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**Abstract** “The Use of Egyptian Magical Papyri to Authenticate the Book of Abraham: A Critical Review” (1993), by Edward H. Ashment.

**Edward H. Ashment. "The Use of Egyptian Magical Papyri to Authenticate the Book of Abraham: A Critical Review." Salt Lake City: Resource Communications, 1993. 29 pp. \$2.95.**

## **Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob**

Reviewed by John Gee

The discovery of almost any new historical evidence that challenges ingrained ideas about a given historical event or time period creates controversy because the new evidence is vigorously resisted in certain quarters. Thus the discovery of the name *Abraham* among Egyptian documents recently excavated in the library stacks followed a familiar pattern: (1) The initial discovery was made by an outsider to the field who only reported it to researchers in the field after a delay. (2) Then active researchers in the field began investigating the find and doing a more systematic excavation. This was accompanied by preliminary public reports that might have appeared to have had a sensational flavor (even when the researchers tried to be cautious). (3) These were followed by attacks on the evidence and those involved in the research. (4) Ideally, these attacks will eventually be followed by a fuller synthesized picture of the evidence in its historical context. The work under review illustrates the third step of the process and would seem to be a reaction to some perceived sensationalism in the initial reports. While we should welcome any correction of flaws in the scholarly argument, the author, Edward H. Ashment, has continually been noted for his confused, confusing, and occasionally incoherent presentations,<sup>1</sup> a trend continued in the

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The following abbreviations are used in this review:

CDME for Raymond O. Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1961)

EDG for Wolja Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1954)

JEA for *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*

LÄ for Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, eds., *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, 7 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975–89)

OCD for N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970)

PDM Papyri Demoticae Magicae, the demotic portions of the PGM

PGM Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner 1928, 1931)

RBBM for *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*

Wb for Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 5 vols. (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1926–31)

ZÄS for *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*; ZPE for *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

I would like to thank Joseph and Erin Gee, Bill Hamblin, Louis Midgley, Karen Nelson, Dan Peterson, Matt Roper, and Michael Rhodes for their comments on various parts of the manuscript in various stages, Robert Ritner for his comments on an earlier incarnation of one section as well as general guidance and support on various topics, William Brashear, David Johnson, David Cameron, and Michael Rhodes for each adding a reference to my list of mentions of the name *Abraham* (none of these references came in response to the request through *Insights*), Stephen Ricks and Davis Bitton for insisting that I do this review, and finally Dan Peterson for providing a place for it to be published. None of these individuals should be held responsible for any of the errors or opinions in this review essay.

<sup>1</sup> Louis Midgley, "More Revisionist Legerdemain and the Book of Mormon," *RBBM* 3 (1991): 283–95; Stephen E. Robinson, review of Dan Vogel, ed., *The Word of God*, in *RBBM* 3 (1991): 317; Steven Epperson, review of Vogel, ed., *The Word of God*, in *BYU Studies* 31/3 (Summer 1991): 67, 69–71; Newell G. Bringhurst, "A Conference Overview," *The Mormon History Association Newsletter* 81 (Summer 1991): 3; Gary F. Novak, review of George D. Smith, ed., *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History*, in *RBBM* 5 (1993): 244–49; Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction," *RBBM* 6/1 (1994): x; John A. Tvedtnes, review of Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, in *RBBM* 6/1 (1994): 30–40; John Gee, "La Trahison des Clercs: On the Language and Translation of the Book of Mormon," *RBBM* 6/1 (1994): 79–120; Royal Skousen, "Critical Methodology and the Text of the Book of Mormon," *RBBM* 6/1 (1994): 132–35; William J. Hamblin, "An Apologist for the Critics: Brent Lee Metcalfe's Assumptions and Methodologies," *RBBM* 6/1 (1994): 483–84; Daniel C. Peterson, "Text and Context," *RBBM* 6/1 (1994): 526 n. 9. In James R. Harris, *The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham, A Study of the Joseph Smith Egyptian*

present work. In this endeavor he has been preceded by the dedicated anti-Mormons Jerald and Sandra Tanner, who excel Ashment only in the honesty with which they admit their agenda, and their willingness to concede that the evidence does actually say what has been claimed.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, Ashment's and the Tanners' discussions of the evidence are preoccupied with mind-reading and characterized by muddled thinking. But since they are not particularly adept in the theory and practice of magic, and emphatically reject notions of divine revelation in modern times, they fail miserably as mind-readers. Every time they state what the author they are attacking had in mind (and I have this on impeccable authority), they get it wrong (more on this later).<sup>3</sup> (Since they purport to be scholars, they ought to be ashamed for even attempting this.)

Preliminary reports in periodicals aimed at a popular audience are generally too short to cover background information and issues. This review essay will, it is hoped, cover those background issues and move into the next stage of the process, providing a synthesis of the available information as well as correcting some of the misinformation circulated by a few more zealous than knowledgeable.

Ashment and the Tanners show a large amount of confusion on at least four fundamental theoretical issues that makes their

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*Papyri* (Payson, UT: by the author, 1990), 69, Harris rebuts an argument of Ashment from a much earlier publication. In all fairness to Ashment, however, the ungrammatical misreadings of hieratic that Harris attributes to Ashment are Harris's own and not Ashment's. Ashment provided no misreadings—in fact, no readings at all—in his article; only in the last two years has Ashment provided any published indication that he can read, transcribe, or translate any ancient language.

<sup>2</sup> Jerald and Sandra Tanner, "Solving the Mystery of the Joseph Smith Papyri," *Salt Lake City Messenger* 82 (September 1992): 1–12.

<sup>3</sup> I will defer presentation of the evidence for this claim to a later place, partly because it serves no purpose here, partly because there are more important issues to discuss, and partly because "there is nothing more tedious than the spectacle of disgruntled authors complaining that they have been misrepresented or, even worse, whimpering that they have been 'misunderstood.'" Academic authors, above all others, should be immunized from such concerns, after years of seeing the versions of our lectures we get back in blue books at the end of the term"; Peter Novick, "My Correct View on Everything," *American Historical Review* 96/3 (June 1991): 699.

work unintelligible and thus an unreliable guide to the evidence they wish to discuss: (1) the nature of the arguments made in the preliminary reports they are trying to respond to, (2) the nature of the papyrus documents in question, (3) the definition of the term *magic*, and (4) the relationship between the papyri and the book of Abraham.

### Missing the Point

Both the Tanners and Ashment take the two short articles that initially reported the finds as attempts at apologetics. But the titles of the articles—"References to Abraham Found in Two Egyptian Texts"<sup>4</sup> and "Abraham in Ancient Egyptian Texts"<sup>5</sup>—are apt summaries of their arguments: The first was to alert researchers to the discovery of the name *Abraham* in two Egyptian papyri; the second was to discuss for a Latter-day Saint audience some of the occurrences of the name *Abraham* in some Egyptian papyri. Since the object of the second article was to explain these references to Latter-day Saints and not Egyptologists, papyrologists, or secularists, some of the arguments, explanations, and terms were peculiar to that intended audience. The arguments also do not take into account information published after November 1991. Ashment, by the very title of his work, seems to consider these articles as "The Use of Egyptian Magical Papyri to Authenticate the Book of Abraham." The Tanners, too, claim that this was an attempt to prove the book of Abraham true, and then contend that the articles undercut that argument.<sup>6</sup> But Ashment and the Tanners show a fundamental misunderstanding of the issues involved, not only in the articles in question, but in the processes by which documents are tested. Tests for authenticity do not return a verdict of authentic or inauthentic, or even a range of authentic, inauthentic, undetermined, but only a result of inauthentic or indeterminate. A single test for the authenticity of a

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<sup>4</sup> John Gee, "References to Abraham Found in Two Egyptian Texts." *Insights: An Ancient Window* (September 1991): 1, 3.

<sup>5</sup> John Gee, "Abraham in Ancient Egyptian Texts," *Ensign* 22 (July 1992): 60–62.

<sup>6</sup> Tanner and Tanner, "Solving the Mystery of the Joseph Smith Papyri," 6.

document usually cannot decide the question in and of itself.<sup>7</sup> The papyri references were used in the articles as evidence, not for the authentication of the book of Abraham, but for the falsification of a particular anti-Mormon theory.<sup>8</sup> Since “the method of science is . . . to look for facts which may refute a theory,” attempts to disprove a theory “confirm the theory only if they are the results of unsuccessful attempts to overthrow its predictions, and therefore a telling testimony in its favor.”<sup>9</sup> In this case, the evidence refutes two hypotheses that have been put forward. The first is that Egyptian papyri “have nothing to do with any scripture written by Abraham,”<sup>10</sup> which quickly degenerates into statements that the name *Abraham* never appears in Egyptian writing. The second is that it disproves the hypothesis that “if additional fragments of papyrus from the Theban tombs should be acquired, they would most likely be more of the Egyptian type of funerary documents that are consistently found in burials.”<sup>11</sup>

The stance was and is that these references to Abraham in the papyri do not—indeed cannot in themselves—prove the book of

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<sup>7</sup> George J. Throckmorton, “A Forensic Analysis of Twenty-one Hofmann Documents,” in Linda Sillitoe and Allen Roberts, *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), 533.

<sup>8</sup> This sort of misunderstanding is encountered in the anti-Mormon treatment of Dee Jay Nelson: Wesley Walters, review of Robert L. Brown and Rosemary Brown, *They Lie in Wait to Deceive*, in *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 5/4 (1982): 116–20; Charles M. Larson, *By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Institute for Religious Research, 1992), 199–226; Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Can the Browns Save Joseph Smith?* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1981). Dee Jay Nelson was a huckster who fooled both Mormon and anti-Mormon alike, though he did not fool the Egyptologists; see Dieter Mueller, in *Annual Egyptological Bibliography* 1968 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 169–70. This does not necessarily mean that all his work is wrong (although much of it is), but it does mean that it is not trustworthy.

<sup>9</sup> Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (reprint New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 2:260.

<sup>10</sup> Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Case against Mormonism*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1968), 2:159; 3:30; cf. Dee Jay Nelson, *Joseph Smith's “Eye of Ra”: A Preliminary Survey and First Translation of Facsimile No. 2 in the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, 1968), 25.

<sup>11</sup> Harris, *Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham*, 88.

Abraham authentic. It was argued specifically that "the *only* real proof of scripture can come *only* through the power of the Holy Ghost (see Moro. 10:3-5; D&C 50:17-23)."<sup>12</sup> The logical extension of this position is that for someone who accepts only empirical evidence there can be no real proof of scripture. Egyptology is an empirical discipline and thus can never really prove what to Latter-day Saints are the most important parts of the book of Abraham. (What sort of empirical or archaeological evidence would be left if God talked with Abraham—or with Joseph Smith for that matter?)

Can Egyptology disprove the book of Abraham? Since the general Latter-day Saint position on scripture is that it is historically based in events that happened in the empirical world, one would think that an empirical discipline might be able to shed light on scriptural events. In theory this may be true, but in practice it is not. The preservation of the physical remains of the past is haphazard at best and constantly deteriorating. If all of the written records from all periods of Egypt's history had been somehow miraculously preserved and someone could actually sift through all of them in one lifetime, could we not tell whether Abraham visited Egypt and what he did there? Even this hypothetical proposition is doubtful. What we know of the names and personalities and historical events of ancient Egypt is completely dependent upon the sporadic, fragmentary, and often frustratingly elliptical records<sup>13</sup> preserved by the less than one percent of the

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<sup>12</sup> Gee, "Abraham in Ancient Egyptian Texts," 60, emphasis added.

<sup>13</sup> The fragmentary nature of the Egyptian historical record is emphasized by Alan H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 53: "It must never be forgotten that we are dealing with a civilization thousands of years old and one of which only tiny remnants have survived. What is proudly advertised as Egyptian history is merely a collection of rags and tatters." Similar cautions have been voiced in B. G. Trigger, "The Rise of Egyptian Civilization," in *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-2, 44, 56, 58-59; Barry J. Kemp, "Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period," in *ibid.*, 71, 76-78, 81, 96, 108, 113; David O'Connor, "New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period, 1552-664 BC," in *ibid.*, 187-88; I. E. S. Edwards, "The Early Dynastic Period in Egypt," in *Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 1.2:19; Gay Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 190. This is, of course, true of most of ancient history; see Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2:265; Ludlow Bull, "Ancient

population that was literate.<sup>14</sup> What sort of archaeological evidence would we expect to find for the visit of a single particular Asiatic household to Egypt for a while somewhere between 3500–4000 years ago? Where would we find it? How would we know how to recognize it? If we fail to find something we neither know how nor have ever bothered to look for, and which probably has not been preserved anyway, what is that supposed to prove? Arguments from silence in this field are extremely suspect.<sup>15</sup>

But beyond fallacies of negative proof, Latter-day Saints have, for good reasons, never felt bound by certain currently accepted results of Egyptology. “As everyone knows, Egyptology is a ‘discipline,’ ” writes Antonio Loprieno, “and not a ‘science.’ ”<sup>16</sup> Though Egyptology may not be a hard science, it is an empirical and historical discipline that has tried to model itself on the hard sciences, and has always seen itself as such. Egyptology, as a discipline, developed mostly at the end of the last century and the beginning of the present century and has followed the lead of the discipline of history during the same time in the adoption of “scientific imagery, and the assumption of the mantle of science.”<sup>17</sup> Thus Sir Alan Gardiner described “pre-Napoleonic

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Egypt,” in *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Robert C. Benton (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1983), 3–5; Stephen D. Ricks, review of Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, in *RBBM* 2 (1990): 135–37; Sterling Dow, *Conventions in Editing* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1969), 20.

<sup>14</sup> John Baines and Christopher J. Eyre, “Four Notes on Literacy,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 61 (1983): 65–72; John Baines, “Literacy and Ancient Egyptian Society,” *Man* 18 (1983): 584–86; Robert K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1993), 204 and n. 948. It should be emphasized that this figure is based on pure guesswork. First the population in the Old Kingdom is approximated according to the theoretical population that the estimated arable land could support based on flood levels and irrigation techniques known to have been in use at the time. The level of literate people is guessed by the number of individuals who could afford tombs, to which is added a guess of the number of professional scribes. The percentage is a ratio between the estimate and the guess, rounded up.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. David H. Fischer, *Historians’ Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 47–48.

<sup>16</sup> Antonio Loprieno, “Book Reviews Once More,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 112 (1989): 40.

<sup>17</sup> The American history profession’s assumption of the mantle is detailed in Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the Ameri-*

Egyptology” as “yet wholly uncritical and unscientific;”<sup>18</sup> but Egyptian archaeology of the last century he described as “scientific excavation,” using “scientific standards,”<sup>19</sup> while Egyptian philology had “a scientific grammar,” and therefore he considered Egyptology to be a “growing science.”<sup>20</sup> “This, then, was the model of scientific method which, in principle, the historians embraced. Science must be rigidly factual and empirical, shunning hypothesis; the scientific venture was scrupulously neutral on larger questions of end and meaning; and, if systematically pursued, it might ultimately produce a comprehensive, ‘definitive’ history.”<sup>21</sup> Notwithstanding Loprieno’s assertion of Egyptology as a discipline, he thinks that “Egyptology is doomed (whether consciously or unconsciously) to borrow theoretical settings from ‘systematic’ sciences.”<sup>22</sup> Unlike the American history profession,<sup>23</sup> Egyptology has only recently begun to feel the impact of Thomas Kuhn’s work on the hard sciences. Loprieno thus talks about “Egyptology [being] no exception” to trends “characteristic of modern scientific discourse altogether, in so-called exact sciences as well as in so-called humanities,” dealing “with the progressive switch in the focus of scholarly concern from the need to preserve and submit to investigation the individual documents of the past . . . to the interests for the paradigms (in Kuhn’s sense) on the basis of which we analyse and eventually classify these documents scientifically.”<sup>24</sup> Such issues have not been integrated into the mainstream in Egyptology because a significant proportion of Egyptologists cannot penetrate the “undisciplined use of

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*can History Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 31–46; the quotation is from 33.

<sup>18</sup> Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 11–12.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–16.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>21</sup> Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 37.

<sup>22</sup> Loprieno, “Book Reviews Once More,” 40. Historically, Loprieno’s statement has not been true. W. M. Flinders Petrie’s archaeological digs served as a bellwether in archaeology, where other disciplines borrowed and adapted the methods of Egyptian archaeology. More pertinent to our topic, it is Egyptologists, specifically the Demoticists, who have been in the forefront of understanding the so-called magical papyri.

<sup>23</sup> Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 524–37.

<sup>24</sup> Loprieno, “Book Reviews Once More,” 37.

language and [the] ill-defined terminology” of Loprieno and his fellows sufficiently to figure out what the fuss is all about.<sup>25</sup> The discipline nevertheless still usually views itself as a science.<sup>26</sup> To the extent that Egyptology is a science, it falls under the able critique of physicist and historian Erich Robert Paul: “Properly conceived, science is not, and should never become, an intellectual partner of theology—including Mormon theology. Looking at the same concern from the religious side, one can say that genuine faith can *only* be sustained outside the dimensions of historical and scientific evidence.”<sup>27</sup> Thus though we are grateful for any incidental confirming details—such as the appearance of the name *Olishem* (Abraham 1:10) in ancient historical documents<sup>28</sup>—Mormons do not ultimately rest their faith on scraps of historical

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<sup>25</sup> Richard H. Pierce, review of Gertie Englund and Paul J. Frandsen, eds., *Crossroad, Chaos or the Beginning of a New Paradigm*, in *Acta Orientalia* 49 (1988): 133–38; the quotation is from 135.

<sup>26</sup> With statements like the following from Loprieno, “Book Reviews Once More,” 40—“What every scholar of Egyptian grammar as well as of any other area of Egyptological research does [is] to verify critically the validity of grammatical ‘theories’ or concepts”—one wonders if he has understood the debate in the philosophy of science in the last century, including the work of Kuhn or more especially Popper, or if he is simply following “one of the many common misreadings of the work of Thomas Kuhn” (Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 431), since Loprieno’s statement betrays a theory of science from the last century—a theory shared by Ashment. See the discussion in Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 533–34.

<sup>27</sup> E. Robert Paul, *Science, Religion, and Mormon Cosmology* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 232.

<sup>28</sup> For discussion of the location of the place name *Olishem* in a Rim-Sin inscription, see John Lundquist, “Was Abraham in Ebla?” in *Studies in Scripture II: The Pearl of Great Price*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent Jackson (Salt Lake City: Randall, 1985), 234–35; Paul Y. Hoskisson, “Where Was Ur of the Chaldees?” in *The Pearl of Great Price: Revelations from God*, ed. H. Donl Peterson and Charles D. Tate (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1989), 136 n. 44; John Gee, “A Tragedy of Errors,” *RBBM* 4 (1992): 115–16, esp. n. 64. The inscription in question has recently been translated into English in Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, 2 vols. (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 1993), 1:52–53, esp. n. 3: “Location unknown, presumably on the Syrian coast.” The significance of this is that if the “Ulisim” of the inscription is the same as the “Olishem” of the book of Abraham, the Ur of the Chaldees would presumably be near the Syrian coast.

data unearthed by scholars or by the sometimes fanciful reconstructions of historians, but on Jesus Christ and his resurrection.

