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Preserving the Joseph Smith Papyri Fragments: What Can We Learn from the Paper on Which the Papyri Were Mounted?

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Title Preserving the Joseph Smith Papyri Fragments: What Can We Learn from the Paper on Which the Papyri Were Mounted?

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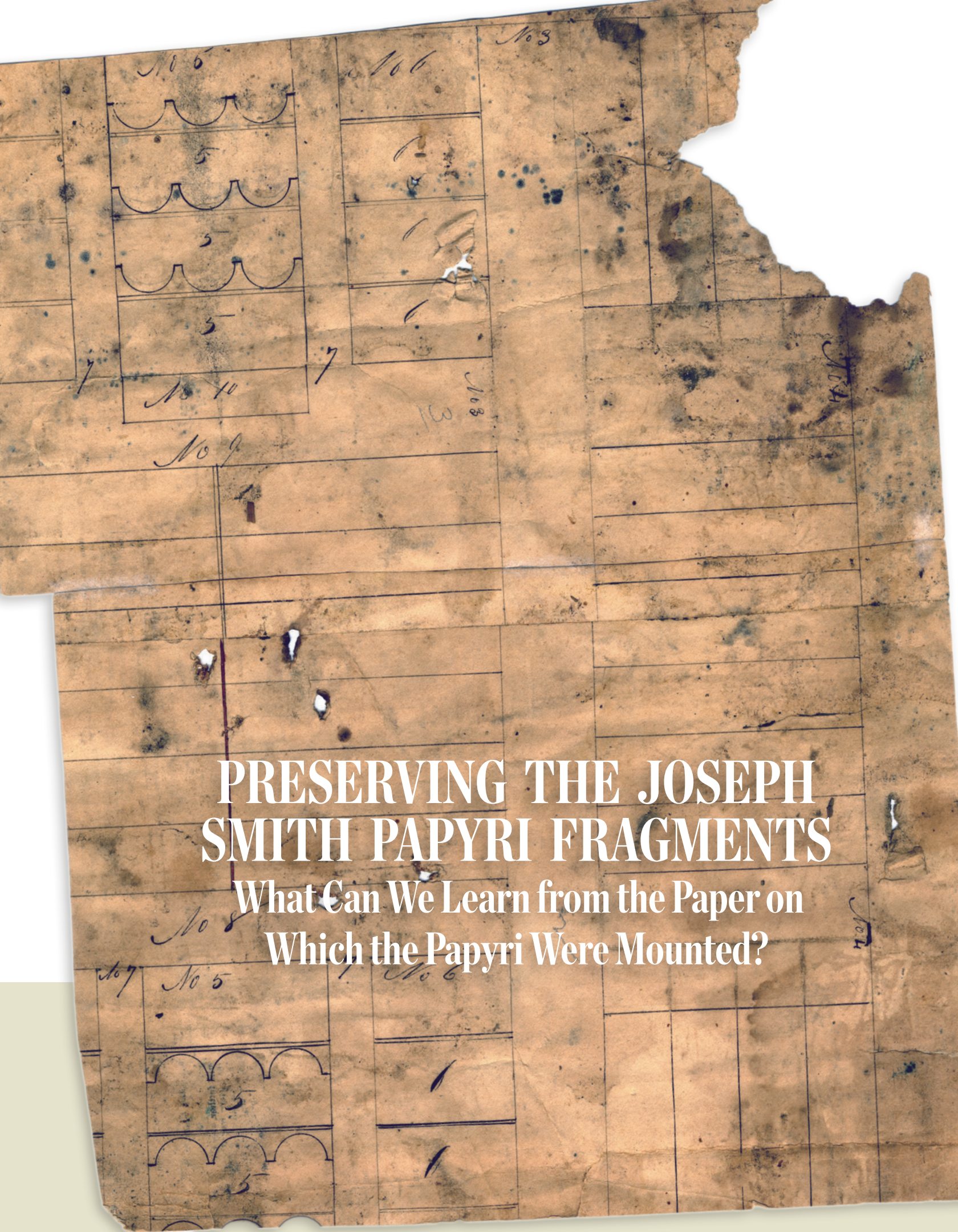
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Abstract This article discusses possible explanations regarding the procedures Joseph Smith and his associates used in mounting the Joseph Smith Papyri fragments and their reasons for doing so. The backing materials, some of which contain drawings of a temple plan and plat sketches of northeastern Ohio townships, provide a valuable historical artifact that helps historians answer questions associated with the papyri. The dimensions, gluing techniques, and cutting patterns of the backing paper and papyri also help explain the mounting process, as does an examination of the handwriting on the backing paper. Careful analysis suggests that a portion of the backing material came from several sheets of paper glued together to make a large sheet on which plans for a temple were drawn. Historical evidence suggests that in late 1837 or early 1838, pieces of papyri were glued to this and other papers and cut into smaller pieces, some of which were put under glass to preserve the papyrus fragments from further deterioration.

