

Appendix IV Modern Chronology of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Antiquities

[Peterson, 1995; Todd, 1969; Gee, 1999; Gee, Eyewitness; Commentary Notes]

Date	Place	Event
1817-1820	Thebes	Antonio Lebolo excavating in the Valley of the Nobles. His name appears on pit tomb 32. He excavates many antiquities, which now reside in numerous European museums. Although Lebolo sold many Egyptian artifacts and collections including mummies, he kept eleven mummies acquired in Egypt as his personal property. These eleven mummies had the Joseph Smith papyri with them. These mummies were probably stored in Trieste after 1822.
1820-1822	Egypt	Antonio Lebolo deals in antiquities in Egypt.
1822-1825	Various locations from Egypt to Europe	Lebolo deals in antiquities.
1826	Castellamonte, Italy	Lebolo returns to his Italian home.
February 18, 1830	Castellamonte	Lebolo dies; his possessions are willed to his family, the existence of the eleven mummies is not mentioned in the will. The mummies are discovered later.
July 30, 1831	Italy	Turin archives contain a power of attorney this date from the guardian of Lebolo's minor children to Pietro Lebolo to collect various debts owed to the deceased Antonio Lebolo including one from Albano Oblassa who had been given possession of the eleven mummies to arrange their sale.
March 1833 (abt.)	New York City	The mummies arrive in New York at shippers mentioned below [see at Oct 1833].
April 3 - July, 1833	Philadelphia, PA	Michael H. Chandler is showing the mummies as a curiosity show. How he acquired them is unknown, but they were obtained from the New York shipping firms mentioned below. Chandler claims he is Lebolo's nephew, but no evidence exists for this. Chandler also claimed the mummies were first shipped to Ireland. This is undoubtedly false. Chandler may have had ties to the New York shippers, was financed by local interests to enable him to quit his job and go on the road to hawk the relics. Several years later, two men for whom he was apparently acting as an agent will sue Chandler for breach of contract regarding mummies. This further discredits Chandler's claims of ownership. Chandler sells five mummies. Two are now found at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. Newspaper accounts also note Chandler had several rolls of papyrus.
July - August 1833	Baltimore, MD	Chandler displays relics in Baltimore.
September 1833	Harrisburg, PA	Chandler displays relics in Harrisburg, PA.
October 5,	Turin, Italy	Torino archives contain a power of attorney indicating Oblassa

1833		sent the mummies to New York for sale as curiosities. Francesco Bertola, Jr., a Lebolo family friend now (1833) living in Philadelphia was empowered to go to the New York shipping offices of Maitland & Kennedy and McLeod & Gillespie to get any money from the sale of the mummies.
February 1835	Hudson, Ohio	Mummies displayed in Hudson, the collection has been reduced to four mummies. By this time Chandler lists his residence as Stow, Ohio.
March 26, 1835	Cleveland, Ohio	Mummies exhibited in Cleveland, newspaper accounts indicate that a "book" of papyrus was found with one of the mummies, about 4 inches wide, one foot in length. A second "book" is also mentioned. These were not "rolls."
March 27, 1835	Painesville, Ohio	The Telegraph gives its famous description of the mummies and papyri. Painesville is 30 miles east of Cleveland. The Telegraph mentions the "books" above and rolls of papyrus.
End of June 1835	Kirtland, Ohio	Michael Chandler arrives in Kirtland and asks to see Joseph Smith
July 6, 1835	Kirtland, Ohio	Joseph Smith shows Chandler his interpretation of some Egyptian script - Chandler shows Joseph Smith an interpretation by Charles Anthon (of Book of Mormon fame) - Joseph's and Anthon's work compares well and Chandler gives Joseph Smith a certificate to the effect. No suggestion of Smith buying the relics has been made yet. Joseph Smith shows Chandler characters written from the golden plates seven years previously. They note similarities.
Between July 5-9, 1835	Kirtland, Ohio	Several rolls of papyrus and some other smaller pieces and four mummies purchased for Joseph Smith from Chandler by a consortium of individuals including Joseph Coe and Simeon Andrews for \$2,400.00 after Joseph Smith realizes some of the scrolls contain (copies of) ancient mss of Abraham (and Joseph?).
July-Dec. 1835	Kirtland, Ohio	Sporadic, often interrupted, translation efforts. Likely that the text we now have in the book of Abraham is produced in July. HC references to an "Alphabet" in July are probably bogus. Cowdery makes one mention of Alphabet in October. Joseph Smith never claims one [see note 25 of Appendix V]. Facsimile explanations possibly come later although Facsimile No. 2 and/or Chapter 3 material may have been worked on in October. William Appleby sees explanations in 1841. Diary accounts suggest a text much longer (x4) than currently published. Scrolls and mummies in the beginning are displayed in Joseph Smith's house and shown by his wife who repeats Joseph's translations of the characters. No more translation work referenced until 1842. Compare various notes in Appendix V.
February 17, 1836	Kirtland, Ohio	Some or all of the relics are turned over to one of the original purchasers, Joseph Coe, to establish a curiosity show to make money from the display of the mummies.
August 1836	Kirtland, Ohio	Sarah Leavitt and others mention the mummies and papyri being kept in the temple in August 1835.
December	Kirtland, Ohio	Lumen Shirliff wrote:" We examined the mummies [in the