The evidence brought forth in the two articles was briefly mentioned and not fashioned into an historical argument. It would seem, though, that Ashment and the Tanners have not understood this point. They have the idea that, since the author of the articles believes the book of Abraham is authentic, and since he published evidence that refuted certain anti-Mormon claims connected with the book of Abraham, the work must be apologetic. They have, thereby, misconstrued the arguments of the articles. Since these arguments seem to cause such problems, I will summarize them below:

I. The name *Abraham* appears on Egyptian papyri.

A. The name *Abraham* on the papyri discussed is that of the biblical Abraham.

1. One of these occurrences of the name is connected with a lion couch scene.

2. Another of these occurrences is plausibly linked to hypocephali. (Facsimile 2 of the book of Abraham is a hypocephalus.)

II. Figure 3 in Facsimile 1 of the book of Abraham is a priest. (This was not a major argument in either of the articles in question but was implied in the second one.)

The details of supporting arguments or explanations are not necessarily sacrosanct. For example, it would seem that the identification and explanation of the appearance of the god "Balsamos" in *P. Leiden* I 374 that was given in the *Ensign* article<sup>29</sup> is completely irrelevant since it appears that that particular name resulted from a misreading of the papyrus.<sup>30</sup> If the major argument is correct, however, the details can be refined through further research without drastically affecting the major argument;<sup>31</sup> on the other hand, if the major argument is wrong no amount of correctness in the details can save it. Ashment and the

<sup>29</sup> Gee, "Abraham in Ancient Egyptian Texts," 61.

<sup>30</sup> Robert W. Daniel, ed., *Two Greek Magical Papyri in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden: A Photographic Edition of J 384 and J 395 (= PGM XII and XIII)* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), xxii-xxiii, 29.

<sup>31</sup> For example, no one seems to think, because the Tanners have made mistakes in their hieratic, that their arguments are invalid.

Tanners have only mixed results on the details—the more irrelevant the detail, the more likely they are to be correct—but Ashment, particularly, has taken an indefensible position relating to the major argument.

### Out of the Mainstream

The fundamental issue is whether or not the name *Abraham* appears in Egyptian papyri. To this the answer is without question in the affirmative. The article in the *Ensign* listed six examples;<sup>32</sup> many other references could have been given.<sup>33</sup> From reading Ashment's booklet, on the other hand, one might receive the impression that the author of the *Ensign* article saw the name *Abraham* where it does not actually exist.<sup>34</sup> This is clearly not the case, since no scholar who seriously works with these papyri doubts the existence in them of the name *Abraham*.<sup>35</sup> So confi-

<sup>32</sup> Gee, "Abraham in Ancient Egyptian Texts," 60–62. The texts cited were *PGM* V.460–80; *PDM* xii.6–20; *PGM* XII.270–321, *PGM* XII.474–95 + *PDM* xii.135–64; *PDM* xiv.228–29; *PGM* XXXVI.295–310. Due to some confusion in the editing process, one of these references was inadvertently omitted from the published version.

<sup>33</sup> For example, *PGM* I.219; IV.2209; VII.315; VIII.8; XIII.778, 817, 976; XXIIb.6; XXXV.14; 2a.7; 21.31; *PGM* Suppl. 2:6; 29:18; 75:[21]; 88:11.

<sup>34</sup> There are actual examples of this; see, for example, Robert W. Daniel and Franco Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum*, 2 vols (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990–92), 1:51; 2:208. Please note that, unlike Ashment, these scholars do not deny the presence of the name "Abraham" on principle, but show that in two specific instances the examination of the traces proves that what another scholar had read as *Abraham* is really something else.

<sup>35</sup> For example, the following sources all accept the occurrence of the name *Abraham*: Augustus Audollent, *Defixiones Tabellae quotquot innotuerunt* (Paris: Fontemoing, 1904), 374–75; David E. Aune, "PGM V.459–89," in *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation including the Demotic Spells*, ed. Hans D. Betz (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1986), 110; David E. Aune, "PGM XXIIb.1–26," in *ibid.*; Walter Beltz, "Die koptischen Zauberpapyri der Papyrus-Sammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin," *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 29 (1988): 81; Ludwig Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen* (1898; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1974), 97–101, 106–7; James H. Charlesworth, "Prayer of Jacob," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983–85), 2:717; W. E. Crum, *Short Texts from Coptic Ostraca and Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), 6 (#18); W. E. Crum, "Eine Verfluchung," *ZÄS* 34 (1896): 87, 89; Daniel and Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum*, 1:7–9, 79–80, 82:

dent are scholars that the name does occur in these papyri, that they are willing to restore it into lacunae in the papyri.<sup>36</sup> That the name refers to the biblical Abraham is both undisputed and indisputable when the papyrus mentions "Abraham, Isaac, and

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2:193; Arnaud Delatte and Philippe Derchain, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1964), 34, 278–79, 332–33, 335, 337; Samson Eitrem, *Papyri Osloensis*, 3 vols. (Oslo: Dybwad, 1925–36), 1:27; Samson Eitrem, *Les papyrus magiques grecs de Paris* (Kristiana: Dybwad, 1923), 14; Francis Ll. Griffith and Herbert Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, 3 vols. (London: Grevel, 1904), 1:65; Theodor Hopfner, "Der religions-geschichtliche Gehalt des grossen demotischen Zauberpapyrus," *Archiv Orientalní* 7 (1935): 118; Janet H. Johnson, "Louvre E3229: A Demotic Magical Text," *Enchoria* 7 (1977): 94, 96; Janet H. Johnson and Edward N. O'Neil, "PDM xii.135–46 [PGM XII.474–79]," in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, 171; Roy Kotansky, "PGM LXXXII.1–20," in *ibid.*, 300; Conrad Leemans, *Papyri Graeci Musei Antiquarii Publici Lugduni Batavi*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1885), 2:30–31, 42–43; François Lexa, *La Magie dans l'Égypte antique*, 3 vols. (Paris: Geuthner, 1925), 1:117, 2:133, 158; Gaston Maspero, "Sur deux tabellae devotionis de la nécropole romaine d'Hadrumète," in *Bibliothèque Égyptologique* 2:305–306, 309, 311; Marvin W. Meyer, "PGM IV.1227–64," in Betz, ed., *Greek Magical Papyri*, 62; Edward N. O'Neil, "PGM XXXVI.295–311," in *ibid.*, 276; Raphael Patai, *The Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 56–57; Karl Preisendanz, *Papyrae Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–31), 1:13, 113, 197; 2:77, 86, 124, 128, 148, 190; esp. 3:207, 212; Martin Rist, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: A Liturgical and Magical Formula," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 57 (1938): 289–303; Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), 73; Morton Smith, "PGM XII.270–350," in Betz, ed., *Greek Magical Papyri*, 164; Morton Smith, "PGM XIII.734–1077," in *ibid.*, 191, 194; Viktor Stegemann, *Die koptischen Zaubertexte der Sammlung Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer in Wien* (Heidelberg: Winters, 1934), 70, 72; M. A. Héron de Villefosse, "Tablette magique de Beyrouth conservée au Musée du Louvre," *Florilegium Melchior de Vogüé* (Paris, 1910), 289–90, 292, 294; Dierk Wortmann, "Neue magische Texte," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 168 (1968): 104; this is also implied in Alfred D. Nock, "Greek Magical Papyri," *JEA* 15 (1929): 224, 226, 228–29.

<sup>36</sup> Charlesworth, "Prayer of Jacob," 720; Daniel and Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum*, 2:137, 141; Theodor Hopfner, "Ein neuer griechischer Zauberpapyrus (Pap. Wessely Pragens. Graec. No. 1)," *Archiv Orientalní* 7/3 (1935): 356–57; Roy Kotansky, "PGM CV.1–15," in Betz, ed., *Greek Magical Papyri*, 310. Of the restorations cited, the last, by Kotansky, seems to me doubtful; it is a possibility, but no more than that since it does not meet the criteria outlined in Dow, *Conventions in Editing*, 20–31.

Jacob.”<sup>37</sup> Nor is Abraham the only biblical figure to appear in the papyri, since the names *Isaac*,<sup>38</sup> *Jacob*,<sup>39</sup> *Solomon*,<sup>40</sup> *Eve*,<sup>41</sup> *Seth*,<sup>42</sup> and *Moses*<sup>43</sup> also appear. The name *Moses* even appears in a demotic papyrus where, in a lamp divination text (an Egyptian technique for receiving revelation),<sup>44</sup> the supplicant requests the god to “reveal thyself to me here today in the type of form of revealing thyself to Moses which thou didst on the mountain upon which thou createdest the darkness and the light.”<sup>45</sup>

Further corroboration of the use of the name *Abraham* by ancient pagan Egyptians is provided by a decidedly unsympathetic ancient author. The Egyptian Christian Origen, writing in the early third century, reported that “many of those who call upon the divine powers use ‘the God of Abraham’ in their speeches, even feigning friendship with God’s righteous one through the name because they mention the words ‘the God of

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<sup>37</sup> PGM XIII.976; XXXV.14; Daniel and Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum*, 1:79, 82; 2:188, 190; Delatte and Derchain, *Les initiales magiques gréco-égyptiennes*, 34.

<sup>38</sup> PGM XIII.976; XXXV.14; Daniel and Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum*, 1:79, 82; 2:188, 190; Delatte and Derchain, *Les initiales magiques gréco-égyptiennes*, 34; *P. Berol.* 21227, in William Brashear, “Vier Berliner Zaubertexte,” *ZPE* 17 (1975): 25.

<sup>39</sup> PGM XIII.317, 976; XXIIb.1, 26; XXV.14; XXXV.14; Daniel and Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum*, 1:79, 82; 2:188, 190; Delatte and Derchain, *Les initiales magiques gréco-égyptiennes*, 34, 172–73; *P. Berol.* 21227, in Brashear, “Vier Berliner Zaubertexte,” 25, 27.

<sup>40</sup> PGM IV.850, 853, 3040; Daniel and Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum*, 2:62, 64, 208, 212, 216; Delatte and Derchain, *Les initiales magiques gréco-égyptiennes*, 261–64.

<sup>41</sup> Daniel and Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum*, 1:154–56; Robert L. Daniel, “It Started with Eve,” *ZPE* 74 (1988): 249–51.

<sup>42</sup> Jarl Fossum and Brian Glazer, “Seth in the Magical Texts,” *ZPE* 100 (1994): 86–92, with a discussion of how one distinguishes between “Seth, the son of Adam” and “the Egyptian god Seth-Typhon.”

<sup>43</sup> PGM V.109; VII.619; XIII.21, 343, 382–83, 724, 731–32, 970, 1057, 1077; *P. Berlin* 8329, in Walter Beltz, “Die koptische Zauberpapirrollen der Papyrus Sammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin,” *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 30 (1984): 94.

<sup>44</sup> See, among others, Robert Schlichting, “Offenbarung,” in *LÄ* 4:557

<sup>45</sup> *P. Leiden* 383 5/13–15 = *PDM* xiv.129–31. It is worth noting that the situation described matches Moses 1 in the Pearl of Great Price, but is not found in the Bible.

Abraham' although they have not learned who Abraham is. The same must be said about Isaac, and Jacob and Israel; which names, although confessedly Hebrew, are frequently introduced by those Egyptians who profess to produce some wonderful result by means of their knowledge."<sup>46</sup> Thus ancient Egyptian documents contain the name *Abraham*,<sup>47</sup> modern scholars who study these documents say that they mention the name *Abraham*, and other ancient sources say that the Egyptians used the name *Abraham*. Most people seem to be convinced that there has been sufficient "demonstration that a name exists, and is not unlikely in the given region and period."<sup>48</sup> To my knowledge, the only person who doubts that the name *Abraham* exists in the papyri is Edward H. Ashment. Ashment, who finds himself outside the mainstream of scholarship on this point, must give some convincing evidence to support this denial.

Despite such clear and overwhelming evidence, Ashment argues that the name is not *Abraham*, and certainly not the biblical Abraham, because (1) the demotic name identified as *Abraham* is not spelled the same way in demotic as the name of the construction worker Abram;<sup>49</sup> (2) the demotic name identified as *Abraham* is spelled similarly to the name *Abrasax*; Ashment thinks that the two names are etymologically related and that, therefore, the demotic name is not that of the biblical Abraham since he has constructed a different etymology. Unfortunately Ashment's argument from etymology will not bear scrutiny. His test case for etymology is the name *Abrasax*, which appears three times in the papyrus in question.<sup>50</sup> In *P. Lond. demot.* 10070 + *P.*

<sup>46</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum* I, 22.

<sup>47</sup> See above, notes 35–37; this does not include Christian amulets and texts that mention Abraham by quoting the first line of the gospel of Matthew, e.g., Gerald M. Browne, "Illinois Coptic Texts, I," for *Bulletin for the American Society of Papyrologists* 16/1–2 (1979): 33; Ernestus Schaefer, ed., *Voluminum codicumque fragmenta graeca cum amuleto christiano* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1912), 18–32.

<sup>48</sup> Dow, *Conventions in Editing*, 28.

<sup>49</sup> The name *brm* is attested in O. Petrie, line 4, in W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Hyksos and Israelite Cities* (1906; reprint London: Histories & Mysteries of Man, 1989), pl. XXIV.

<sup>50</sup> Ashment appears to be confused by the spelling "Abraxam" in Janet H. Johnson, "The Demotic Magical Spells of Leiden I 384," *Ouhedkundige*

*Lugd. Bat.* J 383 (*PDM* xiv) at 23/24 (=698) the name appears as  $\text{ʿbr}^{\text{c}}\text{-ste-}^{\text{c}}\text{ks}^{\text{s}}$ <sup>51</sup> and is glossed in Old Coptic as *Abrasax*, but at both 13/27 (=392) and v 12/8 (=1033) the name is spelled  $\text{ʿbr}^{\text{c}}\text{s}^{\text{c}}\text{ks}$ . This is clearly the same name and has been taken so by all scholars who have edited the papyrus.<sup>52</sup> The switch between an  $\text{ʿayin}$  ( $\text{ʿ}$ ) and an *aleph* ( $\text{ʾ}$ ) does not pose a problem in demotic since these two sounds have coalesced.<sup>53</sup> Thus the spelling of a foreign name is not necessarily an indication of the etymology of the name. Ashment clings to the reading "ABRAHME" based on the transcription *ʿbr-hme* despite (1) the Old Coptic gloss *abrakham*, (2) the fact that the demotic word transcribed *hme* becomes the Coptic

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*mededelingen uit het rijksmuseum van oudheden te Leiden* 56 (1975): 33, 48. An examination of p. 33 and pl. VIII reveals that the "x" represents not an English "x" ("ks") but an Old Coptic "X" representing a hard "h" (or "kh"). In matters of transliterations of foreign names, one should not put overmuch stock in spellings; see for example the comments in Byron E. Shafer, "Preface," in *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice*, ed. Byron E. Shafer (Ithaca: Cornell, 1991), xii; Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957), 434.

<sup>51</sup> The use of the group writing for *ste* has been commented on in Francis Ll. Griffith and Herbert E. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, 3 vols. (London: Grevel, 1904), 1:147 n. for l, line 24. The sign is that listed in Georg Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1927–36), 2:14; 3:15, #167. The gloss gives a reading for this sign as *s* that is otherwise unattested.

<sup>52</sup> In Johnson, "PDM xiv.376–94," "PDM xiv.695–700," "PDM xiv.1026–45," in Betz, ed., *Greek Magical Papyri*, 218, 233, 245, the name is read as "Abrasaks."

<sup>53</sup> For example, compare the spellings of demotic  $\text{ʿkr}$  "boat" as  $\text{ʿkr}$ ,  $\text{ʿqyr}$ ,  $\text{ʿyqy}$  and  $\text{ʿygy}$  (*EDG* 1, 12, 73).  $\text{ʿwy}$  "to be far" as  $\text{ʿwe}$ , and  $\text{ʿwy}$  (*EDG* 2, 57),  $\text{ʿby}$  "panther" as  $\text{ʿb}^{\text{c}}$  (*EDG* 3, 59),  $\text{ʿb.t}$  "altar" as  $\text{ʿbw}$  (*EDG* 3, 58),  $\text{ʿbh}$  "to forget" as  $\text{ʿbh}$  (*EDG* 4, 59),  $\text{ʿbq}$  "raven" as  $\text{ʿbq}$  (*EDG* 4, 59). Examples can be multiplied at will; these are simply those from the first four pages of *EDG*. In the last century and the early part of the present century, the two letters were often not distinguished in demotic studies. This is also indicated in the same papyrus by the demotic spelling  $\text{ʿtʾ-n=y}$  for Hebrew *Adonai* with the gloss *Atone* in the papyrus in question: see Griffith and Thompson, *Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, 2:X, line 4. See also Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 258 n. 2; James E. Hoch, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 386, 412–13, 431, 435.

word “craftsman,”<sup>54</sup> (3) the acknowledgment of the translation he was using that “the spelling of the magical names given here [Ashment’s source] is based on the Demotic spelling supplemented by the Old Coptic spelling,”<sup>55</sup> even though “many Demotic words are still spelled historically, with no evidence of the actual pronunciation,”<sup>56</sup> and (4) the fact that “the alphabetic signs were added to the Demotic spellings for the same reason that they were used in the magical names—to indicate correct pronunciation.”<sup>57</sup> Therefore an (epenthetic) *e* added to the end of the word that is not reflected in the gloss should not be seen as taking precedence over the gloss in determining the pronunciation of the word.<sup>58</sup> Normalization into English *Abraham* is perfectly acceptable.<sup>59</sup> His etymology also suffers from the drawback that, in Egyptian words formed with *hme-/ham-*, that element comes first in the word.<sup>60</sup> Ashment also fails to give a meaning for either *Abraham* or *Abrasax*; it seems strange to make an argument based on etymology and then never give an etymology. I suppose that because the argument Ashment con-

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<sup>54</sup> *EDG*, 303; Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 673b–674a.

<sup>55</sup> Janet H. Johnson, “PDM xiv.1–92,” in Betz, ed., *Greek Magical Texts*, 196 n. 8.

<sup>56</sup> Janet H. Johnson, “The Dialect of the Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden,” in *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1976), 125 n. 60.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>58</sup> The issue is discussed in *ibid.*, 125–27, note especially the opening remarks; see also Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Demotische Grammatik* (Heidelberg: Winters, 1925), 4–5. The historical spelling of demotic *hme* derives from the Middle Egyptian antecedents *hmw* “to be skilled” and *hmww* “craftsman” (*EDG* 303; *Wb* 3:82–84; *CDME* 170), whose final *ws* have long since dropped from pronunciation.