PRESERVING THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPYRI FRAGMENTS

What Can We Learn from the Paper on Which the Papyri Were Mounted?



Much research has been conducted regarding the papyri once owned by Joseph Smith, especially the fragments that still exist today.¹ One aspect of this research that has not received very much attention is the paper on which the extant papyri were glued or mounted.² Those papers are interesting in and of themselves since these materials also cast light on the attempt made by Joseph Smith and his associates to preserve the papyrus fragments. In this article we will examine the backing material of the papyrus fragments and discuss some historical connections that stem from analyzing the backing as well as when and why it was used.

In 1967, the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art transferred eleven papyrus fragments once owned by Joseph Smith to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.³ These fragments had originally been glued to paper, and some were framed under glass. The backing paper used for each of the papyrus fragments is thicker than normal writing paper and served as good mounting material. In 1856, Abel Combs purchased the Egyptian antiquities, including the framed fragments, from Emma Smith and her second husband, Lewis Bidamon. Sometime later, Combs gave the papyrus fragments to his housekeeper, Charlotte Weaver, whose descendants sold them to the Metropolitan Museum in 1947. About twenty years after the museum acquired the papyri, arrangements were made to transfer ownership to the LDS Church.⁴ The collection was named the Joseph Smith Papyri, and each fragment was numbered with Roman numerals. The abbreviations for these fragments are JSP I, JSP II, . . . JSP XI. While we will use this established numbering system to designate which papyrus fragment we are

analyzing, for the purposes of this article we will discuss them in the order of how they seem to have been grouped together on the backing papers.⁵

JSP I

The backing paper used on JSP I is largely blank. The edges were cut quite cleanly, although one side wanders a little and the others have straight portions interrupted only by an occasional small snag. These snags suggest that after the papyrus was mounted, the papyrus and its backing paper were cut together with scissors. The person doing the cutting does not appear to have been attempting a careful, straight cut. A note regarding the method used for cutting the papyrus and backing paper is in order. Although it is often difficult to tell what method was used for cutting, we will note the method that seems most likely for each fragment, whether with scissors or with a straight edge and a blade. However, it is quite possible that they were always cut using the same method, in which case it appears that cutting with scissors was the method.

When JSP I is viewed from the papyrus side, the top is 19 cm at its widest point, while the bottom is 18.3 cm. The left side is 12.1 cm, and the right side is 11.6 cm. The backing paper of JSP I, XI, and III contains schematic drawings of the interior of a temple, including pews and pulpits. The backing of JSP I displays what appears to be two partial squares, one inside the other. The paper was cut in the middle of these squares. Inside the small square, some writing was also cut in half.⁶ The remains of the abbreviation “No” and the numeral “1” are visible. An examination of the drawing on the backing of JSP I and of the configuration on the backing of JSP XI (discussed

Joseph Smith Papyrus IIIa © By Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

FROM THE EDITOR:

It appears that some of the papyri that came into the possession of Joseph Smith and that are associated, in debatable degrees, with the Book of Abraham were cut and pasted onto repurposed nineteenth-century paper. Though not their main concern, Kerry Muhlestein, an Egyptologist, and Alex Baugh, an LDS historian, have used the nineteenth-century paper backing of the papyri to reconstruct the original relationship of the papyrus pieces, thus confirming previous suggestions.

below) indicates that the two fragments were once part of the same original backing document that contained a schematic floor plan of a temple. This inspection also leads to the conclusion that JSP I and JSP XI were originally mounted together, an inference supported by the fact that the papyrus text on these two fragments is contiguous. Furthermore, on the papyrus side of JSP I, the left sides of the paper and papyrus match perfectly with the right side of JSP XI. The angle of the cut, the papyrus text, and the drawings on both the front and back of the backing paper all correspond perfectly. Though largely covered by JSP I, the front side of the backing paper features another rendition of the plan that is also on the back side of the backing paper of JSP I and XI, with parts of several pews visible. This drawing continues for seven more full rows plus another partial row on the front side of the backing paper of JSP XI. On the back side of the backing paper of JSP I and XI, the squares align and face rows of pews. The “No 1” is completed in the smaller square. The continuity of both the papyrus and the drawings on the paper indicates that the papyrus was originally glued to the paper in one piece and later cut.

JSP XI

The left side and bottom of JSP XI have fairly clean cuts, while the top and right side are cut at angles and wander. It is difficult to tell what cutting method was used, although it seems most likely it was cut with a straight edge (such as a ruler); however, the person doing the cutting was not able to prevent the straight edge from moving as the cut was made.⁷ As previously noted, both the papyrus and the backing paper of JSP XI are contiguous with JSP I, which means that the temple plan depicted on the backing of JSP I continues on the backing of JSP XI. Several aisles and pews are depicted on this part of the plan, one section of which is labeled with a “No 4” written in an aisle space. This labeling is similar to JSP III, which is discussed below. To one side of the aisle space, two full pews are depicted. When the paper was cut, it went through a third pew, now only partially portrayed. On the other side of the aisle, four full corner pews are situated perpendicular to the other pews.

On the lower side of these pews, the paper is cut at an angle, but the partial remains of “No 1” are still visible. As was mentioned previously, the other

half of this number is present on the backing of JSP I, indicating that JSP I and JSP XI were originally mounted together as part of the same document. That said, the similarities of the temple drawings (including the dimensions of the pews), the texture of the paper, and the blotching on JSP I and JSP XI also correspond with that of JSP III, confirming that all three were part of the same document before it was cut. A careful reconstruction makes it possible to view the full original temple drawing that served as the backing paper for JSP I, XI, and III. Erasures of pew lines that span across the backing of JSP XI and III further confirm that they were once the same sheet.⁸ The papyrus fragments were apparently glued to this large sheet and then cut.

Significantly, drawings of pews also appear on the upper portion of the papyrus side of JSP XI’s backing paper. The beginnings of eight rows of pews and perhaps part of a ninth are visible. This side also exhibits more signs of damage after the papyrus was mounted. Moreover, both short edges of the paper show that the papyrus was cut after mounting because the cut wanders at an angle that includes the paper and the papyrus together. JSP I was on one side of this fragment. We do not know what happened to the portion of papyrus that was cut from the other side. As noted, JSP I and JSP XI were originally on one piece of paper and then were separated. The reason for creating the smaller pieces may have been to fit them into framed glass for additional protection. The plan drawn on the front, or papyrus side of the backing paper, is so close to the top that it seems unlikely the draftsman would have drawn it that close to the original edge. This suggests that the paper was cut after the drawing was made,⁹ an idea strengthened by the fact that the cut along this edge wanders. The backing paper is 17.1 cm at the top, 16.3 cm at the bottom, and 12.2 cm on both sides.

JSP III

The drawings on the backing of this paper are part of the same temple plan that is on the back of JSP I and XI. This papyrus fragment was cut on all sides, indicating that a larger piece of papyrus was glued to the paper and then later cut. The backing paper was originally two pieces of paper spliced together by abutting the two papers and then gluing a strip of paper across them. The top of the backing paper with the temple plan is 25.9 cm by 14.4 cm.