1837		temple], five in number, looked at the parchment or papyrus, as called in Egyptian language. The parchment appeared to be made of fine linen cloth, starched or sized with some kind of gum, then ironed smooth and written in charter, figures, hieroglyphics, and conveying the Egyptian language. These sheets were about eight by 12 inches. They were rolled, put in a gum case and laid on the breast of the leading men of the Egyptians. When the mummies were found, this record was on his breast. Their bodies seemed to be wound up each limb by itself, with several thicknesses of very fine cloth dipped in gum or pitch like thick tar or rosin and wound on when warm. It was from this record that the Pearl of Great Price was translated by the Prophet." This suggests that some of papyrus was cut apart for preservation. Likely, the outside of some of the rolls, deteriorating, and preserved by pasting the fragments on backing paper as implied by the West pamphlet.
January 1838	Kirtland, Ohio	At least some of the relics evidently fell into apostate hands for a short period. They were regained by loyal friends of Joseph in repayment of debt. The mummies are cared for by various persons and hidden from Smith's enemies. Papyri, Book of Abraham, translation of the Bible are shipped to Far West sometime between Jan. and Mar. Arrive in latter part of March or early April according to Anson Call.
May 13, 1838	Far West, MO	Joseph Smith's "Scriptory Book" (pp. 41-42) shows that translation work was still under active consideration and any scrolls subject to this work would have been with Joseph Smith at this point.
May 24, 1838	Richmond, MO	At least some of the relics are observed in Missouri. At some point they were transported by Samuel Woolley. The mummies were exhibited in Quincy, Ill. during the winter of 1838-39 by Joseph Smith's parents. The papyri were brought to Illinois by Joseph Smith's wife, Emma Smith.
April 1840	Nauvoo, Ill.	Papyrus shown to Iowa visitor by Joseph Smith and an account of this is published in the <i>Quincy Whig</i> in October.
June 20, 1840	Nauvoo, Ill.	Antiquities mentioned in statement to Nauvoo High Council. Mummies are now in Nauvoo.
October 1840	Nauvoo, Ill.	Three Mummies observed in Joseph Smith's log house.
May 1841	Nauvoo, Ill.	William I. Appleby observes rolls of papyrus. Makes a copy of portion of English text of Book of Abraham, including some description and explanations of the facsimile prototypes.
December 1841-March 1842	Nauvoo, Ill.	Translation work being done by Joseph Smith? Coray letter suggests this-with seer stone.
March 1842	Nauvoo, Ill.	Publication of the Book of Abraham begins.
July 1842	Liverpool, England	Parley P. Pratt publishes the Book of Abraham in England. He also makes some unusual claims about the route taken by the relics to New York. He states that they came to the Thames first. Whether he is recalling Oliver Cowdery's statements incorrectly or had other information is unknown.
February 19,	Nauvoo, Ill.	Mummies displayed by Lucy Mack Smith (Joseph Smith's

1843		mother.)
May 1844	Nauvoo, Ill.	Josiah Quincy (soon to be mayor of Boston) and Charles Francis Adams visit Nauvoo and see Joseph Smith who shows them the mummies and papyri. Quincy gives a somewhat bogus account of this many years later. Adams' diary contains what is probably a more correct account of the meeting. [See Appendix V.]
June 27, 1844	Carthage, Ill.	Joseph & Hyrum Smith assassinated.
February 1846	Nauvoo, Ill.	Mormon pioneers brought one papyrus fragment to Utah. Apparently the balance of the relics remain in the care of Lucy Smith.
Summer 1846	Nauvoo, Ill.	Lucy shows papyri to visiting Quakers. She 'reads' papyri which was pasted into a 'book,' shows 'dark' roll of papyrus. Says Joseph read papyri [with seer stone?] "he held a hat over his face." The readings seem to have expanded in scope (Mechizedek is included for example). Lucy says that Joseph's method allowed him to read even missing (torn away) pieces of the papyrus.
May 26, 1856	Nauvoo, Ill.	Lucy dies. Various accounts assert that after Joseph Smith's death, William Smith eventually obtained the relics and finally sold them. [For example, Brigham Young in Thomas Bullock journal, Nov. 11, 1855.] However a bill of sale exists conveying four mummies and some mss from Emma Smith Bidamon (Joseph Smith's widow) and her current husband to LDS Church member Abel Combs. Combs split up the collection he obtained.
August 14, 1856	St. Louis, MO.	Two of the Joseph Smith mummies and some papyri appear at the St. Louis Museum. The location of the other two mummies remains a mystery. Gustavus Seyffarth, an expert in observing, if not in translating Egyptian script, sees the rolls and the Hor papyrus is observed to contain another book besides the breathings document.
August 10, 1863	Chicago, Ill.	The St. Louis Museum is purchased and removed to Chicago. The mummies go with it.
January 1864	Chicago, Ill.	The museum contents are purchased by Joseph H. Wood who changed the name to Wood's Museum.
1865	Chicago, Ill.	Papyrus rolls and mummies seen in Wood's Museum by LDS missionary.
October 8, 1871	Chicago, Ill.	Chicago fire destroys Wood's Museum. Whether the two mummies and papyrus mss were still there is unknown but it seems the papyrus rolls were destroyed.
1875	Philadelphia, PA.	Abel Combs is listed as lamp maker in the city directory.
July 5, 1892	Philadelphia, PA.	Abel Combs dies. His nurse, Charlotte Benecke Weaver receives eleven papyrus fragments as Combs' bequest. Weaver has a daughter, Alice Combs Weaver, later Alice Heusser.
January 16, 1918	New York City	Alice C. Heusser brought "9 or 10" papyrus fragments to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. No transaction took place.
April 29,	New York City	Ludlow Bull, associate curator for the Metropolitan locates