<sup>59</sup> Ashment’s complaint about the use of the standard English spelling of “Zoar” instead of the standard *Greek* spelling of *Sēgōr* in an English translation (p. 17) falls under the same heading. The object of a translation into English is to make the text comprehensible to the reader of English. Those who can read Greek presumably do not need a translation. Ashment is simply grasping at straws, looking for things to criticize; using common English forms of names is a standard and accepted practice in the field; see, for example, Alan K. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs, 332 B.C.–A.D. 642 from Alexander to the Arab Conquest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 8.

<sup>60</sup> See *EDG*, 303–4; Walter E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939), 673b–674a.

structs leaves him with a meaningless word, that he is compelled to declare that the name *Abraham* is simple magical mumbo-jumbo. It seems as though Ashment is grasping at straws here. More importantly, variations in the demotic spelling of the name hardly amount to the refutation of the existence of the name.

Thus there can be no question that the name *Abraham* appears in the papyri and that the name refers to the biblical Abraham. Significantly, even the Tanners did not follow Ashment in this mistake! The implications of this evidence now will be explored.

### The Background of the Papyri

The mere appearance of the name *Abraham* in any random papyrus provides only limited information. The background of the papyri that contain these references plays a significant role in understanding their implications. Ashment and, more particularly, the Tanners seem to realize this and make some attempt to address this issue. Unfortunately, their discussions betray a misunderstanding of this background. A proper understanding of these issues will prevent many of the misconceptions that regrettably plague most of the discussions of these documents—including the majority of the treatments by scholars. The position I take on this issue is currently a minority position—the documents are Egyptian religious texts not Greek magical texts—but it is the position taken by most Demoticists who work with the documents, and it is a position that is gaining a wider acceptance among those of a classical background who work in this field.

Our story begins with Giovanni d'Anastasi, collector of Egyptian antiquities extraordinaires. A successful merchant who saw the advantage of cashing in on Europe's taste in Egyptian antiquities,<sup>61</sup> Anastasi employed several agents to gather antiquities for him, including one Piccinini who was working in Girga (Thinis) in 1828.<sup>62</sup> Anastasi's full collections cut across boundaries of genre

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<sup>61</sup> See Warren R. Dawson, "Anastasi, Sallier, and Harris and Their Papyri," *JEA* 35 (1949): 158–59.

<sup>62</sup> Jean-François Champollion, *Lettres et journaux écrits pendant le voyage d'Égypte*, ed. H. Hartleben (n.p.: Bougois, 1986), 149.

and time,<sup>63</sup> but they were an amalgamation of smaller collections. He dispersed his massive collections in four installments: One of these was in 1826, the second in 1828 (bought by the Leiden museum),<sup>64</sup> the third in 1839,<sup>65</sup> and the last in 1857, shortly after Anastasi's death.<sup>66</sup> The final auction contained 1,129 lots and took five days to complete.<sup>67</sup> The fifty-eight papyri and twenty-one ostraca were some of the most coveted items in the collection, and museums from all over Europe bought them up.<sup>68</sup> The order in which the documents were sold tells us nothing about the discovery date of the papyri since, for example, different parts of the same papyrus were sold in 1828 and 1857.<sup>69</sup> The third-century A.D. papyri—like papyri of all periods from the Anastasi collection—were then published individually in scattered publications that left no clue that they were originally together. Several scholars who worked with the documents individually suspected that the third-century papyri were all part of a single collection,<sup>70</sup> but only

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<sup>63</sup> As is amply demonstrated by the catalogue of his work in the auction of 1857: François Lenormant, *Catalogue d'une collection d'antiquités égyptiennes* (Paris: Maulde et Renou, 1857).

<sup>64</sup> Apparently, Anastasi had been contemplating this as early as 1826; see the letter of J. Rifaud to M. Drovetti, 18 May 1826, in Bernadino Drovetti, *Epistolario*, ed. Silvio Curto (Milano: Cisalpino, 1985), 476–77.

<sup>65</sup> This collection includes BM 10247 (*P. Anastasi I*); see Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts, Transcribed, Translated and Annotated. (EHT) Series I: Literary Texts of the New Kingdom, part I: The Papyrus Anastasi I and the Papyrus Koller, Together with the Parallel Texts* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1911), 1; BM 10243 (*P. Anastasi II*), BM 10246 (*P. Anastasi III*), BM 10249 (*P. Anastasi IV*), BM 10244 (*P. Anastasi V*), BM 10245 (*P. Anastasi VI*); see Alan H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (Bruxelles: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1937), xiii–xvii.

<sup>66</sup> Dawson, "Anastasi, Sallier, and Harris and Their Papyri," 159–60.

<sup>67</sup> Of these 1129, 1115 were Egyptian. Lenormant, *Catalogue d'une collection d'antiquités égyptiennes*, 90; see also Dawson, "Anastasi, Sallier, and Harris and Their Papyri," 160.

<sup>68</sup> Dawson, "Anastasi, Sallier, and Harris and Their Papyri," 160.

<sup>69</sup> Griffith and Thompson, *Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, 1:1.

<sup>70</sup> Francis Li. Griffith, "The Old Coptic Horoscope of the Stobart Collection," *ZÄS* 38 (1900): 72; Otto Lagercrantz, *Papyrus Graecus Holmiensis (p. Holm.): Rezepte für Silber Steine und Purpur* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1913), 54; Theodor Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1974), iv (this work was originally published in 1921);

recently has any effort been made to assemble a list of the contents of this archive, which has somewhat inappropriately been called the "Thebes cache."<sup>71</sup> Similar archives have been assembled from Anastasi's collections, forming the Memphis "Undertakers' Archive" (203–65 B.C.),<sup>72</sup> the Theban archive of Timounis, daughter of Thabis (270–175 B.C.),<sup>73</sup> the Theban archive of Amenothos, son of Harsiesis (216–170 B.C.),<sup>74</sup> and the Middle Kingdom stelae from the terrace of the Great God of Abydos.<sup>75</sup> Other archives of similar material are also known.<sup>76</sup>

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Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1:vi–vii, 21; Arthur D. Nock, "Greek Magical Papyri," *JEA* 15 (1929): 220; Harold I. Bell, Arthur D. Nock, and Herbert Thompson, *Magic Texts from a Bilingual Papyrus in the British Museum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 5; Georges Ort-Geuthner, *Grammaire démotique du papyrus magique de Londres et Leyde* (Paris: Geuthner, 1936), xi; M. Bertholet, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*, 3 vols. (London: Holland Press, 1963), 7; E. G. Turner, *Greek Papyri: An Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 46; Johnson, "Demotic Magical Spells of Leiden I 384," 53; Johnson, "Dialect of the Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden," 105 and n. 2; Johnson, "Louvre E3229: A Demotic Magical Text," 56; Betz, "Introduction to the Greek Magical Papyri," in Betz, ed., *Greek Magical Papyri*, xlii–xliii; Janet H. Johnson, "Introduction to the Demotic Magical Papyri," in Betz, ed., *Greek Magical Papyri*, lv–lvi.

<sup>71</sup> Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 168–72. I have added to Fowden's list several papyri that he missed. A complete list of the papyri in the Thebes cache will appear in Robert Ritner, "Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire: The Demotic Spells and Their Religious Context," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, part II, vol. 18.5 (Berlin: de Gruyter, in press) and the companion article by William Brashear, "Die Zauberpapyri aus Ägypten," in *ibid.* My list was done independently of the lists in these articles. The name "Thebes cache" is not appropriate here since there are many caches of documents from Thebes.

<sup>72</sup> Dorothy J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 157, 280–82.

<sup>73</sup> Carol A. R. Andrews, *Ptolemaic Legal Texts from the Theban Area* (London: British Museum, 1990), 47–59.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 37–47.

<sup>75</sup> William K. Simpson, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos: The Offering Chapels of Dynasties 12 and 13* (New Haven: Peabody Museum of Natural History of Yale University, 1974), 1–6.

<sup>76</sup> For example, *P. Osl.* I, 1 (=PGM XXXVI), *P. Osl.* I, 2 (=PGM XXXVII), *P. Osl.* I, 3 (=PGM XXXVIII), *P. Osl.* I, 4 (=PGM XXXIX), all acquired by Samson Eitrem from the Fayyum in 1920 (except the last, which was acquired in 1923)

In 1893 similarity of content caused Albrecht Dietrich and his students to desire to publish all papyri of this sort together in one corpus.<sup>77</sup> Karl Preisendanz finally accomplished this feat in two volumes published in 1928 and 1931; a third volume of indices and additions was printed but destroyed on 4 December 1941 when the press was bombed in World War II.<sup>78</sup> This work, entitled *Papyri Graecae Magicae* ("Greek Magical Papyri," abbreviated as *PGM*), reflected the editor's idea—and the general scholarly consensus—of what these documents were. A second edition appeared in 1973 and 1974 (again without indices).<sup>79</sup> Preisendanz and those who have supplemented him also included ostraca, *lamellae*,<sup>80</sup> *defixiones*,<sup>81</sup> and gems (which are, strictly speaking, not papyri, though this is a minor quibble). Fortunately, Preisendanz managed to assemble much of the Roman period Anastasi ritual archive in one place, though this was unintentional. The papyri from this archive are as follows:

(1) *P. Berol. inv. 5025*, also known as *PGM I*, was acquired by the Berlin Museum in the 1857 auction, where it was lot number 1074.<sup>82</sup> This manuscript contains 347 lines and 7 texts, mostly in Greek with some Old Coptic. It is paleographically dated to the fourth or fifth century A.D.<sup>83</sup>

(2) *P. Berol. inv. 5026*, also known as *PGM II*, was acquired by the Berlin Museum in the 1857 auction, where it was lot number 1075.<sup>84</sup> This manuscript contains 183 lines and 2 texts,

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and all from the fourth century; see Eitrem, *Papyri Osloenses*, vol. 1; Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2:162, 175–77.

<sup>77</sup> Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1:viii.

<sup>78</sup> The third volume circulates only in *samizdat* form from photocopies of the galley proofs; see Betz, "Introduction to the Greek Magical Papyri," xlv.

<sup>79</sup> Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973–74). The two editions are essentially the same.

<sup>80</sup> A *lamella* is a thin plate, generally of silver, bronze, copper, or gold, with an inscription—generally of a specific type—engraved into it.

<sup>81</sup> A *defixio* is a lead *lamella* generally containing an imprecation.

<sup>82</sup> Lenormant, *Catalogue d'une collection d'antiquités égyptiennes*, 87; Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1:1 and n. 1.

<sup>83</sup> Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiii.

<sup>84</sup> Lenormant, *Catalogue d'une collection d'antiquités égyptiennes*, 87; Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1:20.

mostly in Greek. It is paleographically dated to the fourth century A.D.<sup>85</sup>

(3) *P. Bibl. Nat. Suppl.* gr. no. 574, also known as *PGM IV*, was acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in the 1857 auction, where it was lot number 1073.<sup>86</sup> This codex contains 3274 lines and 53 texts, mostly in Greek with some Old Coptic. It is paleographically dated to the fourth century A.D.<sup>87</sup>

(4) *P. Holm.*, also known as the Stockholm alchemical papyrus. This manuscript contains 28 columns, 1125 lines, and 152 texts in Greek.<sup>88</sup> It is paleographically dated to the third or the fourth century.<sup>89</sup>

(5) *PGM Va*, a loose sheet of papyrus found with *P. Holm.* and sometimes counted as part of that manuscript. It contains three lines of text.<sup>90</sup> It is not dated paleographically.<sup>91</sup>

(6) *P. Lond.* 46, also known as *PGM V*, was acquired by the British Museum in 1839.<sup>92</sup> This manuscript contains 489 lines and 10 texts, mostly in Greek. It is paleographically dated to the fourth century, though there is some question.<sup>93</sup>

(7) *P. Lugd. Bat.* J 384, also known as *P. Leiden I 384*, Leiden V, Anastasi 75, or *PGM XII*, was acquired by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden in 1828.<sup>94</sup> The verso of this manuscript contains 13 columns, 656 lines, and 29 texts, mainly in Greek with significant portions in demotic and Old Coptic; hieratic also appears. The verso is paleographically dated to the fourth century.<sup>95</sup> The recto contains 22 columns of demotic stories woven into a cycle whose frame story is known as the Myth of the Sun's

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85 Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiii.

86 Lenormant, *Catalogue d'une collection d'antiquités égyptiennes*, 87; Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1:64–65.

87 Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiii.

88 Lagercrantz, *Papyrus Graecus Holmiensis*.

89 *Ibid.*, 47.

90 Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1:198–99; Lagercrantz, *Papyrus Graecus Holmiensis*, 42, 233.

91 Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiii.

92 Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1:181.

93 Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiii.

94 Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2:57.

95 Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiii.

Eye.<sup>96</sup> Some of the stories within this text were adapted into Aesop's Fables.<sup>97</sup> The text on the recto dates to the second century paleographically. The verso of this manuscript has never been properly published.<sup>98</sup>

(8) *P. Lugd. Bat.* J 395, also known as *P. Leiden* I 395, Leiden W, or *PGM* XIII, was acquired by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden in 1828.<sup>99</sup> This manuscript contains 1077 lines and 6 texts, mainly in Greek with some Old Coptic. It is paleographically dated to the fourth century.<sup>100</sup>

(9) *P. Lond. demot.* 10070 + *P. Lugd. Bat.* J 383, also known as *PDM* xiv, was acquired half by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden in 1828 and half by the British Museum from the auction in 1857, where it was lot number 1072.<sup>101</sup> This manuscript contains 62 columns, 1227 lines and 98 texts, mainly in demotic with Old Coptic glosses and some passages in Greek. It is paleographically dated to the third century A.D.<sup>102</sup>

(10) *P. Brit. Mus. inv.* 10588, also known as BM 10588 and *PDM* lxi, was acquired by the British Museum probably in 1839. The manuscript contains 216 lines and 16 texts, mainly in demotic

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<sup>96</sup> Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Der ägyptische Mythos vom Sonnenauge (Der Papyrus der Tierfabeln "Kufi") nach dem Leidener Demotischen Papyrus I 384* (Strassburg: Strassburger Druckerei, 1917). This has recently been printed in a new edition: François de Cenival, *Le mythe de l'oeil du Soleil*, vol. 9 of *Demotische Studien* (Sommerhausen: Zauzich, 1988).

<sup>97</sup> Henri Brugsch, "Aesopische Fabeln in einem ägyptischen Papyrus," *ZÄS* (1878): 47–50; Leemans, *Papyri Graeci Musei Antiquarii Publici Lugduni Batavi*, 2:3–4; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California, 1973–80), 3:156–57.

<sup>98</sup> This includes the recent publication of Daniel, ed., *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, 2–29, which completely omits the demotic columns; these must be supplied by Johnson, "Demotic Magical Spells of Leiden I 384," 29–64, pl. VIII–XIII. The pattern was established by Leemans, *Papyri Graeci Musei Antiquarii Publici Lugduni Batavi*, 2:1–76.

<sup>99</sup> Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2:86; Leemans, *Papyri Graeci Musei Antiquarii Publici Lugduni Batavi*, 2:77–198. The latest edition of this papyrus is Daniel, ed., *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, 32–81.

<sup>100</sup> Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiii.

<sup>101</sup> Lenormant, *Catalogue d'une collection d'antiquités égyptiennes*, 87.

<sup>102</sup> Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2:131; Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiii.

with some passages in Greek. It is paleographically dated to the second or third century A.D.<sup>103</sup>

(11) Louvre E 3229, also known as *PDM* Supplement, was acquired by the Louvre from the auction in 1857, where it was lot number 1061.<sup>104</sup> This manuscript contains 208 lines and 14 texts, mainly in demotic and hieratic with some Old Coptic glosses. It is paleographically dated to the third century.<sup>105</sup>

(12) *P. Leiden* I 397, also known as Leiden X, was acquired by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden in 1828. This manuscript contains 16 columns and 679 lines and 105 texts, listing the properties of various chemical substances in Greek.<sup>106</sup> It is considered "a twin" of the Stockholm Alchemical Papyrus.<sup>107</sup> It is paleographically dated to the third or fourth century A.D.<sup>108</sup>

(13) *P. Leiden* I 398, also known as Leiden Y, was acquired by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden in 1828. This manuscript contains a text in demotic followed by a list of letter combinations in Greek. It has not been dated paleographically.<sup>109</sup>

Together, ten of these thirteen manuscripts account for a significant portion of the *PGM* (comprising most of the ritual manuals for that corpus) and the two earliest chemical texts in Greek. They derive most probably from a single archive found in Thebes, perhaps from the fourth century A.D.—though, like most Egyptian archives,<sup>110</sup> this one seems to have been formed over time.

<sup>103</sup> Bell, Nock, and Thompson, *Magical Texts from a Bilingual Papyrus*, 5; Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, xxv.

<sup>104</sup> Lenormant, *Catalogue d'une collection d'antiquités égyptiennes*, 86.

<sup>105</sup> Johnson, "Louvre E3229," 56–58; Betz, ed., *Greek Magical Papyri*, xxviii.

<sup>106</sup> Leemans, *Papyri Graeci Musei Antiquarii Publici Lugduni Batavi*, 2:199–256; Bertholet, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*, 1:3–73.

<sup>107</sup> Lagercrantz, *Papyrus Graecus Holmiensis*, 50

<sup>108</sup> Leemans, *Papyri Graeci Musei Antiquarii Publici Lugduni Batavi*, 2:199.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:260–61.

<sup>110</sup> The classic reassembled archive is the "Naunakhte" archive, which passed along family lines from *Qn-hr-hpš=f* (who lived during the reign of Ramses II) through at least *Mḥ-nḥtw=f* a century later (the reign of Ramses IX). The archive consisted of letters, memoranda, legal texts, documents relating to the private affairs of the *Hnsw* family, exercises, practical handbooks (of so-called "magical" texts), and literary texts. For a discussion, see P. W. Pestman, "Who Were the Owners, in the 'Community of Workmen,' of the Chester Beatty

The paleographic dates are problematic and questionable. Thus far the name of the owner or owners of this archive has not been discovered.

The Anastasi archive provides the best evidence for the nature of the papyri in the *PGM. P. Leiden I 384* is written by the same scribe as *P. Leiden I 383*,<sup>111</sup> and this scribe uses Greek, Old Coptic, demotic, and hieratic within these two papyri.<sup>112</sup> Whatever one may think of the idea that Greeks in Egypt learned demotic,<sup>113</sup> in the Roman period hieratic—as the name meaning “priestly” implies—was used only by Egyptian priests.<sup>114</sup> This identifies both the scribe who wrote these papyri and the user of the papyri

Papyri?” in *Gleanings from Deir el-Medīna*, ed. R. J. Demarée and Jac. J. Janssen (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten te Leiden, 1982), 155–72.

<sup>111</sup> Johnson, “Demotic Magical Spells of Leiden I 384,” 53; Johnson, “Louvre E3229,” 56; Johnson, “Introduction to the Demotic Magical Papyri,” lvi.

