (p.3). The deceased Egyptian would use the papyri as a passport and guide to the netherworld. Dr. Rhodes explains that, "The general purpose of the Book of Breathings Made by Isis, like all Egyptian funerary compositions, was to provide the deceased with the essential information needed to be resurrected from the dead and attain eternal life with the gods in the hereafter. According to the instructions in the text of the Book of Breathings Made by Isis, it was to be placed on the breast of the deceased near the heart." (p. 14).

Marc Coenen, an Egyptologist living in Belgium, seems to be the expert on the "Book of Breathings Made by Isis," and Rhodes makes extensive use of his expertise. One example of Rhodes following Coenen's lead is in naming the Hor Book of Breathings as a "Book of Breathings Made by Isis." (p. 14). Rhodes also provides information about the dating of the Hor Book of Breathing, citing Coenen that this is the earliest reliably dated "Book of Breathings Made by Isis." (pp. 3, 13). On pages 14-15 Rhodes gives a nice outline of what a "Book of Breathings Made by Isis" contains.

Rhodes provides a "Glossary of Gods, Place Names, and Egyptian Terminology" (pp. 73-75). If I had this glossary years ago it would have saved me many hours of trying to figure out what a Wadjet is, and many other things Egyptian. Rhodes also provides a "Complete Glossary of Egyptian Words in the Hor Book of Breathings." This is very cool; you can act like a Egyptologist and translate the hieroglyphics yourself (pp. 77-89). Rhodes provides a section on paleography -a study of ancient writing showing that the Smith papyri matches papyri from the Greco-Roman period, 332 B.C. to 395 A.D.(pp. 5-6).

I found chapter 4 to be very interesting. Here, Rhodes provides details about the two vignettes (Facsimiles No. 1 and No. 3 found in the Pearl of Great Price) in the Hor Book of Breathings. He explains that these vignettes would occur at each end of the papyrus roll and that the vignette at the beginning (Facsimile No. 1 in the Pearl of Great Price) is unique in the Hor Book of Breathings when compared with the other known "Book of Breathings Made by Isis." Eighteen of the twenty-nine known examples of these "Book of Breathings Made by Isis" have vignettes, and some are similar to Facsimile No. 3 found in the Pearl of Great Price. Rhodes provides information as to the figures and objects in the vignettes; Facsimiles No. 1 and No. 3. For example, Rhodes tells the reader that the black figure (figure No. 3) in Facsimiles No. 1, is with "reasonable certainty," Anubis. Rhodes also compares the two vignettes with a number of other "Book of Breathings Made by Isis."

In addition to the above, Rhodes provides a transliteration and translation in chapter 4 of the two vignettes (Facsimiles No. 1 and No. 3). In chapter 5 Rhodes provides the transliteration and translation for the Hor Book of Breathings. I believe it is important for the reader to get a feel for Rhodes' translation of the papyri. To accomplish this I have included Rhodes' translation of Facsimile No. 1 and No. 3.

Translation of the original of Facsimile No. 1 [The numbers in () identify the hieroglyphics in columns. The columns in Egyptian are read from right to left]

(1) [The Osiris, God's father] priest of Amon-Re, king of the gods, priest of Min, who massacres his enemies, priest of Khonsu, who is powerful in Thebes. (2) . . . Hor, justified, the son of one of like titles, master of the secrets, god's priest, Usirwer, justified, born of [the house wife, the musician (3) of Amon-Re,] Taykhebyt. May your soul live in their midst. May you be buried at the head of the West. . . . (4) . . . (5) [. . .] May you give him beautiful and useful things on the west [of Thebes] like the mountains of Manu. (pp. 21, 23)

Of special interest is Rhodes translation of the characters associated with Facsimile No. 3 found in the Pearl of Great Price. Rhodes has provided the clear identification of the numbered figures:

[Bottom line of Facsimile No. 3, characters from left to right:] The gods of the West, the gods of the cavern, the gods of the south, north, west, and east say: May Osiris Hor, justified, born of Taykhebet, prosper.

[Figure 2, characters to the right of Isis:] The great Isis, mother of the god.

[Figure 1, characters to the right of Osiris:] (1) Words spoken by Osiris, the Foremost of the Westerners: (2) May you, Osiris Hor, abide at (3) the side of the throne of his greatness.

[Figure 4, characters to the left of Maat:] Maat, Lady of the West.

[Figure 5, characters in front of Hor:] (1) Osiris Hor, the (2) justified forever.

[Figure 6, characters in front of Anubis:] (1) Words spoken by Anubis who make protection (2) Lord of heaven, Foremost of (3) the Westerners. (p. 25)

The papyrus image on page 34 would be to the left of Facsimile No. 1. Part of this text explains where to place the papyrus roll on the deceased individual so that it assists in the afterlife. Michael Rhodes has provided the translation of this instruction in his book:

Translation of column, lines 1-9 to the left of original of Facsimile No. 1 [read from right to left:]

1. [Osiris shall be brought in] to the great pool of Khonsu,
- (2) and likewise [the Osiris Hor, justified] born of Taykhebyt, justified,
- (3) after his two hands have been clasped to his heart.
- (4) The Document of Breathing which made shall (also) be buried, which
- (5) is written on both the inside and outside of it, (wrapped) in royal linen, being placed his
- (6) left arm near his heart, while the bearer of
- (7) his coffin works on its outside. If this book is made for him, then he will
- (8) breathe like the souls of the gods forever and
- (9) ever. (pp. 27-28)

Highlights of the book are the images of the papyri. On pages 32-41 are the high resolution color photographs with a hieroglyphic transcription. This is where you can use the second glossary and translate the images yourself. From pages 43-47 Rhodes provides high resolution gray scale photos. The advantage of having both sets of images is that some details are clearer in one format

than in another. Rhodes has made this book the point of departure for any further research on this part of the Joseph Smith papyri.

It has been eight years since the publishing of *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary*. On page one; Rhodes tells us that, "The Book of the Dead fragments will be the subject of a separate book." I hope this volume will be published soon. If it is of the same caliber as the book reviewed above, we will have another winner from the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies.

This book is essential for anyone interested in the Book of Abraham. It allows the reader to see Facsimile No. 1 in its original form. This provides a great opportunity to see the papyri and have the translation of the Egyptian hieroglyphics that Joseph Smith and the early Saints held as sacred. The papyri are preserved in the Church Historical Library. Rhodes has given us a wonderful opportunity to see these sacred relics in all their glory, and provides the text that allows us to understand the papyri as the Egyptians would have understood them.