1946		Alice Heusser's husband, now 80, and finds he still has the papyri.
June 11, 1946	New York City	Bull offers Heusser a modest sum for the papyri which is accepted. In addition, Bull claims that a former staff member at the museum recalled that Alice brought a hypocephalus with her in 1918. Bull asked for it, but Heusser either did not have it or chose not to turn it over.
Early 1966	New York City	Coptic scholar Aziz Atiya is requested by curator Henry Fischer to help in discovering whether the LDS Church would be interested in the papyri. One of which is original for Facsimile No. 1 [see Appendix V for reconstructed breathing permit fragment] and Atiya embarks on a plan to have them transferred to the LDS Church.
November 27, 1967	New York City	In exchange for a donation from an anonymous donor, the Met. gives the papyri to President N. Eldon Tanner, of the First Presidency of the LDS Church who accepts in behalf of the Church. The Combs papyri fragments move to Utah.

Parley P. Pratt, editor of the *Millennial Star* in 1842 gave the following sequence of events for the acquisition of the papyri in the issue (pages 46-47) which published the Book of Abraham. Pratt's account contains some unusual statements but is hearsay [compare notes 34, 35, 58, 164 of the commentary]:

We have much pleasure this month in being able to give an illustration and extract from the BOOK OF ABRAHAM; a book of higher antiquity than any portion of the bible. Singular is the providence by which this ancient record fell into the hands of the servant of the Lord, JOSEPH SMITH. A gentleman, travelling [sic] in Egypt, made a selection of several mummies, of the best kind of embalming, and of course in the best state of preservation; on his way to England he died, bequeathing them to a gentleman of the name of CHANDLER. They arrived in the Thames,¹ but it was found the gentleman was in America, they were then forwarded to New York and advertised, when Mr. CHANDLER came forward and claimed them. One of the mummies, on being unrolled, had underneath the cloths in which it was wrapped, lying upon the breast, a roll of papyrus, in an excellent state of preservation, written in Egyptian character, and illustrated in the manner of our engraving, which is a copy from a portion of it. The mummies, together with the record, have been exhibited, generally, through the States, previous to their falling into our hands. Mr. CHANDLER was, of course, anxious to find some one who could interpret or translate this valuable relic of antiquity, and, we believe, on one occasion, met with an individual² who was enabled to decipher a small portion, or, at least, to give an opinion of what he supposed its meaning to be. He every where heard mention of JOSEPH SMITH and the Book of Mormon, but so generally associated with something slanderous, that he could scarcely think seriously of applying to him. But at length, however, he called upon Mr. SMITH, to inquire if he had a power by which he could translate the ancient Egyptian. Mr. SMITH replied that he had, when Mr. Chandler presented the fragment which had been partially interpreted.³ Mr. SMITH retired into his translating room, and presently returned with a written translation in English, of the fragment, confirming the supposed meaning ascribed to it by the gentleman to whom it had been previously presented. An event, of a nature so extraordinary, was of course soon noised abroad, when a number of gentlemen in the neighborhood, not connected with the Saints, united together, and, purchasing the record together with some or all of the mummies, made Mr. SMITH a present of them.⁴ The record is now in course of translation by the means of the Urim and Thummim,⁵ and proves to be a record written

partly by the father of the faithful, Abraham, and finished by Joseph when in Egypt.⁶ After his death, it is supposed they were preserved in the family of the Pharoahs [sic] and afterwards hid up with the embalmed body of the female with whom they were found.⁷ Thus it is, indeed, true, that the ways of the Lord are not as man's ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.⁸

¹ There is no other evidence to suggest the mummies came to England.

² Ironically, perhaps Charles Anthon.

³ That a fragment was passed to Joseph Smith suggest perhaps a hypocephalus.

⁴ That philanthropic non-Mormons bought the papyri is fanciful.

⁵ The use of "Urim and Thummim," in the translation is suggested by Woodruff.

⁶ That (ancient) Joseph wrote on the same roll of papyrus is a new suggestion, and that it somehow "finished," the record is not otherwise attested. Other testimony suggests at least two or three rolls, one Abraham, one Joseph.

⁷ The transmission of the text by Egyptian hands was clearly just a conjecture.

⁸ The whole scenario begs the question: where does Pratt get his information? He was not in Kirtland at the time Chandler came through. His autobiography makes no mention of the Book of Abraham.