<sup>112</sup> The mixture of hieratic with in the Demotic was first noted in C. J. C. Reuvsens, *Letters à M. Letronne sur les papyrus bilingues et grecs, et sur quelques autres monumens gréco-égyptiens du Musée d'Antiquités de l'Université de Leide* (Leiden: Luchtmans, 1850), 36–37.

<sup>113</sup> This has been suggested by Ann E. Hanson, “Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Arabes, and Ioudaioi in the First Century A.D. Tax Archive from Philadelphia: *P. Mich. Inv. 880 Recto* and *P. Princ. III 152 Revised*,” in *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, ed. Janet H. Johnson (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1992), 136. The standard view is that, in the Greco-Roman period, demotic was used only by Egyptians, most likely priests; see the discussion in W. J. Tait, “Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society,” in Johnson, ed., *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society*, 307–10; Edwyn Bevan, *A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty* (London: Methuen, 1927), 84; Willy Clarysse, “Egyptian Scribes Writing Greek,” *Chronique d'Égypte* 68/135–36 (1993): 187–88.

<sup>114</sup> Ritner, “Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire.” Jan Mertens, in his survey of the demotic literary and paraliterary texts, lists 117 out of 535 literary texts (about 22%) that are classified as religious, mythological, funerary/mortuary, magical or omen literature (“Bibliography and Description of Demotic Literary Texts: A Progress Report,” in Johnson, ed., *Life in a Multicultural Society*, 234); the low percentage of religious texts would seem to be because the religious literature was kept in hieratic. Baines and Eyre, “Four notes on literacy,” 76–77, argue that scribes of demotic documents “seem all to have held positions as officials, particularly ones with priestly or temple connections.”

(possibly both identical with the owner) as an Egyptian priest.<sup>115</sup> Thus it is not surprising that "the contents and the methodology [of the papyri] are overwhelmingly Egyptian. Most of the material is completely Egyptian and its origins are easily traceable in earlier Egyptian religious and magical literature. The methods used are likewise standard Egyptian practices."<sup>116</sup> The various lists of rituals contained in the papyri match the list given by Porphyry of things the Egyptian priest Chaeremon said were "common talk among the Egyptians."<sup>117</sup> That the same scribe who wrote the Greek also wrote the demotic passages is demonstrated, not only by the intercalation of Greek passages and demotic passages,<sup>118</sup> but by the fact that this occurs within the same ritual. The passage that originally provoked this quibble (*P. Leiden* I 384 1(12)/1-11 = *PGM* XII.474-79 + *PDM* xii.135-46) is one of these, although the mixture of demotic and Greek has prevented it from ever being published properly within the last century.<sup>119</sup> The structure of this ritual follows a pattern found in the Book of the Dead: (1) title and initial instructions, (2) vignette, (3) recitation, (4) instructions for use.<sup>120</sup> The recited portion of the ritual is written in

<sup>115</sup> Ritner, "Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire." Patai's assertion, in *The Jewish Alchemists*, 56-57, that Leiden Papyrus W was written by a Jew ignores the general context of the papyri.

<sup>116</sup> Johnson, "Introduction to the Demotic Magical Papyri," lviii; cf. Lexa, *Magie dans l'Égypte antique*, 1:155-66; Klaus Koch, *Geschichte der ägyptischen Religion* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1993), 542. The tracing of Egyptian motifs in the *PGM* may also be found in, *inter alia*, Jan Bergman, "Ancient Egyptian Theogony in a Greek Magical Papyrus," in *Studies in Egyptian Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 28-37.

<sup>117</sup> Chaeremon fragment 4, in Porphyry, *Epistula ad Anebonem* II, 8, cited in Pieter Willem van der Horst, *Chaeremon: Egyptian Priest and Stoic Philosopher* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 12.

<sup>118</sup> Noted in Reuven, *Lettres à M. Letronne*, 37-39.

<sup>119</sup> The latest publication, Daniel, ed., *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, is a beautiful edition, but the photographs omit all the demotic, including those portions where the text is interwoven with the Greek; the text is, therefore, left completely unintelligible. The photographs in Johnson, "Demotic Magical Spells of Leiden I 384," pl. VIII-XIII, are difficult if not impossible to read. Much of this is due to the deterioration of the papyrus itself; *ibid.*, 30-31. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2:86, only transcribed the Greek portions.

<sup>120</sup> This pattern may be observed in Book of the Dead I, 1B, 13, 15B2, 18-20, 30-32, 45, 58, 64, 72, 84, 86, 89, 91-92, 99-101, 104, 116, 119, 128, 130, 133-36, 136B, 137A, 140, 142, 144, 146-48, 151, 153, 155-65,

Greek script, while the instructions are written in demotic. (In this particular ritual, a love spell with the threat of incineration,<sup>121</sup> the vignette is an integral part of the text since the closing instructions in demotic are to “[Write these w]ords with this picture upon a new papyrus.”)<sup>122</sup> Other rituals on this papyrus follow similar lines. Such a mixture of languages and scripts could only have been used by a bilingual scribe, but it follows a pattern of switching language that dates back at least to the Eighteenth Dynasty,<sup>123</sup> if not to the Old Kingdom.<sup>124</sup>

The use of Judeo-Christian material by pagan Egyptians can be documented in two other instances which shed light on the processes by which it was incorporated. (1) The Egyptian pagan

175–76, 181, 185B, 185D, 185K–M, 186A, 190, Pleyte 167, 172, 174; for discussion of this see Thomas G. Allen, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in Their Own Terms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 2.

<sup>121</sup> The term in *PGM* XII.479 is *ekpyrōsai*; “incinerate” occurs here in this corpus. Though there are occasional references to “burning” in the sense of lust (*PGM* LXI.23; XXXIIa.3–8; LXVIII.1–20; and ambiguously *PGM* VII.473, 990; XVI.4–5) it is also commonly used in the *PGM*, even in love charms, as a punishment (*PGM* IV.2488; XII.490; XIXa.50; XXXVI.81, 110–11, 340–46, 355–57), or used of lamps (*PGM* I.340; IV.1732, 2372) or other flammable material (*PGM* IV.1551, 2143; V.71; LVIII). Compare also the “flaming mouth” in *PGM* V.154; VII.245 with the similar reference in the negative confession of Book of the Dead 125. Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 112–19, 136–42, 157–59, 162–72, shows how these late period love charms are connected with ritual complexes that include human sacrifice. The connection with the book of Abraham in Gee, “Abraham in Ancient Egyptian Texts,” 61, is, of course, speculation.

<sup>122</sup> *PDM* xii.146.

<sup>123</sup> See Richard C. Steiner, “Northwest Semitic Incantations in an Egyptian Medical Papyrus of the Fourteenth Century B.C.E.,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 51/3 (July 1992): 196–97; Thomas Schneider, “Mag. pHarris XII, 1–5: Eine kanaanäische Beschwörung für die Löwenjagd?” *Göttinger Miszellen* 112 (1989): 53–63; Stephen Quirke, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (London: British Museum, 1992), 112.

<sup>124</sup> For example, see Pyramid Texts 280–81 §§421–22. Other examples are noted in Lexa, *Magie dans l'Égypte antique*, 1:61 nn. 1–2. Contra Lexa, there is no particular increase in this practice in the late period; see Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 246, esp. n. 1130; Robert K. Ritner, “Horus on the Crocodiles: A Juncture of Religion and Magic in Late Dynastic Egypt,” in *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, ed. William K. Simpson (New Haven: Yale Egyptological Seminar, 1989), 104–5.

Zosimus of Panopolis<sup>125</sup> (who is roughly contemporary with the Anastasi priestly archive)<sup>126</sup> is familiar with both the Egyptian Amduat and Jewish sources,<sup>127</sup> and refers to either Genesis, Jubilees, or the book of Enoch as “our book.”<sup>128</sup> (2) Two papyri whose provenance is unknown nevertheless seem to come from the same archive.<sup>129</sup> The first, *P. Lond.* I 125, was acquired by the British Museum in 1888.<sup>130</sup> The recto, dating to July 336, is an account text detailing the land holdings of an estate centered in Hermonthis,<sup>131</sup> the verso (paleographically dated to the fifth century) is known as *PGM IXa* and contains an invocation to Nephthys.<sup>132</sup> The companion text, *P. Lips.*, has an account text from A.D. 338 on the recto covering the same accounts as *P. Lond.* I 125,<sup>133</sup> but the verso contains Psalms 30:5–55:14.<sup>134</sup> Presumably, the owner of the archive read both texts.<sup>135</sup>

The Anastasi archive is clearly Egyptian. Yet of the other material in the *PGM*, most was also found in Egypt, and the rest was chiefly found in the general area of temples of the Isis cult—

<sup>125</sup> There is no reason to assume along with Patai, *The Jewish Alchemists*, 56, that Zosimus was a Jew.

<sup>126</sup> Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 90–91.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 120, 122, 151–52, citing Zosimus, fragments, 107–20, 122, 151–52; compare with the Amduat descriptions in Erik Hornung, *Idea into Image: Essays on Ancient Egyptian Thought*, trans. Elizabeth Bredeck (New York: Timken, 1992), 99–101.

<sup>128</sup> Patai, *The Jewish Alchemists*, 56, citing Zosimus, whose allusion is either to Genesis 6:1–5; Jubilees 5:1–2; or 1 Enoch 6–7.

<sup>129</sup> Roger S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 126 and n. 79.

<sup>130</sup> Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2:54–55

<sup>131</sup> F. G. Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, 5 vols. (1893; reprint Milano: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1973), 1:192–94.

<sup>132</sup> Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, 1:123–25; Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2: 54–55; note esp. the comments of Jan Bergman and Robert K. Ritner in Betz, ed., *Greek Magical Papyri*, 150 n. 3.

<sup>133</sup> Ludwig Mitteis, *Griechische Urkunden der Papyrussammlung zu Leipzig* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1906), 245–90.

<sup>134</sup> Carl F. G. Heinrici, *Der Leipziger Papyrusfragmente der Psalmen* (1903; reprint Chicago: American Theological Library Association, 1986).

<sup>135</sup> See the comments of Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 126 n. 79. Bagnall’s statement that the owner was Christian is an assumption that seems to me dubious.

the form of the ancient Egyptian religion that spread abroad throughout the Mediterranean and Roman world. Even the earliest *defixiones* in Attica<sup>136</sup> can be linked with the temple of Isis established in the fourth century B.C. at Pirrhaeus, the port of Athens.<sup>137</sup> These types of rituals always seemed repugnant to classicists and are thought to have been introduced by foreigners.<sup>138</sup> Even so, most of the scholars who have worked with this material have approached it from the assumption that it is Greek in origin rather than Egyptian, and have erred egregiously, though unwittingly, in so doing. This has serious consequences for the scholarship that is based on this evidence and these assumptions, some of which we will indicate later. For example, together the *PGM* and the *defixiones* provide direct refutation of Roger Bagnall's assertion that "it is hard to find much evidence of its [the native Egyptian religion's] activity or prosperity."<sup>139</sup> He nullifies their weight as evidence by classifying them not as documents pertaining to the Egyptian religion, but as documents pertaining to magic.<sup>140</sup>

### What Is "Magic"?

If the so-called Greek Magical Papyri are not "Greek," nor necessarily papyri, are they "magical"? That depends on what one defines as "magic." In dealing with this issue Ashment commits the fallacy of equivocation. "The *fallacy of equivocation* occurs whenever a term is used in two or more senses within a single argument, so that a conclusion appears to follow when in fact

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<sup>136</sup> For which, see John G. Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 49–50.

<sup>137</sup> On that temple, see Quirke, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 174.

<sup>138</sup> Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, trans. Margaret E. Pinder and Walter Burkert (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 65–73. Burkert suggests Mesopotamian influence, although he does not rule out Egyptian influence; he does so at least partially because he is more familiar with Mesopotamia than Egypt.

<sup>139</sup> Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 267, cf. 261–68.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 273–75.

it does not."<sup>141</sup> Thus, for instance, Ashment uses Robert Ritner's statement that "magic" was found all over Egypt and interprets it according to Bruce R. McConkie's remarks about "magic" (pp. 20–21). But were McConkie and Ritner talking about the same thing?

Ritner adopted a "working definition" wherein "any activity which seeks to obtain its goals by methods outside the simple laws of cause and effect will be considered 'magical' in the Western sense."<sup>142</sup> By Ritner's definition, Joseph Smith's use of the Urim and Thummim to translate the Book of Mormon, Jesus' miracles, and even the Atonement of Christ are considered "magical." McConkie, however, would not consider any of these examples to be "magic," and most believing "born-again" Christians would be hesitant about applying this definition universally. For Ritner himself, "'magic' is *not* seen as a universal category of equal applicability across time and space (*contra* all early anthropology, certain modern theorists of comparative religion, and most Egyptological treatments). Inherent in the term is the subjectivity of cultural bias, and this 'magic' must be understood with reference to a specific cultural context. This working definition openly recognizes and incorporates the Western bias of the present scholarly category."<sup>143</sup> "This definition of 'magic' is serviceable for analysing elements of our own and other cultures *from our cultural perspective*; it does not, however, make any pretense of being universally valid from the perspective of those other cultures."<sup>144</sup> The cultural context is significant since, to the Egyptians, "the force of *ḥkꜣ* [the Egyptian word conventionally translated 'magic'] is to be understood primarily as the power of effective duplication or 'empowered images,' . . . [thus] the use of *ḥkꜣ*

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<sup>141</sup> Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies*, 274. The fallacy of equivocation is a favorite tactic of anti-Mormons; see Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word: How Anti-Mormons Play Word Games to Attack the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Aspen, 1992), 55–62.

<sup>142</sup> Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 69, cf. 1.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 237. Compare the remarks of Koch, *Geschichte der ägyptischen Religion*, 17.

<sup>144</sup> Robert K. Ritner, "Egyptian Magic: Questions of Legitimacy, Religious Orthodoxy and Social Deviance," in *Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society in Honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths*, ed. Alan B. Lloyd (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1992), 191.

could hardly be construed in Egyptian terms as 'activity outside the law of natural causality' since *hk3* is itself the ultimate source of causality, the generative force of nature."<sup>145</sup>

For McConkie, on the other hand, "magic is the art which produces effects by the assistance of supernatural beings or by a mastery of secret forces in nature" when such is "in imitation of true religion . . . by unauthorized . . . ministers."<sup>146</sup> One who "practices the black art of magic" or witchcraft is, according to McConkie, a witch.<sup>147</sup> The key to what constitutes witchcraft is that it involves "actual intercourse with evil spirits" or for someone to have "entered into a compact with Satan."<sup>148</sup> McConkie goes on to state that "there are not witches, of course, in the sense of old hags flying on broomsticks through October skies; such mythology is a modernistic spoofing of a little understood practice."<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, "it is probable that none, or almost none, of those unhappily dealt with as supposed witches were persons in actual communion with evil spirits. Their deaths illustrate the deadly extremes to which the principles of true religion can be put when administered by uninspired persons."<sup>150</sup> The key for McConkie's understanding of the term *magic* is inspiration: Without inspiration it is impossible to tell miracle from magic, the work of God from the work of an evil spirit.<sup>151</sup>

As is common in most of his work, McConkie based his definition on scriptural passages. In the Bible, the term *magic* is not defined but is generally used of outsiders.<sup>152</sup> It does not appear in the Doctrine and Covenants, but in the Book of Mormon it appears at the end of Nephite civilization: When "these Gadianton robbers, who were among the Lamanites, did infest the land, . . . it came to pass that there were sorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics,

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<sup>145</sup> Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 249.

<sup>146</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 462.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 840.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 197, 270-73.

<sup>152</sup> See Stephen D. Ricks and Daniel C. Peterson, "Joseph Smith and 'Magic': Methodological Reflections on the Use of a Term," in *To Be Learned Is Good If . . .*, ed. Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 130-36.

and the power of the evil one was wrought upon all the face of the land" (Mormon 1:18–19, punctuation altered; cf. 2:10). Though the scriptures do not explicitly define "magic" they do associate it directly with "the power of the evil one," and the impression left upon those who read the scriptures in English is that it involves the manipulation of evil spirits (either in the sense of "manipulating evil spirits" or "being manipulated by evil spirits").<sup>153</sup> On these matters, Latter-day Saints have specific scriptural counsel (notably D&C 46; 50; 129). First, it is the "Spirit of truth" that detects "spirits which ye could not understand" (D&C 50:13–23). Second, "that which doth not edify is not of God" (D&C 50:23). Third, "if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. . . . If you behold a spirit manifested that you cannot understand, and you receive not that spirit, ye shall ask of the Father in the name of Jesus; and if he give not unto you that spirit, then you may know that it is not of God. And it shall be given unto you power over that spirit; and you shall proclaim against that spirit with a loud voice that it is not of God—Not with a railing accusation that ye be not overcome, neither with boasting nor rejoicing, lest you be seized therewith" (D&C 50:29–33). The presiding authority, if he is in tune with the Holy Spirit, has the gift to discern the source of spiritual manifestations (D&C 46:27–29). Evil spirits are to be dispelled through the power of God (Jude 1:9; Moses 1:12–23; Joseph Smith–History 1:15–17). Thus for Latter-day Saints, the detection and overcoming of evil spirits and magic are not generally empirical.<sup>154</sup> Only one empirical test

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<sup>153</sup> This is also the sense given in Janet Thomas, "Magic," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:849–50.

<sup>154</sup> Note particularly the case of casting the devil out of Newel Knight, detailed in *HC* 1:82–84 and recapped in 1:92–93. Newel Knight's testimony was that the devil was cast out "by the power of God, and Joseph Smith was the instrument in the hands of God on the occasion." Furthermore, when Knight was asked if he saw the devil and if so what he looked like, Knight replied that he had seen the devil but had to ask the lawyer, "Do you, Mr. Seymour, understand the things of the spirit?" After a negative reply, Knight told the lawyer, "it would be of no use to tell you what the devil looked like, for it was a spiritual sight, and spiritually discerned; and of course you would not understand it were I to tell you of it."

is given for the detection of whether an angelic "administration is from God"—and there the evil spirits are the ones who fail to be empirical (D&C 129:1–9).

Thus McConkie's definition of *magic* is nonempirical and nonobjective (in the common scholarly use of that term), while Ritner strove "to formulate an objective criterion for judging the 'magical' nature of any given act."<sup>155</sup> Ashment's use of the fallacy of equivocation is therefore particularly egregious. Whether a practice qualifies as "magic" depends on the definition adopted. "At the outset, a definition of 'magic' is critical for any discussion of the problem since we find that there is no consensus on the meaning of the term *in English*, leaving aside the wider problem of concepts equated with 'magic' in other cultures. Most often, the English term is bandied about as if an implicit consensus existed, yet this can easily be proved to be false, not only by widespread contemporary scholarly disagreement on the topic but by the unstandardized ways in which the term has been used historically."<sup>156</sup> "In any discussion of magical spells and techniques, one is at once confronted by the complete absence of any shared criteria for exactly what constitutes 'magic.' All too often, the religious and medical practices of one culture or era become 'magic' when viewed from the perspective of another."<sup>157</sup>

Definitions of magic tend to distinguish it from religion by one or more of the following methods:

**Goal-oriented definitions** (associated most closely with the work of Bronislaw Malinowski) focus on the goals of the activity: Activities with specific goals are seen as magical while those without specific goals are seen as religious.<sup>158</sup> Malinowski's critics,

<sup>155</sup> Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 69.

<sup>156</sup> Ritner, "Egyptian Magic," 190.

<sup>157</sup> Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 4; cf. Ritner, "Egyptian Magic," 190: "Magic here is simply the religious practices of one group viewed with disdain [*sic*] by another. . . . The concept 'magic' serves to distinguish 'us' from 'them,' but it has no universal content."

<sup>158</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1948), 21, gave what he considered to be "a prima facie distinction between magic and religion. While in the magical act the underlying idea and aim is always clear, straightforward, and definite, in the religious ceremony there is no purpose directed toward a subsequent event." According to William J. Goode, "Magic and Religion: A Continuum." *Ethnos* 14 (1949): 177,

however, have noted that "Malinowski's contrast between the practical goals of magical ritual and the broad social values fostered by religious ritual seems to hinge more on terminology than on substance. The difference seems to be a stylistic choice of concrete or abstract phrasing."<sup>159</sup> To give a concrete example, the prayer through which a born-again Christian becomes born-again has a specific goal—becoming a saved Christian—and therefore it is "magic" under this definition, as is the recitation of the *shahada* by which a Muslim becomes a Muslim.

**Group-oriented definitions** focus on whether the activity is done by or for individuals or by large groups in concert: Religion is seen as centering around a Church, whereas magic centers solely on the individual.<sup>160</sup> One of the problems with this definition comes when it is applied to the Egyptian evidence, since it has been argued that the magicians in Egypt were lone private indi-

"Concrete specificity of goal relates most closely to the magical complex." "As a final, ideally distinguishing characteristic, magic is used only instrumentally, i.e., for goals." Religious "practices are ends in themselves" (ibid., 178). Similarly, "with regard to the process of achieving the goal, in case of magical failure, there is more likely to be a substitution or introduction of other techniques. Stronger magic will be used, or magic to offset the counter-magic of enemies, or even a different magician" (ibid., 177). See also Bob Brier, *Ancient Egyptian Magic* (New York: Morrow, 1980), 11.

<sup>159</sup> Dorothy Hammond, "Magic: A Problem in Semantics," *American Anthropologist* 72 (1970): 1351.

<sup>160</sup> "The really religious beliefs are always common to the determined group, and they make its unity"; Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph W. Swain (New York: Free Press, 1915), 59. On the other hand, "there is no Church of magic. Between the magician and the individuals who consult him, as between these individuals themselves, there are no lasting bonds which make them members of the same moral community. . . . The magician has a clientele and not a Church" (ibid., 60). "The professional-client relationship is ideally-theoretically to be found in the magical complex. . . . Individual ends are more frequently to be found toward the magical end of this continuum, as against groupal ends toward the other. . . . The magical practitioner or his 'customer' goes through his activities as a private individual, or individuals, functioning much less as groups. . . . The practitioner decides whether the process is to start at all, toward the magical pole. . . . Similarly, the practitioner decides when the process is to start, in the case of magic." Goode, "Magic and Religion," 177-78; see also R. Campbell Thompson, *Semitic Magic: Its Origins and Development* (reprint New York: Ktav, 1971), xvii.

viduals, but these "magicians" turn out to be Egyptian priests<sup>161</sup> who were organized into phyles and associations.<sup>162</sup> Under this definition, where should one classify the Mormon rite of baptism, which is for the salvation of the individual, but also is the rite whereby the individual becomes a member of the Church? Christians who feel that salvation comes independent of a Church should be aware that under this definition, they are guilty of "magic."<sup>163</sup>

**Social deviance definitions** focus on how society perceives the individual engaged in an activity: Religious activities which conform to social norms are seen as religious, while those that deviate from social norms are seen as magical.<sup>164</sup> This definition would mean that whether Mormonism (or any other religion for that matter) was "magic" or not would depend on one's geographical or chronological position rather than one's theological or doctrinal position. Born-again Christians who accuse Mormons of practicing "magic" in the Bible-belt would themselves be guilty of practicing "magic" in Utah. The ancient Egyptians could not be guilty of practicing "magic" because their practices were not deviant but the norm for Egyptian religion.<sup>165</sup> If "magic is

<sup>161</sup> Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 192–233; Ritner, "Egyptian Magic," 194. It should also be noted that one of the words for "magician" in Hebrew (*hartumim*) is simply borrowed from the title of an Egyptian priest (*hry-tp*); Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 220–21; cf. *Wb* 3:395; *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, 24 vols. (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–), 6:116.

<sup>162</sup> On the phyles, see Ann M. Roth, *Egyptian Phyles in the Old Kingdom* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1991), 2–4, 61–143; Walter Otto, *Priester und Tempel im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1905–08), 1:17, 23–26.

<sup>163</sup> For a discussion with references, see Peterson and Ricks, *Offenders for a Word*, 101–7.

<sup>164</sup> "Magic is thought of as at least *potentially directed against the society*, or a major accepted group within it, or a respected individual in good repute with the gods." Goode, "Magic and Religion," 178. "The charge of magic is likely to be made by legitimate religious leaders against people who are viewed as threatening the social order but who have as yet done no other persecutable criminal offense." Alan F. Segal, "Hellenistic Magic: Some Questions of Definition," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions for G. Quispel*, ed. R. van den Broeck and M. J. Vermaseren (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 370.

<sup>165</sup> Ritner, "Egyptian Magic," 194–97; Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 12–13.

defined as that form of religious deviance whereby individual or social goals are sought by means alternate to those normally sanctioned by the dominant religious institution,"<sup>166</sup> then dissidents, dissenters, and former Mormons who protest Church policy by staging candlelight vigils, taking out advertisements in newspapers, or turning to the media to promote their causes are involved in *magic* instead of the expression of any sort of religious sentiment.

**Attitudinal definitions** of magic focus on the attitude of the individual engaged in a particular activity: Propitiation is religious, while threats are magical.<sup>167</sup> Some definitions hold that magic is primarily defensive in nature,<sup>168</sup> while others reverse this position and state that magic is primarily hostile in nature.<sup>169</sup> "Problems with this definition are legion, not least because it requires the investigator to intuit subjectively the attitude of the ancient practitioner. This is not often easy or even possible."<sup>170</sup> Unless this

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<sup>166</sup> David E. Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.23.2:1513–16.

<sup>167</sup> "By religion, then, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life. In this sense it will readily be perceived that religion is opposed in principle both to magic and to science. . . . Magic as well as . . . science . . . take for granted that the course of nature is determined, not by the passions or caprice of personal beings, but by the operation of immutable laws acting mechanically." James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 2nd ed. (London: MacMillan, 1900), 1:63. "The *manipulative attitude* is to be found most strongly at the magical pole, as against the supplicative, propitiatory, or cajoling, at the religious pole." Goode, "Magic and Religion," 177; similarly, "although the practitioner may feel cautious in handling such powerful forces, a *lesser degree of emotion* is expected at the magical end of this continuum" (*ibid.*, 178). Cf. Aune, "Magic and Early Christianity," 1512. T. Witton Davies, *Magic, Divination and Demonology among the Hebrews and Their Neighbors* (reprint New York: Ktav, 1969), 1–2, takes an even more strident position: "Magic may be briefly defined as the attempt on man's part to have intercourse with spiritual and supernatural beings, and to influence them for his benefit." Thus all prayer would fall under his category of "magic."

<sup>168</sup> For Evans-Pritchard, magic "is primarily not so much a means of controlling nature as of preventing witchcraft and other mystical forces operating against human endeavor by interfering with the empirical measures taken to attain an end." E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 111.

<sup>169</sup> Goode, "Magic and Religion," 178.

<sup>170</sup> Ritner, "Egyptian Magic," 191.

intention is spelled out by the subject (and it usually is not),<sup>171</sup> the scholar is required to practice mind-reading, something most are not very adept at.<sup>172</sup> "This approach is also of limited scholarly value as a descriptive tool, since it usually merely demonstrates that non-Judeo-Christian societies function in ways non-Judeo-Christian."<sup>173</sup> Even in Judeo-Christian societies the approach is of limited value; for example, "this way of distinguishing magic from religion is unhelpful in dealing with the medieval material."<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, a "basic fallacy in absolutizing this attitudinal distinction between magic and religion is the fact that it is demonstrably false: magic not infrequently supplicates while religion not infrequently manipulates supernatural powers."<sup>175</sup>

**Deity-oriented definitions** center on the deity or deities invoked in an activity: Those activities which invoke the proper deities are seen to be religious, while those which do not are magic.<sup>176</sup> But this distinction often reduces to a mere statement that the "magician" has a different religion than the one making the definition. Closely related are definitions which concentrate on the source of the power by which the individual is said to perform the activity: "Religion becomes magic when the power by which things operate is transferred from God to the things themselves."<sup>177</sup>

**Results-oriented definitions** focus on whether an activity produces the results it is supposed to: If it does, it is seen as religious or scientific; if it does not, it is magical.<sup>178</sup> Or alternatively, if it

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<sup>171</sup> Some exceptions may be found in 1 Nephi 6:4; 2 Nephi 2:30.

<sup>172</sup> Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies*, 187–88, 215.

<sup>173</sup> Ritner, "Egyptian Magic," 191.

<sup>174</sup> Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 15.

<sup>175</sup> Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity," 1512–13.

<sup>176</sup> "Up through the twelfth century, if you asked a theologian what magic was you were likely to hear that demons began it and were always involved in it." Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 10.

<sup>177</sup> Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 261–62.

<sup>178</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 1:62.

works, it is magic; if it does not, it is religion.<sup>179</sup> Part of Frazer's theories on magic, this notion "fails to account for the remarkable persistence of the 'pathetic or ludicrous' activities which he finds so devoid of truth or value."<sup>180</sup>

**Combination definitions** seek to use a combination of definitions to determine magic. Thus Aune combines a social-deviance definition with a results-oriented definition.<sup>181</sup> Goode set up a series of conflicting factors that he saw as magical and envisioned a continuum that this would produce even though the results were sometimes contradictory. However, since Goode provided no way to implement his definition it has not been seriously used. Better in this regard is Stanley Tambiah, who sees a dual criterion for which both elements must be met: "On the one hand, [magic] seems to imitate the logic of technical/technological action that seeks to transform nature or the world of natural things and manifestations. On the other hand, its structure is also transparently rhetorical and performative (in that it consists of acts to create effects on human actors according to accepted social conventions)."<sup>182</sup> Tambiah's definition does not deal with religion per se, and thus psychiatry, psychology, politics, and advertising could all fit Tambiah's definition.

**Open definitions** are those that refuse to define the object of study. Recently, H. S. Versnel has tried to sidestep the issue of problematic definitions of magic, arguing that "the definition should remain open,"<sup>183</sup> because he wants to continue to use the term without bothering to define it. For him, it is, "besides being a matter of personal viewpoint and, indeed, of belief, of minor importance."<sup>184</sup> While I agree with Versnel that it is a matter of the scholar's viewpoint and belief, I do not see it as being "of minor importance" because it is not personal. The use of open

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<sup>179</sup> Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity," 1515: "Goals sought within the context of religious deviance are magical when attained through the management of supernatural powers in such a way that results are virtually guaranteed."

<sup>180</sup> Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 10.

<sup>181</sup> Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity," 1515-16

<sup>182</sup> Stanley J. Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 82.

<sup>183</sup> H. S. Versnel, "Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion," *Numen* 38/2 (1991): 187.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

definitions in a matter so potentially volatile and derogatory leads to the most common, and most dangerous, definition of *magic*, the **definition by accusation**, which we will discuss below. Christopher A. Faraone has challenged the grounds of Versnel's proposed definitions in the specific case (*defixiones*) in which Versnel would like to apply it, noting that it "seems inevitably (and unfortunately) to rest on our subjective appraisal of the attitude of the persons performing the acts."<sup>185</sup>

Even if a scholar carefully defines his terms, the definitions are sometimes not followed in the discussion of the material. Even someone as well versed in the theoretical literature of magic as Peter Schäfer can slip into a functional definition of *magic* that is different from his theoretical one. For example, for Schäfer, what identifies magical elements in the *Hekhalot* literature is the use of a seal, a crown, or adjurations of the name of God.<sup>186</sup>

Two other aspects to the discussion of *magic* as pertains to ancient Egypt should be considered. The first is that Frazer, in formulating his definition of the term *magic*, explicitly used characteristics of ancient Egyptian religion in defining his term; i.e., *magic* was what the ancient Egyptian religion was.<sup>187</sup> Frazer's definition of *magic* was then used by Egyptologists to show (surprise!) that Egyptian religious practices were full of "magic."<sup>188</sup> This circular reasoning has not been generally noted or recognized by either Egyptologists or anthropologists, who have unintentionally doomed the Egyptians to be perpetual pariahs, since they have made Egyptian religion *magic* by definition. Perhaps this can be best illustrated in two books by Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge. In his book on *Egyptian Religion*, Budge included "the principal ideas and beliefs held by the ancient Egyptians concerning the resurrection and the future

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<sup>185</sup> Christopher A. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells," in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 18.

<sup>186</sup> Peter Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism*, trans. Aubrey Pomerance (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 40–51, 71–72, 89–92, 144–47.

<sup>187</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 1:64, 66–67.

<sup>188</sup> Noted in Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 9–10.

life."<sup>189</sup> In other words, that which "closely resembles in many respects the Christian religion of to-day" was religion, while the part of Egyptian religion that had a "non-Christian aspect" which Budge felt belonged "to a savage or semi-savage state of existence" he put in a book he entitled *Egyptian Magic*.<sup>190</sup> The ancient Egyptian religion was doomed from the start.

The other aspect of the problem with defining *magic* was the peculiar correlation of the beliefs of the scholars making the definitions with the content of their definitions. With the exception of a few individuals like D. Michael Quinn,<sup>191</sup> most scholars define *magic* in such a way as not to include their own beliefs and practices. The "emphasis on religion as a system of beliefs, and the distinction between prayer and spell, the former being associated with 'religious' behaviour and the latter with 'magical' acts, was a Protestant legacy which was automatically taken over by later Victorian theorists like Tylor and Frazer, and given a universal significance as both historical and analytical categories useful in tracing the intellectual development of mankind from savagery to civilization."<sup>192</sup> Sir Edward Tylor, called by some "the Father of Anthropology," came from a "non-conformist Quaker parentage and background which gave him a strong aversion to religious ritual of the kind displayed in Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism. He had no feeling for what religion, particularly public, organized, ritualized religion, meant to the worshippers themselves."<sup>193</sup> Tylor "was a social evolutionist with a profound commitment to the science of social development."<sup>194</sup> Thus, for him, " 'magical arts,' witchcraft and the 'occult sciences' (as he called them), whenever they were encountered in the civilized European societies, [were] *survivals* from a barbarous past . . . which they were destined to discard altogether," and he defined

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<sup>189</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Religion* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1899), ix.

<sup>190</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Magic* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1901), 1-2.

<sup>191</sup> This is noted in Stephen E. Robinson, review of D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, in *BYU Studies* 27/4 (Fall 1987): 88.

<sup>192</sup> Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality*, 19.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44.

“magic” accordingly.<sup>195</sup> Tylor “does not attempt to make a clear distinction between magic and religion but is content to claim ‘as a minimum definition of Religion, the belief in Spiritual Beings’, and to leave the rest of the supernatural to magic.”<sup>196</sup> Sir James Frazer was, like Tylor, part of the “British Victorian intellectual establishment,” and borrowed his ideas about “magic” essentially from Tylor.<sup>197</sup> Bronislaw K. Malinowski, a native of Poland who was influenced by positivistic theories while a student, held views on religion that “were a mixture of derivative Christian theology and pragmatist considerations akin to the doctrines of William James that however threatened to deteriorate into crude utilitarianism,” and these views are reflected in his theories on magic.<sup>198</sup> The most positivistic definition surveyed here is that of Ritner, an agnostic from a Presbyterian background. So, the Egyptologist Herman te Velde notes, “The word *magic* is often used simply to label actions, sayings, and ideas that do not seem reasonable from a Western positivistic or Christian point of view.”<sup>199</sup> Stanley Tambiah, in his important book, *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality*, tries to show how it is not coincidental that most of the major theoreticians of “magic” have been positivistic Protestants who have defined “magic” in such a way as not to include their own beliefs. “Thus, ‘magic’ is relegated to the ‘they’ side of a ‘we/they’ dichotomy. This is simultaneously unfair to the materials and practices studied under the heading of ‘magic,’ and self-serving for the materials (mainly those we identify as ‘our own’) that are exempted from that label. It perpetuates a complacent double standard.”<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 45–47.

<sup>196</sup> E. E. Evans-Pritchard, “The Intellectualist (English) Interpretation of Magic,” *University of Egypt Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts* 1/2 (December 1933): 284, citing Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed. (1891), 424.

<sup>197</sup> Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality*, 42.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 65–70; the quotation is from 70.

<sup>199</sup> Herman te Velde, “Funerary Mythology,” in *Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Sue D’Auria, Peter Lacovara, and Catherine H. Roehrig (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1988), 29.

<sup>200</sup> Edmund Meltzer, “Old Coptic Texts of Ritual Power,” in *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 13.

D. Michael Quinn is the oddity, for though he did give more consideration to theoretical concerns than Ashment, the Tanners, and most other anti-Mormons, his definition not only deliberately encompasses what was then his own religion, but many others as well. Yet Quinn reverses the double standard: He only applies the pejorative label to his former religion, but not to any others. Consider how Quinn's definition of "magic" applies to the prayer through which a born-again Christian becomes saved: It is "the use of means [prayer] that are believed to have supernatural power to cause a supernatural being [God] to produce or prevent a particular result [salvation and damnation respectively] considered not obtainable by natural means [works]."<sup>201</sup> Therefore, by Quinn's definition, the prayer through which one becomes born again is magic. Christ's grace also fits his definition since Quinn also includes any "extraordinary power or influence seemingly<sup>202</sup> from a supernatural source."<sup>203</sup> Now note the connotations that Quinn infuses into his use of the word. Someone who practices magic (our born-again Christian) looks at the world through the "magic world view," which is "animistic."<sup>204</sup> He (or she) uses "special words, signs, numbers."<sup>205</sup> For the magician (our born-again Christian), "no event is 'accidental' or 'random,' but each has its chain of causation in which Power . . . was the decisive agency."<sup>206</sup> And though he may find his religion

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<sup>201</sup> D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), xi. This is essentially the definition used in Werner Vycichl, "Magic," in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. Aziz S. Atiya, 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 1499. For a critique of this definition from an Egyptological viewpoint, see Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 8.

<sup>202</sup> One could quibble with the word "seemingly," since to believers such as Mormons and born-again Christians, grace not only seems to come, but actually does come from a supernatural source. To a nonbeliever, however, the word seems apt. Since the word need not imply falseness, I intend it in the broadest sense here.

<sup>203</sup> Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, xi

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, xii. This notion of animism in religion can be traced back to Tylor (see Evans-Pritchard, "Intellectualist [English] Interpretation of Magic," 285) and perhaps further (Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 13-14).

<sup>205</sup> Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, xii.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, citing Rosalie Wax and Murray Wax, "The Magical World View," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 1 (April 1962): 184.

“both emotionally satisfying and rational” this is only a “perceived rationality.”<sup>207</sup> Do not be deceived; the magician (our born-again Christian) practices something that “being by definition false or wicked, or both, couldn’t possibly be confused with ‘religion,’ ”<sup>208</sup> since it is nothing but “a crude aggregate of superstitions.”<sup>209</sup> Even if he thinks his is a religion, it can “scarcely differ from magical arts and incantations”<sup>210</sup> since it involves “supernatural coercion, intricate rituals, and efforts to understand the otherworldly and ineffable.”<sup>211</sup> Our poor born-again Christian finds himself inextricably involved with one of the things he wanted to be saved from, just by trying to become saved. Now, I do not believe for a moment that born-again Christians actually fit this sordid portrait of animistic satanic superstitious pagans that Quinn paints, any more than Catholics, Mormons, or ancient Egyptians do. That is the point: Quinn’s definitions of “magic” are a theoretical nightmare that irreparably flaw his book to the point of worthlessness. I fail to comprehend why any born-again Christian—as the Tanners ostensibly are—or any religious person, for that matter, would find Quinn’s book useful, since it condemns not only Mormonism, but nearly every other religion, under the vituperative label of “magic.”

Given the theoretical confusion over the term *magic* among the scholars, one must ask what the person using the term means by it. Otherwise we are simply following a **definition by accusation**: a practice is magic because someone, anyone, anywhere, anytime, for any reason, says so. Consider Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s use of the term *magic* in some of their works. In a book devoted to “magic,” they begin by simply stating that “the Smith’s [*sic*] were charged with being involved in money digging

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<sup>207</sup> Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, xii.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, citing George B. Vetter, *Magic and Religion: Their Psychological Nature, Origin and Function* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), 156.

<sup>209</sup> Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, xiii, citing Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), 93.

<sup>210</sup> Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, xiii, citing A. A. Barb, “The Survival of Magical Arts,” in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. Arnaldo Momigliano (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 101.

<sup>211</sup> Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, xiv.

and magic practices.”<sup>212</sup> They do not define what it means for a practice to be “magic” although they do define “necromancy,”<sup>213</sup> “crystallomancy,”<sup>214</sup> and “divining.”<sup>215</sup> Their functional definition of “magic” seems to be that if an object once possessed by someone, or any detail in any rumor told about someone, “reminds us [the Tanners] of something we might read in a magic book”<sup>216</sup> then the owner of the object or the subject of the rumor must have been involved in “magic practices.” For example, they compare a “magic circle” with a Hofmann forgery (the fake Anthon transcript) because they “suspect there may be a connection to magic” and are certain that the nonexistent Oliver Cowdery history (another fabrication of Hofmann popularized by Brent Lee Metcalfe on hearsay) “contained **MAGIC CHARACTERS!**”<sup>217</sup> Sometimes the connection with “magic” is established by simple assertion: “The original parchments were painted in various colors. Each of these colors is important to those who believe in magic.”<sup>218</sup> Of course, the same may be said of the Sistine Chapel, but that does not make it magical. (To show how silly this is, we should note that the Tanners publish books in various colors, each of which is important to those who believe in magic.) Elsewhere they inform us that “knives play a very important part in magic rituals.”<sup>219</sup> Knives, however, also play a very important part in cooking, but the sim-

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<sup>212</sup> Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1983), 1.

<sup>213</sup> “The pretended art of divination through communication with the dead” in *ibid.*, 22. Presumably, actual communication with the dead is not necromancy.

<sup>214</sup> “Crystallomancy is a method of divination by the crystal which gave its answers whether pyramidal, cylindrical, or any other manufactured shape of crystal. Or else it was done by means of pieces or kinds of crystal enclosed in rings, or else enclosed in some vase, and cylindrical or oval in shape, in which the devil feigns and makes it seem as though he were in it.” Tanner and Tanner, *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*, 27, citing Theodor Besterman, *Crystal-Gazing*, 3.

<sup>215</sup> “DIVINING, the faculty of feeling or discovering water.” Tanner and Tanner, *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*, 29, citing *The Divining Rod* (1894), 1.

<sup>216</sup> Tanner and Tanner, *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*, 37.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 42–46, emphasis in original.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

ple possession of a knife—even a decorated one—does not make its owner a magician any more than mere possession of a Book of Mormon makes one a Mormon, or the mere possession of a Bible makes one a Christian.<sup>220</sup> The Tanners are never clear on what “magic” is and whether the treasure-digging practices they accuse Joseph Smith of<sup>221</sup> are “magic” in their sense, or whether Joseph Smith would have thought them to be “magic” or “occult practices;”<sup>222</sup> instead, they are satisfied simply to accuse Joseph Smith of “magic,” whatever that may be. Since they have given no grounds for what constitutes “magic,” their accusations that Joseph Smith practiced it are groundless, and their evidence consists mostly of hearsay, ambiguous or dubious objects, innuendo, or blatant forgeries.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> It would be tempting to see the Tanners as the unintentional source of Mark Hofmann’s infamous “Salamander Letter,” since they seem to be the first to link a “fairy, sylph, or salamander” (ibid., 23) with Joseph Smith, treasure digging (ibid., 18–20), Martin Harris (ibid., 24–25, 38, 42), the Book of Mormon (ibid., 21–29), guardians of treasures (ibid., 39–42), and slipping treasures (ibid., 24–25, 31–32, 36, 37–39). But it may just be coincidence. The Tanners’ book seems to predate the “Salamander Letter,” according to the information given in Linda Sillitoe and Allen D. Roberts, *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1988), 273–77. This may not, however, have any basis in fact. Ashment used similar reasoning in his arguments about the publication and influences of the articles he is responding to—and got the story all wrong.

<sup>221</sup> Joseph Smith himself discusses “the very prevalent story of my having been a money-digger” (Joseph Smith–History 1:56) and classifies it as one of “the many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons” (Joseph Smith–History 1:1). I do not know whether he would have included this as one of his “foolish errors, . . . the weakness of youth and the foibles of human nature;” but he did say that, “in making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins” (Joseph Smith–History 1:28). The Tanners seem to disagree. But then, again, for the Tanners simply being a Mormon is a great and malignant sin.

<sup>222</sup> The charge is in Tanner and Tanner, *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*, 55.

<sup>223</sup> Studies about Joseph Smith’s connection with “magic” were common in the mid-1980s, but most of them are flawed with the explicit or implicit use of Hofmann forgeries. There needs to be a careful examination of this question using primary source materials rather than secondary source materials, and paying careful attention to both the definitions and attitudes of various writers on “magic.” This is beyond the scope of this essay.

Just as one cannot take scholarly labels or modern accusations of "magic" at face value, one can also not take ancient accusations of "magic" necessarily at face value. Any one of the following: keeping chaste, performing rituals in the name of Christ, the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, initiation rites, leaving a room that has been locked, miracles, or being a stranger, could be considered sufficient for an accusation of magic in the ancient world.<sup>224</sup> Marrying a rich widow was sufficient reason for Sicinius Aemilianus to accuse Apuleius of Madaurus of being a magician.<sup>225</sup> Consider also the use of terms for magic in the Coptic martyrdom of Serapion. The soldiers come to haul Serapion from prison to stand before the magistrate, where they say they have caught him practicing magic in his dungeon cell because "they found the saint standing praying."<sup>226</sup> In turn, the Christians considered anyone who worshipped "Apollo and Zeus and Athena and Artemis" to be a "magician."<sup>227</sup> If simply praying can be considered practicing "magic" then the term has little substance. Time and again, Quinn and the Tanners classify a practice as "magic" simply because someone, somewhere, sometime considered the practice to be "magic."<sup>228</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* has accurately assessed the connotations of the use of the English term in its definition: "The *pretended* art of influencing the course of events, and of producing marvelous physical phenomena, by processes *supposed* to owe their efficacy to their power of *compelling* the intervention of spiritual beings, or of bringing into operation some *occult* controlling principle of nature; *sorcery, witchcraft*."<sup>229</sup> This definition almost screams opprobrium; indeed, the pejorative connotation of the term gen-

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<sup>224</sup> Gérard Poupon, "L'accusation de magie dans les actes apocryphes," in *Les Actes apocryphes des apôtres: Christianisme et monde païen* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1981), 71-76.

<sup>225</sup> Harold E. Butler and Martin S. Smith, "Apuleius," in *OCD* 88.

<sup>226</sup> "The Martyrdom of Saint Serapion," in I. Balestri and H. Hyvernât, *Acta Martyrum*, 4 vols. (Paris: Typographeo Reipublicae, 1907-24), 1:76.

<sup>227</sup> "The Martyrdom of Apa Anoub," in *ibid.*, 1:217.

<sup>228</sup> Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 1-26 and *passim*; Quinn's problematic definitions are on pages x-xvi. A similar theoretical problem plagues Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

<sup>229</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "magic," emphasis added.

erally overshadows any substantive meaning in its usage. We have seen how Quinn takes a fairly innocuous definition and heaps censure and innuendo on it; Tylor is no different, considering magic (anything supernatural other than a belief in spiritual beings) “one of the most pernicious delusions that ever vexed mankind.”<sup>230</sup> “At the root of the problem is the loaded, evaluative connotation of ‘magic’ as false, deceptive, discredited, or morally tainted, contrasted with both science (a correct, enlightened understanding of natural law and causation) and religion (a correct, enlightened understanding of the divine and spirituality).”<sup>231</sup> Given the loaded nature of the English term, what, if anything, is to be gained by using the term *magic* in scholarly discourse?<sup>232</sup>

It is thus little wonder that, as an English term in scholarly discourse, the term *magic* has become vacuous and meaningless.

The use of the term “magic” tells us little or nothing about the substance of what is under description. The sentence, “X is/was a magician!” tells us nothing about the beliefs and practices of X; the only solid information that can be derived from it concerns the *speaker’s* attitude toward X and their relative social relationship—that X is viewed by the speaker as powerful, peripheral, and dangerous.<sup>233</sup>

The term thus usually classifies the person who uses it rather than the person of whom it is used. Back in 1933 the distinguished anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard reported, “What is important is that all students in the same field should use key terms like

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<sup>230</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1:112, cited in Evans-Pritchard, “Intellectualist (English) Interpretation of Magic,” 283.

<sup>231</sup> Edmund Meltzer, “Old Coptic Texts of Ritual Power,” in *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 13.

<sup>232</sup> I have asked colleagues, professors, and other scholars why they insist on branding cultures and religions that they study, love, and are deeply concerned for with such a stigmatic slur and have yet to receive a satisfactory answer.

<sup>233</sup> Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells*, 25.

magic and religion with the same meaning.”<sup>234</sup> Yet since that time the number of definitions has mushroomed, but the persuasiveness of those definitions has diminished.

There is a growing consensus in the social sciences that, since there are no objective criteria for distinguishing magic from ritual, “magic” is useless as a classificatory term. In some ways, we are inclined to think it worse than useless. It is so frequently pejorative in connotation, and its polemical potential is so high, that it tends to draw its users away from the standards of objectivity that the social sciences claim to espouse.<sup>235</sup>

And even in particular instances, “a broadly conceived theoretical dichotomy between ‘magic’ and ‘religion’ is not . . . of any great help in analyzing and evaluating the peculiar cultural phenomenon presented in the early Greek *defixiones*.”<sup>236</sup> The term *magic*, both historically and currently, is generally used simply as a club with which one beats one’s religious opponents over the head.<sup>237</sup> Scholars have nothing to gain by using the term and, thus, it should be dropped from scholarly usage. While scholars—like Ritner—who are extremely careful in specifying its definition

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<sup>234</sup> Evans-Pritchard, “Intellectualist (English) Interpretation of Magic,” 311.

<sup>235</sup> Stephen D. Ricks and Daniel C. Peterson, “The Mormon as Magus,” *Sunstone* 12/1 (January 1988): 38. This statement shocked D. Michael Quinn, “Mormonism: Without Parallel or Part of Context?” *Sunstone* 12/1 (January 1988): 40, who claimed, “Ricks and Peterson do not seem to be seriously advocating the abandonment of ‘magic’ as a term to describe the activities of Pharaoh’s court, or of Simon Magus, or of John Dee.” Actually, however, this is precisely what Ricks has been advocating; see Stephen D. Ricks, “The Magician as Outsider: The Evidence of the Hebrew Bible,” in *New Perspectives on Ancient Judaism*, ed. Paul V. M. Flesher (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 125–34. For other reactions to recommendations that the term *magic* be dropped, see Aune, “Magic in Early Christianity,” 1510–11; Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 13.

<sup>236</sup> Faraone, “The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells,” 20.

<sup>237</sup> See Flint, *Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*, 16–20; Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 4, 236–37; Johannes Friedrich and Annelies Kammenhuber, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. to date (Heidelberg: Winter, 1975–), 1:64, s.v. “aluanzatar”; Peterson and Ricks, *Offenders for a Word*, 6–8.

whenever used and meticulously sticking to that definition might be able to make a case for usage of the term, the risks of misunderstanding and misuse of them seem too high, while the non-polemical benefits seem nonexistent. The application of the term *magic* to Egyptian religious texts scattered through the Greco-Roman world has produced a witch-hunt conducted by ancient historians throughout Greco-Roman antiquity, looking for groups of wandering magicians that never existed.<sup>238</sup> Chief among the witch-hunters have been Morton Smith,<sup>239</sup> and Hans Dieter Betz.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Note how Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 73, cites a passage from Origen, *Contra Celsum* IV, 33, but attributes it to a class of wandering magicians when Origen specifically attributes this practice to the Egyptians. The text of Origen is cited above.

<sup>239</sup> Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 78–80, 84–91.

<sup>240</sup> Betz, "Introduction," in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, xlv–xlviii. Among his more classic wrong-headed attempts are (1) Hans D. Betz, "The Delphic Maxim 'Know Yourself' in *Greek Magical Papyri*," *History of Religions* 21/2 (November 1981): 156–71. The problem is noted on *ibid.*, 157: "Why the PGM should have become interested in the Delphic maxim is far from self-evident." The real solution is that the PGM is interested in Egyptian religious practices and not the Delphic maxim since the papyri are Egyptian not Greek; thus "the maxim is never quoted verbatim" (*ibid.*) because it is not quoted at all. Telling is Fowden's criticism in *Egyptian Hermes*, 87 n. 54: "Magicians had no need of philosophers to tell them that it was possible to identify oneself with and constrain the gods—least of all in Egypt." (2) Hans D. Betz, "Fragments from a Catabasis Ritual in a Greek Magical Papyrus," *History of Religions* 19/4 (May 1980): 287–95, where Betz would like to identify PGM LXX (=P. Mich. III, 154, a third- or fourth-century A.D. papyrus) as based on the initiations of the Idaean Dactyls. Betz ignores the provenance of the papyri in his discussion, and his source criticism remains vague about what exactly the sources are and how they are woven together. What the Idaean Dactyls might be doing in Egypt, he never says. One strongly suspects that this is another Egyptian text that Betz thinks is Greek. (3) In Hans D. Betz, "Magic and Mystery in the Greek Magical Papyri," in Faraone and Dirk, eds., *Magika Hiera*, 244–59, After a discussion of the problems in defining *magic*, Betz concludes that "good reasons exist for the fact that no one definition appears acceptable to everyone at this time" (*ibid.*, 247), and declares, "whatever magic may be, the magical papyri have plenty of it" (*ibid.*, 248), thus defining *magic* as what is in the PGM. Betz, though he knows of the arguments that the PGM are Egyptian (*ibid.*, 248–49), ignores them on the grounds that they might have been "*perhaps* brought in by Greek settlers in Egypt" (*ibid.*, 249, emphasis added). When the Egyptians wrote about their mysteries in Greek, they borrowed the *terminology* from the Greek mystery cults.

## Witch-hunting through the Ancient World

Robert Morton Smith was born in 1915, and, after getting a doctorate from Harvard Divinity School, traveled to Jerusalem. Being unable to leave throughout World War II, he worked on another doctorate.<sup>241</sup> He became an Episcopal priest but left his parish in 1957.<sup>242</sup> By 1958, when he made his manuscript discoveries at Mar Saba, he had lost his faith.<sup>243</sup> After that time he began what one of his reviewers described as “a scholarly program” wherein “the use of emotionally charged language shows a purpose that is more polemical than scientific.” “The publishing program of Morton Smith seems to be to discredit Christianity.”<sup>244</sup> When I met Morton Smith, in the last year of his life, he was a recalcitrant and bitter old man who thought that anyone who disagreed with his work was a Christian apologist and not a scholar.<sup>245</sup> I can only second the words of O. C. Edwards: “I would be very interested to learn how this parish priest of the 1940s came so to oppose the religion in which he was ordained.”<sup>246</sup>

Morton Smith’s major witch-hunting work was his infamous book, *Jesus the Magician*. The picture of Jesus depicted in

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and Betz argues that therefore the Egyptians borrowed their mysteries from the Greeks even though Greeks such as Herodotus, *Histories* II, 58, argued that the borrowing went the other direction. Betz further argues that the Egyptians imported ideas from the Greeks, who imitated the older Egyptian culture, because the Egyptian religion somehow needed to be “legitimated” by Greeks who were imitating Egyptian culture! And therefore the *PGM* are magic, since “they lacked what we would call ‘religion’ ” (ibid., 249–54). Betz’s cultural biases are flagrant here; his argument also lacks some amount of coherence. For a different view of the Greek opinion of Egyptian religion, see Bevan, *History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, 89, 84.

<sup>241</sup> Morton Smith, *The Secret Gospel* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 1.

<sup>242</sup> O. C. Edwards, Jr., review of Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, in *Anglican Theological Review* 61 (1979): 517.

<sup>243</sup> Smith, *The Secret Gospel*, 10; contrast this with his fascination of seventeen years earlier that he describes on pp. 1–6.

<sup>244</sup> Edwards, review of Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 516–17.

<sup>245</sup> Readers of *RBBM* will note similarities to other individuals prominently figuring in present and previous issues.

<sup>246</sup> Edwards, review of Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 517.

Smith's book has made many Christians feel uncomfortable. Smith, after all, depicted Jesus as a vagabond and a huckster, as homosexual and cannibalistic.<sup>247</sup> The reviewers took him to task because "he excludes by assumption the possibility that traditional orthodox Christian belief is true,"<sup>248</sup> and "his ignorance of current Gospel research is abysmal."<sup>249</sup> "When the outsider's view is given precedence to the point that it becomes the criterion for judging the rest of the evidence, one feels a need to object. . . . The fact that somebody is accused of such performances [sorcery and magic] does not necessarily mean that the charge was true, but only that the group must protect itself from misrepresentation."<sup>250</sup> However much Smith—who lost his own faith somewhere in the forties or fifties—may have delighted in tweaking the noses of the faithful, it is his fallacious theoretical framework, his problematic methodology, and his methodical manhandling of the evidence that should cause any scholar to be wary of his book. Smith's example of a vagrant *magician* (other than Jesus) is Apollonius of Tyana, a traveling Greek *sophist* of the first century.<sup>251</sup> His examples of a magician's spells are taken from third-century manuscripts of Egyptian religious texts (the *PGM*).<sup>252</sup> Besides attributing Egyptian religious practices to a Greek, Smith assigns them a prominent place in influencing Jesus on the following grounds: (1) The documents mention Christ.<sup>253</sup> (2) Similar techniques were used in the Jewish *Sepher ha-Razim*.<sup>254</sup> (3) The Babylonian Talmud claims that Jesus went to Egypt and

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<sup>247</sup> The picture is most graphically painted in Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 67; for cannibalism, see also *ibid.*, 52–53, 66, 146; for the huckster, see also *ibid.*, 60; for the promiscuity, see also *ibid.*, 66.

<sup>248</sup> Edwards, review of Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 516.

<sup>249</sup> Barry Crawford, review of Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 47 (1979): 322.

<sup>250</sup> Sean Freyne, review of Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41 (1979): 659. Anti-Mormons and a few so-called historians could learn something from this, but probably will not.

<sup>251</sup> Herbert J. Rose, "Apollonius (12)," in *OCD* 86.

<sup>252</sup> Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 97–139, with notes on pp. 192–206.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 63–64.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

studied under the magicians there.<sup>255</sup> Let us consider each of these in order.

The documents mention Christ. Yes, on two counts: First the documents of the Anastasi priestly archive mention Christ.<sup>256</sup> Second, in places Egyptian practices were retained by later Christians and incorporated into their Christianity or folk practices.<sup>257</sup> The rituals that mention Christ in the first set of documents are worth looking at because they tell us some things about the Christianity of second- or third-century Thebes. But does the adoption of Christian rituals and deities long after the death of Jesus by the Egyptians, who had no aversion to adopting any one of a number of foreign deities,<sup>258</sup> prove that Jesus was influenced by Egyptian religion? Hardly.<sup>259</sup>

Similar techniques were used in the Jewish *Sepher ha-Razim*. But the *Sepher ha-Razim* is a set of medieval manuscripts found in the Cairo Geniza, in the middle of Egypt.<sup>260</sup> Margolioth, the first editor, said of the author of the *Sepher ha-Razim*: "he is influenced especially by the scribes of the Greek magical writings," i.e., the *PGM*, which are actually Egyptian.<sup>261</sup> We know it borrows from prayers in Greek because it quotes them in transliteration.<sup>262</sup> Yet this Greek prayer addresses Helios, the sun god, as riding in a boat, which is not Greek<sup>263</sup> but Egyptian. It is clear that whoever in the Jewish community in Egypt wrote this manuscript borrowed from their Hellenized Egyptian neighbors some things which they used to produce this work of late antiquity. It is unclear why this

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>256</sup> *PGM* IV.1233; XIII.289; cf. *PGM* XLIV.18.

<sup>257</sup> Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 89–92, 109–10; Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2:289–212; Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 273–75; Vycichl, "Magic," 1499–509.

<sup>258</sup> Quirke, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 113–14.

<sup>259</sup> Noted also in Freyne, review of Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 660.

<sup>260</sup> Mordechai Margolioth, *Sepher ha-Razim: A Newly Recovered Book of Magic from the Talmudic Period* (Jerusalem: Louis M. and Minnie Epstein Fund, 1966), ix.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 23, the full discussion is on pages 1–16

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 12–16.

<sup>263</sup> Judah Goldin, "The Magic of Magic and Superstition," in *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. E. Schüssler Fiorenza (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 135.

should be used as a document illustrative of the life of Jesus in the first century.<sup>264</sup>

The Babylonian Talmud claims that Jesus went to Egypt and studied under the magicians there.<sup>265</sup> Why a piece of anti-Christian scholarly gossip of eighth-century Babylon, that is not even sure about the name of the individual about whom the rumor speaks, should serve as the basis of a historical theory of first-century Palestine somehow escapes me.<sup>266</sup>

Morton Smith's treatment of certain important pieces of evidence also leads one to distrust his book. Consider his treatment of the famous correspondence between Pliny and Trajan about the Christians<sup>267</sup> that he claims he is taking "as it is usually taken, at face value."<sup>268</sup> Where in this correspondence are the references to "magical spells," Jesus as a "demon," and cannibalism that Morton Smith finds there?<sup>269</sup> Professor Smith then uses this evidence read into the text to "clearly show what opinion the Roman authorities had formed of Christianity; they thought it was an organization for the practice of magic."<sup>270</sup> There may well have been Roman authorities who so thought, but the Pliny/Trajan correspondence is not evidence for that idea. Given the theoretical muddle, methodological nightmare, and tortured evidence in this particular work of Morton Smith, it has only a very limited value.

Why have I spent so much time in this review essay on the work of the late unrepentant old crank, Morton Smith? It is because Jerald and Sandra Tanner ironically rely heavily on Morton Smith's flawed presentation (even if they "disagreed with his conclusion"), because they felt that "Professor Smith presented a great deal of material concerning the type of magical

<sup>264</sup> Compare the complaint of Freyne, review of Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 659.

<sup>265</sup> Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 104b. See the discussion in Ricks and Peterson, "Joseph Smith and 'Magic,'" 145 n. 23.

<sup>266</sup> Compare the complaint of Freyne, review of Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 659.

<sup>267</sup> C. Plini Caecili Secundi, *Epistulae* X, 96-97.

<sup>268</sup> Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 53.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

papyri we are dealing with here.”<sup>271</sup> Unfortunately, little of that information is accurate or reliable. Because Ashment and the Tanners rely on sources that have misunderstood the papyri, their discussions are likewise flawed.

### “Abraham” in Greco-Roman Egypt

Consider further what Ashment’s and the Tanners’ arguments about the Joseph Smith Papyri and the Anastasi priestly archive amount to. First they argue that the Joseph Smith Papyri can have no genuine connection to the book of Abraham because they are nothing but pagan magical documents from the archives of priests of Greco-Roman period Thebes.<sup>272</sup> Then, when the name *Abraham* appears in Egyptian documents, they argue that these documents can have nothing to do with either the Joseph Smith Papyri or the book of Abraham because they are nothing but pagan magical documents from the archives of priests of Greco-Roman period Thebes. Setting aside for the moment the question of whether or not any of the documents has anything to do with the book of Abraham, if a scholar wanted to do research on the writings of the priests of Greco-Roman period Thebes, it would only make sense to study all of their archives together. The hysterical touchiness of some on this subject is astonishing. The

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<sup>271</sup> Tanner and Tanner, “Solving the Mystery of the Joseph Smith Papyri,” 5b.

<sup>272</sup> If the generally accepted date of the Joseph Smith Papyri is accurate, this can simply be limited to the Roman Period. Although the date of the Joseph Smith Papyri is not usually disputed, Jan Quaegebaer has pointed out that all Books of Breathings need to be redated perhaps as much as 300 hundred years earlier. The current paleographic dating of the papyri to the Roman period does not have a sound basis; see Jan Quaegebaer, “Demotic Inscriptions on Wood from the Tomb of ‘Anch-Hor,” in Manfred Bietak and Elfriede Reiser-Haslauer, *Das Grab des ‘Anch-Hor, Obermeister der Gottesgemahlin Nitokris*, 3 vols. (Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1982), 2:264, esp. n. 512: “The dating of the late funerary papyri needs a more detailed discussion. A prosopographical study of the Theban priests in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods based on all available sources could shed new light on this problem.” Furthermore, Hugh Nibley’s argument, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), 3–6, that the papyri come from the Soter cache is not certain. Until the date of the Joseph Smith papyri is reexamined, all arguments must be tentative.

appearance of the name *Abraham* in a Greco-Roman period Egyptian priestly archive from Thebes does not prove that the book of Abraham is authentic; it proves merely that Greco-Roman period Egyptian priests in Thebes knew something about Abraham. That a Greco-Roman period priest wrote the name *Abraham* directly underneath a lion-couch scene and noted that they should both be copied together may simply be coincidence—why it is there has never been satisfactorily explained—but the idea of connecting a lion couch scene found in a Greco-Roman period Egyptian papyrus from Thebes with Abraham can no longer be dismissed as absurd, as critics have done for years. Therein is and always has been the significance of the Anastasi priestly archive for the book of Abraham; not that the archive authenticates the book of Abraham—for it does not and no one has ever claimed that it did—but that it shows that the idea that a Greco-Roman period Egyptian priest might have had a copy of the book of Abraham is not completely out of the question.

The argument can actually be made stronger than this, though the Anastasi ritual archive plays no part. How a Greco-Roman period Egyptian priest might have obtained a copy of the book of Abraham and what the original language of the book of Abraham was are still open questions. In one of his more brilliant passages, Ashment suggests that the information about Abraham came into Egypt in the sixth century B.C. with Jewish refugees from the destruction of Jerusalem. This may well be, but that was certainly neither the first nor the only influx of Jews into Egypt. There were waves of Jewish immigrants into Egypt before the conquest of Jerusalem (594–589 B.C.), soon after the conquest of Jerusalem, during the Persian period (525–399 B.C.), during the reign of Ptolemy I (320–301 B.C.), during the Ptolemaic rule of Judah (301–200 B.C.), with the departure of Onias IV to Leontopolis (172 B.C.), and after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70–73), to name just a few.<sup>273</sup> Jewish scriptures and texts could have come

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<sup>273</sup> The list is taken from Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1985), 1–28. Scattered references may be found in Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 443–44; F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 58–59; Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, 85, 97–99, 102; Naphtali Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt: Case Studies in the Social*

during any one or any number of these immigrations into Egypt. By the Persian period transcriptions were made of at least parts of the Jewish scriptures into demotic script.<sup>274</sup>

Nothing compels us to assume that the book of Abraham must necessarily have been written by Abraham in Egyptian and preserved in Egyptian hands the entire time; it may also have passed through the hands of Abraham's posterity and been taken to Egypt only much later, where it was translated.<sup>275</sup> Hecateus of Abdera (ca. 300 B.C.)—a major source for Manetho,<sup>276</sup> Diodorus Siculus,<sup>277</sup> and possibly Tacitus<sup>278</sup>—"used . . . Egyptian sources to revise . . . Herodotus' account of Egyptian history."<sup>279</sup>

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*History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 14, 21, 162 n. 14; Barbara Watterson, *Coptic Egypt* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988), 1–2, 17, 24; Hanson, "Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Arabes, and Ioudaioi," 136–40.

<sup>274</sup> *P. Amherst* 63; for a brief discussion with bibliography, see Gee, "La Trahison des Clercs," 96–99. The paleography dates the text to the Persian period (Robert K. Ritner, personal communication); the archive it was found in contains texts of later date, showing that the text was an heirloom of some sort.

<sup>275</sup> Since Joseph Smith originally stated that the book of Abraham was "a translation of some ancient Records that have fallen into our hands, from the Catacombs of Egypt, purporting to be the writings of Abraham, while he was in Egypt" (*Times and Seasons* 3/9 [1 March 1842]: 704, capitalization standardized and emphasis added), it is conceivable that the writings are an ancient pseudepigraphon. The problem with viewing the book of Abraham as a pseudepigraphon is that this explanation cannot account for the name *Olishem* being the name of a real place, especially since almost all knowledge of that time period vanished from the Old Babylonian Period until modern times; see William W. Hallo, "Simurrum and the Hurrian Frontier," *Revue Hittite et Asiatique* 36 (1978): 75–76.

<sup>276</sup> Anonymus, "Hecateus (2)," in *OCD* 490; Donald B. Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals and Day-Books: A Contribution to the Study of the Egyptian Sense of History* (Mississauga: Benben, 1986), 225–26. Abdera is not exactly in Egypt, but it was within the sphere of Egyptian influence when Hecateus lived; see John Baines and Jaromír Málek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Facts on File, 1980), 54. Hecateus also traveled to Egypt, serving as a diplomat to Ptolemy I; Stanley M. Burstein, "Hecataeus of Abdera's History of Egypt," in Johnson, ed., *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society*, 46; see F. Jacoby, "Hekataios," in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1894–1980), 7:2751–52.

<sup>277</sup> Burstein, "Hecateus of Abdera's History of Egypt," 45–46

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

Hecateus had a positive assessment of Moses and Jews<sup>280</sup> and knew of noncanonical traditions about Abraham, about which he wrote a book that is thought to have been “a major source behind Josephus’ account of Abraham.”<sup>281</sup> Even if the traditions about Abraham are assigned to a Pseudo-Hecateus rather than Hecateus of Abdera, they must date to the first century A.D. at the very latest. If “it is best to postulate Egyptian provenance for the original story” for the *Testament of Abraham*, and “it seems best to assume a date for the original of c. A.D. 100, plus or minus twenty-five years,”<sup>282</sup> what is so unusual about the mention of Abraham in third-century Egyptian papyri, or a papyrus manuscript of a nonbiblical book of Abraham dating to the end of the first century? But the Anastasi priestly archive does not prove that the book of Abraham is true, nor does it prove that it existed. The larger argument is basically independent of any evidence from the archive. What the Anastasi priestly archive shows is that Egyptian priests (in Thebes) freely borrowed from Jewish and Christian sources; thus they must have had some sort of access to them. This does not tell us necessarily what those sources were, or when these sources came into Egypt (although it does provide a *terminus ante quem*), or what sort of shape those sources were in.

Asking what the Egyptians of the Greco-Roman period knew about Abraham is a legitimate historical question. The Anastasi priestly archive is perfectly legitimate evidence for this historical question. The book of Abraham also fits into this historical question and seems to fit into the other evidence. A minimal historical argument from this is that the existence of a book of Abraham in Egypt at the time the Joseph Smith Papyri were produced is well within the scope of reasonable scholarship. If the critics wish to attack an argument, this is the argument they should attack.

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<sup>280</sup> R. Doran, “Pseudo-Hecateus (Second Century B.C.–First Century A.D.),” in Charlesworth, ed., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:905.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 905; Jacoby, “Hekataios,” 2767–68. See also Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* I, 518, 161, 165–66; and Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* V, 14, 113.

<sup>282</sup> E. P. Sanders, “Testament of Abraham,” in Charlesworth, ed., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:875.

## Mumbo-Jumbo

In retrospect, Ashment's argument that the names are nothing but magical gibberish is actually a step backwards. "It is often, and incorrectly, assumed that the 'barbarous names' found in Egyptian and Greco-Egyptian magical texts are meaningless. This may sometimes be the case, but often they are anagrams of divine names which have been 'cut up' or scrambled. Merely because we cannot comprehend them except in terms of some quasi-sociological function does not signify that they are nonsense."<sup>283</sup> In the general field of the history of religion, it has been argued that "magical" words are not nonsense.<sup>284</sup> No less than Adolf Erman showed that a whole section of what had been thought nonsense was actually Old Coptic.<sup>285</sup> More recent work has brought some impressive interpretations of this mumbo-jumbo to light.<sup>286</sup> While not all of these interpretations are equally convincing, the burden should lay on the critic to come up with a better explanation or some cogent reasons why the interpretation does not work. Claiming that it is all nonsense is not a better explanation. One might argue that certainly the long strings of vowels are meaningless, but an ancient author notes that "in Egypt the priests, when singing hymns in praise of the gods, employ the seven vowels, which they utter in due succession; and the sound of these letters is so euphonious that men listen to it in place of flute and lyre."<sup>287</sup> (This is, by the way, another indication that the *PGM* are documents of Egyptian priests.)

<sup>283</sup> Terence DuQuesne, "The Raw and the Half-Baked: Approaches to Egyptian Religion," *Discussions in Egyptology* 30 (1994): 34.

<sup>284</sup> Stanley J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man* n.s. 3 (1968): 175–208.

<sup>285</sup> Adolf Erman, "Die ägyptische Beschwörungen des grossen Pariser Zauberpapyrus," *ZÄS* 21 (1883): 89–109.

<sup>286</sup> Jürgen Osing, *Der spätägyptische Papyrus BM 10808* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976). Contrast this to the editio princeps: W. E. Crum, "An Egyptian Text in Greek Characters," *JEA* 28 (1942): 20–31. See also Heinz J. Thissen, "Ägyptologische Beiträge zu den griechischen magischen Papyri," in *Religion und Philosophie im alten Ägypten*, ed. Ursula Verhoeven and Erhart Graefe (Leuven: Peeters, 1991), 293–302; and the notes of Robert K. Ritner scattered throughout Betz, ed., *Greek Magical Papyri*.

<sup>287</sup> Demetrius, *De electione*, fragment 71, cited in Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 118–19. Contrast this with the confused discussion of Patricia C.

The Anastasi priestly archive has one of the more intriguing parallels to the phenomenon of book of Abraham names. *P. Leiden* I 395 (=PGM XIII, called the "Eighth Book of Moses") 160–61 contains the following statement: "The nine-formed one greets you in hieratic: *menephōiphōth*. When he says that he means: I come unto thee, O Lord (*proagō sou kyrie*)."<sup>288</sup> This is worth noting because, here, in a papyrus owned by an Egyptian priest who knew hieratic, is written a word explicitly identified as hieratic, yet no one has yet been able to come up with a phrase in any phase of the Egyptian language that matches both the phonetics and meaning identified in the papyrus. So long as these sorts of parallel texts are to be found in authentic Egyptian documents, we cannot dismiss words in the book of Abraham as being inauthentic just because we do not understand them.

### The Pupil of the *Wedjat*-Eye

One of the subsidiary issues raised in the publication of the preliminary reports was that the name *Abraham* can be plausibly connected with hypocephali inasmuch as Abraham is called "the pupil of the *wedjat*-eye" in one of the passages. Ashment objects to equating the hypocephalus with the pupil of the *wedjat*-eye (pp. 14–16), though—since even sometime "Mormon" turned anti-Mormon pseudo-Egyptologist Dee Jay Nelson entitled his study of Facsimile 2, *Joseph Smith's "Eye of Ra"*<sup>289</sup>—I suspect

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Miller, "In Praise of Nonsense," in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, ed. A. H. Armstrong (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 481–505.

<sup>288</sup> *P. Leiden* I 395, 160–61, in Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2:94; cf. Morton Smith, "PGM XIII.1–343," 176.

<sup>289</sup> Nelson, *Joseph Smith's "Eye of Ra"*. His reasons for this appellation appear on pages 1–2, 17–19, 25. Nelson's book is too filled with mistakes to recommend it as useful. More recent studies of Facsimile 2 have scarcely advanced beyond preliminaries; e.g., Harris, *Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham*, 50–82; James R. Harris, "The Book of Abraham Facsimiles," in Millet and Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture: Volume Two: The Pearl of Great Price*, 247–86; James R. Harris, "The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham," in *The Pearl of Great Price: A History and Commentary*, ed. H. Donl Peterson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 47–55; Jeff Borgholthaus, *Facsimile 2—A Testament of Righteousness & of the Path Back to God* (Lusby, MD: Borgholthaus, 1993). The best studies of Facsimile 2 to date are Michael D. Rhodes, "A Transla-

that if it were not mentioned in connection with Abraham in *PDM* xiv he would have no particular problem. Ashment rejects the argument that Book of the Dead 162–67 are closely related (pp. 15–16),<sup>290</sup> citing a study by Malcolm Mosher that indicates that these chapters are not connected in the Memphite tradition, but only in the Theban tradition.<sup>291</sup> Ashment's objection, however, is not valid since both *P. Leiden* I 383 and the Joseph Smith Papyri came from Thebes, not Memphis.<sup>292</sup> Since the manuscripts come from Thebes and not Memphis, it would only make sense to follow the Theban tradition where these texts are related. (Hypocephali themselves are also thought to be part of "specifically local traditions" centered at Thebes: "The custom of making hypocephali is propagated exclusively among the members of the Theban clergy,"<sup>293</sup> thus becoming "an exclusive funerary custom.")<sup>294</sup> The main reason, however, for thinking that the "pupil of the *wedjat*-eye" is to be connected with the hypocephalus comes from three hypocephali (the restorations are those of Edith Varga):

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tion and Commentary of the Joseph Smith Hypocephalus" *BYU Studies* 17 (Spring 1977): 259–74; and Michael D. Rhodes, "The Joseph Smith Hypocephalus—Seventeen Years Later" (FARMS, 1994).

<sup>290</sup> Ashment also rejects this argument because none of these chapters are found all together in any one Book of the Dead. I readily concede the point, though I should point out that the argument in Gee, "Abraham in Ancient Egyptian Texts," 61, 62 nn. 12–13, relies only on BD 162–64 being related. As will be shown later, even this argument is superfluous.

<sup>291</sup> Malcolm Mosher, Jr., "Theban and Memphite Book of the Dead Traditions in the Late Period," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 29 (1992): 143–72; the argument is on pages 154–56.

<sup>292</sup> For the Theban origin of the Joseph Smith Papyri, see *HC* 2:348–49; Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 3–6; H. Donl Peterson, "Antonio Lebolo: Excavator of the Book of Abraham," *BYU Studies* 31/3 (Summer 1991): 13; Peterson, *The Pearl of Great Price: A History and Commentary*, 38–39. The Theban origin is granted by the anti-Mormons: Tanner and Tanner, *Case against Mormonism*, 2:120; H. Michael Marquardt, *The Book of Abraham Papyrus Found* (Sandy, UT: Marquardt, 1975), 8. Thus this point is not disputed.

<sup>293</sup> Edith Varga, "Le Fragment d'un hypocéphale égyptien," *Bulletin de Musée Hungrois des Beaux-Arts* 31 (1968): 15.

<sup>294</sup> Edith Varga, "Les travaux préliminaires de la monographie sur les hypocéphales," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 12 (1961): 247. This passage was mistranslated (without my knowledge) in Gee, "Tragedy of Errors," 100 n. 22.

Musée Hungrois des beaux-Arts inv. L.009:

*ink p3 dfđ [m hnw n wdjt]*

"I am the pupil [within the *wedjat*-eye]."

Turin 2323:

*ink dfđ m hnw m [wdjt]*

"I and the pupil within [the *wedjat*-eye]."

B.M. 8445:

*ink pr m wdjt ink p[w] dfđ=s*

"I am he who came from the *wedjat*-eye; I am its pupil."<sup>295</sup>

While one can dispute Varga's restorations in the first two instances, the third is unambiguous. Varga has shown what is crucial here: The pupil of the *wedjat*-eye is the god associated with the hypocephalus.<sup>296</sup> Using a hypocephalus, "the deceased assumes the attributes of the divinity, they are his functions which he executes in order to share his departure and so that, at the daily rebirth of the sun, he himself is also reborn into the new life."<sup>297</sup> This assumption of divinity is basic to Egyptian religion, as the effectiveness of the rites ("magical" or otherwise) is founded on the priest's being a representation or representative of deity.<sup>298</sup> The priest acts in the place of the god; this may be done in various ways, such as by placing a mask of the god on his head, or by simply declaring himself to be the god. The power that made this representation effective was called by the Egyptians *hk3*,<sup>299</sup> a word

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<sup>295</sup> See Varga, "Le Fragment d'un hypocéphale égyptien," 13. The rim inscription of BM 8445 is reproduced (albeit poorly) in Harris, *Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham*, 77. Many thanks to Michael Lyon for allowing me to examine his collection of photographs of hypocephali to collate Varga's assertions. The lacunae are filled by Varga with the exception of BM 8445. The lacuna on BM 8445 may be intact but it is difficult to tell from the photographs.

<sup>296</sup> Varga, "Fragment d'un hypocéphale égyptien," 13–15.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>298</sup> Lexa, *Magie dans l'Égypte antique*, 1:56–58.

<sup>299</sup> Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 247–49, cf. 25–26.

usually rendered by Egyptologists as “magic”<sup>300</sup> or (rarely) as “supernatural power.”<sup>301</sup> The imagery on the hypocephali is either derived from the nighttime journey of the sun in the Amduat (on the lower side) or from the iconography of Re-Kheperi, the morning sun (on the upper side). Thus the hypocephalus does not depict the cycle of the daily circuit of the sun, but is simply designed to get one through the long night of death until the morning of the resurrection.<sup>302</sup> (Note that, though the sun rises daily, the resurrection occurs only once since the Egyptian wants to avoid dying a second time.) It is thus only appropriate that in Egypt, where the Christians would call the underworld “the bosom of Abraham,”<sup>303</sup> Abraham would be called the pupil of the *wedjat-eye*. Ashment might wish to argue that the connection is coincidental, but to argue that it is nonexistent is untenable.

### Masks and Priests

Ashment’s booklet also adds yet another item of bibliography to the completely irrelevant debate over whether the head of Figure 3 in Facsimile 1 of the book of Abraham has been restored properly (p. 13).<sup>304</sup> The figure in Facsimile 1 has a bald human

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<sup>300</sup> *Wb* 3:175–77; the most recent discussion is in Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 14–28.

<sup>301</sup> *Wb* 3:175–76.

<sup>302</sup> See Varga, “Fragment d’un hypocéphale égyptien,” 14, cited above.

<sup>303</sup> This is a standard epithet on Christian tombstones in Egypt and Nubia deriving from Luke 16:22–23. See, for example, H. R. Hall, *Coptic and Greek Texts of the Christian Period from Ostraka, Stelae, etc., in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1905), 8, 10, 12.

<sup>304</sup> For example: Théodule Devéria, “Fragments de manuscrits funéraires égyptiens,” in Théodule Devéria, *Mémoires et fragments*, 2 vols. (Paris: Leroux, 1896), 1:196; Tanner and Tanner, *Case against Mormonism*, 3:38–43; Hugh Nibley, “As Things Stand at the Moment,” *BYU Studies* 9/1 (Autumn 1968): 85–86; Edward H. Ashment, “The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham: A Reappraisal,” *Sunstone* 4/5–6 (December 1979): 36. Hugh Nibley, “The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham,” *Sunstone* 4/5–6 (December 1979): 49; Nibley’s reference to Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* seems to be a reference to Emma Brunner-Traut, “Aspektive,” in *LÄ* 1:477, 483, Tafel II, Abb. 9. The preceding works give an outline of the arguments. Works like the following have no new arguments to add, merely verbiage: Jerald and Sandra Tanner,

head; the critics argue that it should be a jackal's head. (Joseph Smith Papyrus I presently is missing the figure's head.) This particular question—one on which Ashment has lavished his best work ever<sup>305</sup>—is of absolutely no significance. To see why, consider the following:

(1) Assume for the sake of argument that the head on Facsimile 1 Figure 3 is correct. What are the implications of the figure being a bald man? Shaving was a common feature of initiation into the priesthood from the Old Kingdom through the Roman period.<sup>306</sup> Since "Complete shaving of the head was another

*Mormonism: Shadow or Reality* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1987), 349–51; Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Major Problems of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 225); Harris, *Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham*, 33.

<sup>305</sup> Ashment, "The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham," 34–36.

<sup>306</sup> Peter Kaplony, "Barbier," in *LÄ* 1:617–19; Wolfgang Helck, "Priester," in *LÄ* 4:1091; Hans Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1952), 389; Roth, *Egyptian Phyles in the Old Kingdom*, 66; Klaus Finneiser, "Figurengruppe des Ptahmai," in *Ägyptisches Museum/Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, ed. Karl-Heinz Priese (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1991), 150–51; Kurt Sethe, "Die Sprüche für das Kennen der heiligen Orte. (Totb. Kap. 107–109, 111–116)," *ZÄS* 57 (1922): 24; *P. Boulaq XIII*, fragment IX.5, in Fayza Haikal, "Papyrus Boulaq XIII," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 83 (1983): 225, 242 and pl. XLVII; Robins, *Women in Egypt*, 146; Karl-Heinz Priese, "Standfigur des Priesters Hori," in Priese, ed., *Ägyptisches Museum*, 174–75; Herodotus, *Historiae* II, 37, 2–4; Philippe Derchain, *Le Papyrus Salt 825 (B.M. 10051), rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte*, 2 vols. (Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 1965), 1:73–75; J. Gwyn Griffiths, *The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI)* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 192–93; Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 4; Edwyn Bevan, *A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty* (London: Methuen, 1927), 80; Klaus Finneiser, "Kopf eines Priesters," in Priese, ed., *Ägyptisches Museum*, 191–93; M. Valerius Martialis, *Epigrams* XII, 29; D. Iunius Iuvenalis, *Satura* VI, 532–34; Apuleis, *Metamorphoses* XI, 10; Anonymus, *Carmen in Paganos* 98–99. Note that the bald figure of Sobek-hotep (YPM 2853) is a *hry sst3* priest, in Gerry D. Scott, *Ancient Egyptian Art at Yale* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1986), 126–27. One of the most striking images is on *P. Louvre III 93* where Neferwebenef is shown before his initiation entering into the shrine with hair and leaving the shrine after the initiation bald; Suzanne Ratić, *Le Papyrus de Neferwebenef (Louvre III 93)* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1968), pl. XVII; on the initiation, see Reinhold Merkelbach, "Ein ägyptischer Priestereid," *ZPE* 2 (1968): 7–30; Reinhold Merkelbach, "Ein griechisch-ägyptischer Priestereid und das Toten-

mark of the male Isiac votary and priest"<sup>307</sup> the bald figure would then be a priest.

(2) Assume on the other hand that the head on Facsimile 1 Figure 3 is that of a jackal, as was first suggested by Theodule Devéria.<sup>308</sup> We have representations of priests wearing masks,<sup>309</sup> one example of an actual mask,<sup>310</sup> literary accounts from non-Egyptians about Egyptian priests wearing masks,<sup>311</sup> and even a hitherto-unrecognized Egyptian account of when a priest would wear a mask. In the midst of the embalmment ritual, a new section is introduced with the following passage: "Afterwards, Anubis, the *stolites* priest (*hry sšt*)<sup>312</sup> wearing<sup>313</sup> the head of this god, sits

buch," in *Religions en Égypte hellénistique et romaine* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), 69–74; Reinhold Merkelbach, *Die Unschuldserklärungen und Berichten im ägyptischen Totenbuch, in der römischen Elegie und im antiken Rome* (Gießen: Universitätsbibliothek Gießen, 1987), 5–33; Jan Assman, "Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt," in *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, 135–36, 150–52; Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 150 n. 678.

<sup>307</sup> Griffiths, *Isis-Book*, 192.

<sup>308</sup> Devéria, "Fragments de manuscrits funéraires égyptiens," 1:196.

<sup>309</sup> Auguste E. Mariette, *Dendérah*, 4 vols. (1870–74; reprint Hildesheim: Olms, 1981), 4:pl. 31; Brunner-Traut, "Aspektive," 477, 483, Tafel II, Abb. 9; Barbara A. Porter, "North and West Walls of Burial Chamber of Sobek-mose," in D'Auria, Lacovara, and Rochrig, *Mummies and Magic*, 146; Robert S. Bianchi, *Museums of Egypt* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1980), 134–35.

<sup>310</sup> Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Inv. Nr. 1585, now in Hildesheim. This painted clay mask dates between the sixth and the fourth century B.C.; its provenance is unknown. For bibliography, see Bettina Schmitz, "Anubis-Maske für einen Totenpriester," in *Suche nach Unsterblichkeit: Totenkult und Jenseitsglaube im alten Ägypten*, ed. Arne Eggebrecht (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1990), 34–35; Peter Pamminger, "Anubis-Maske," in *Ägyptens Aufstieg zur Weltmacht*, ed. Arne Eggebrecht (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1987), 312–13; Hans Kayser, *Das Pelizaeus-Museum in Hildesheim* (Hamburg: de Gruyter, 1966), 70.

<sup>311</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* XI, 11; Griffiths, *Isis-Book*, 198, 217–19.

<sup>312</sup> On *hry-sšt* as a *stolites* priest, see Jean-Claude Goyon, *Rituels funéraires de l'ancienne Égypte* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1972), 26 n. 1; see also Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 231–32. It has been argued that in the Late (Libyan through Roman) Period, the *hry-sšt* was the equivalent of the *hry-ḥbt*; see Philippe Derchain, "Miettes (suite)," *Revue d'Égyptologie* 30 (1978): 59–61; the passage cited here is evidence to the contrary. This title appears on Joseph Smith Papyrus I as one of the offices of Hor's father, *Wsir-wr* (Osoeris), and was completely misunderstood in Dee Jay Nelson,

down and no lector-priest shall approach him to bind the *stolites* with any work."<sup>314</sup> Thus this text settles any questions about whether masks were actually used.<sup>315</sup> It furthermore identifies the individual wearing the mask as a priest.

Thus, however the restoration is made, the individual shown in Facsimile 1 Figure 3 is a priest, and the entire question of which head should be on the figure is moot so far as identifying the figure is concerned. The entire debate has been a waste of ink. It is ironic that the best work Ashment has ever produced, Egyptological or otherwise, has been spent on a point that makes no difference in the end. The question is not "whether or not Joseph Smith's reconstruction of the standing figure in his lion-couch vignette is accurate" (p. 13) but whether or not the figure is identified correctly as a priest. It is.

*The Joseph Smith Papyri* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, 1968), 24–25, 44; as also by the Tanners in *Case against Mormonism*, 3:34.

<sup>313</sup> For the use of *hr* as "wearing, carrying," see *Wb* 3:387.3; Elmar Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 2 vols. (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1955/64), 2:395, §770b; Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 128, §166.2; Jaroslav Cerny and Sarah I. Groll, *A Late Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1984), 102–3; Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Demotische Grammatik* (Heidelberg: Winters, 1925), 133–34, §294. Mosher, "Theban and Memphite Book of the Dead Traditions in the Late Period," 168, renders this in the description of the vignettes in Book of the Dead 163 as "possessing."

<sup>314</sup> *ir hr-s3 nn hms pw ir.n Inp hry-sst3 hr tp n ntr pn iw nn tkny hry-h3bt nbt r=f r 3qy hry-s3t3 k3wt nbt im=f P. Boulaq III 4/7–8* in Serge Sauneron, *Rituel de l'Embaumement* (Cairo: Imprimerie Nationale, 1952), 11. Though the text has been understood differently by others, it has generally been acknowledged that Anubis represents a "Priester im Kostüm des Anubis;" so Günther Roeder, *Urkunden zur Religion des alten Ägypten* (Jena: Diederichs, 1915), 300. "Le maître des cérémonies est Anubis, supérieur des mystères, c'est-à-dire le prêtre jouant le rôle d'Anubis;" thus Goyon, *Rituels funéraires de l'ancienne Égypte*, 26.

<sup>315</sup> Such questions are voiced by Schmitz, "Anubis-Maske für einen Totenpriester," 34. The use of masks by Egyptian priests has been generally accepted by Egyptologists: Siegfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, trans. Ann E. Kemp (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973), 7; Pamminger, "Anubis-Maske," 312; Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 249 n. 1142; Porter, "North and West Walls of Burial Chamber of Sobek-mose," 146.

## Conclusions

It would be very helpful in the future if those who write about “magic” and the “magical papyri” would get two fundamental issues clear in their minds: (1) Just what do we mean when we talk about “magic”? Would the people to whom we apply this label think that it fit? Would it make any sense to them? Is this an accepted usage of this term? What unexpected phenomena might be included under this term? What advantage, other than polemical, do we gain by using the term? (2) What are the “magical papyri”? What were they used for? What was their context? I would hope this review essay might go some way toward clarifying the former issue and settling the latter. What then is the relevance of this material to the book of Abraham?

The evidence from the Anastasi ritual archive does not settle the question of whether the book of Abraham is authentic. It has never been argued otherwise (except as a straw man by Ashment and the Tanners). Since “a proper historical question must be *operational*—which is merely to say that it must be resolvable in empirical terms,”<sup>316</sup> and since the veracity of certain aspects of the book of Abraham is not resolvable in empirical terms—asking whether the book of Abraham is true is not a question completely open to empirical historical inquiry. My question has been what the Egyptians of the Greco-Roman period (the broad historical period from whence the Joseph Smith Papyri came) knew about Abraham. It turns out that at least some knew a fair amount, and those that did know something seem to have had a favorable opinion of him. This merely indicates that the authenticity of the book of Abraham is possible, which is much different from declaring the book of Abraham authentic. The evidence simply leaves the question open (I suspect a bit too open for Ashment and the Tanners). Ashment and the Tanners err in thinking that any falsification of an anti-Mormon theory is necessarily apologetics or an attempt to prove that the book of Abraham (or the Book of Mormon for that matter) is true. In his booklet, Ashment has conjured up his favorite phantom—the theory that any Mormon scholar with whom he disagrees must be an apolo-

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<sup>316</sup> Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies*, 38.

gist<sup>317</sup>—and summoned it to exorcise the name of Abraham from Egyptian texts. This is sleight of hand. Ashment and the Tanners have only been chasing chimeras, and though they pursue them with all the pseudoscientific expertise of the Ghostbusters, the results are theatrical rather than substantive since they have been pursuing shadow rather than reality. This review essay will hardly be the last word on the subject, but if any advance in knowledge in this area is going to be made, it will not come from indefensible theories and works like those Ashment has produced.

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<sup>317</sup> For discussions with references, see Robinson, review of Vogel, *The Word of God*, 316; Daniel C. Peterson, "Questions to Legal Answers," *RBBM* 4 (1992): xxxi; Gee, "La Trahison des Clercs," 114–19; Hamblin, "Apologist for the Critics," 438–46.