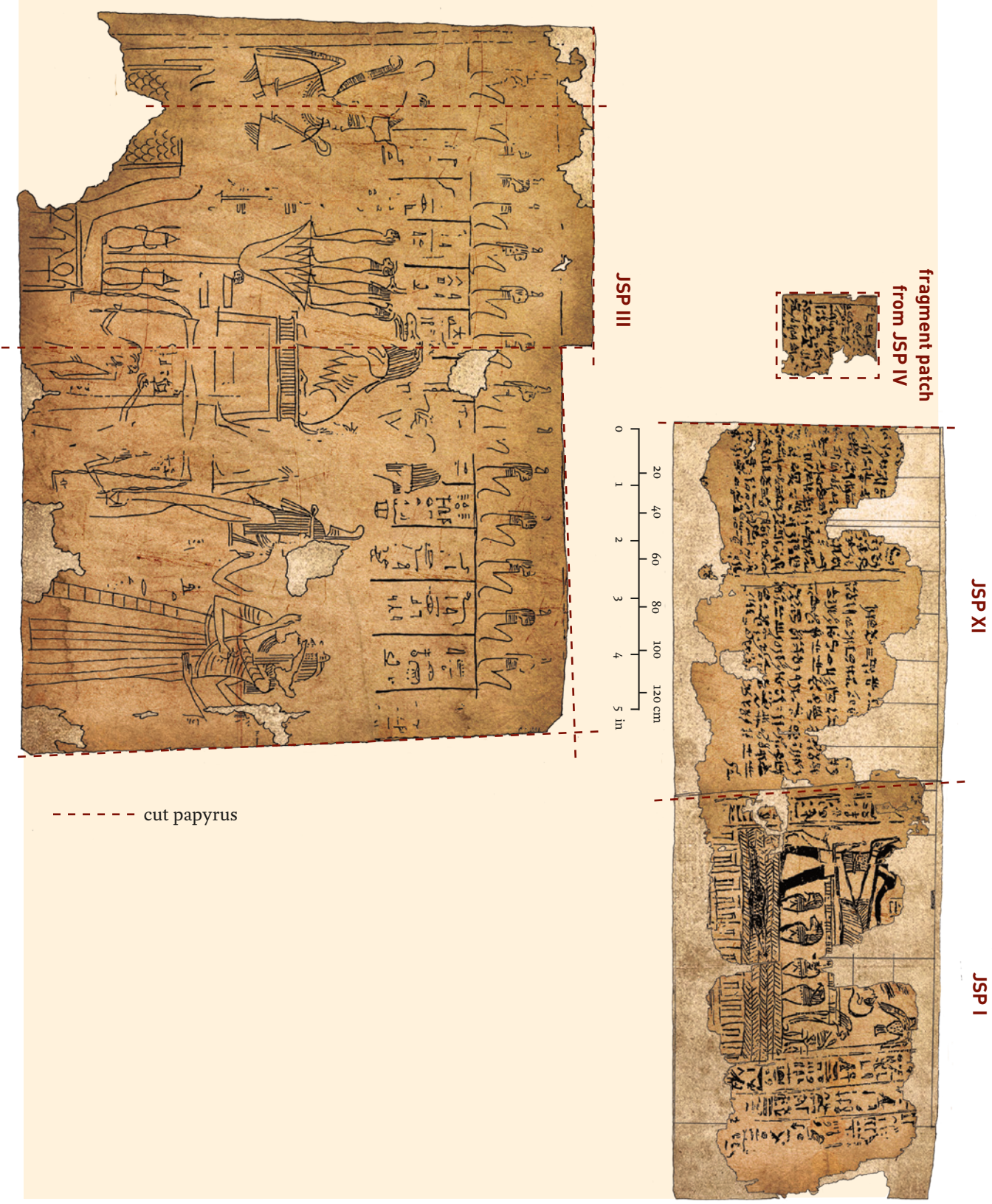
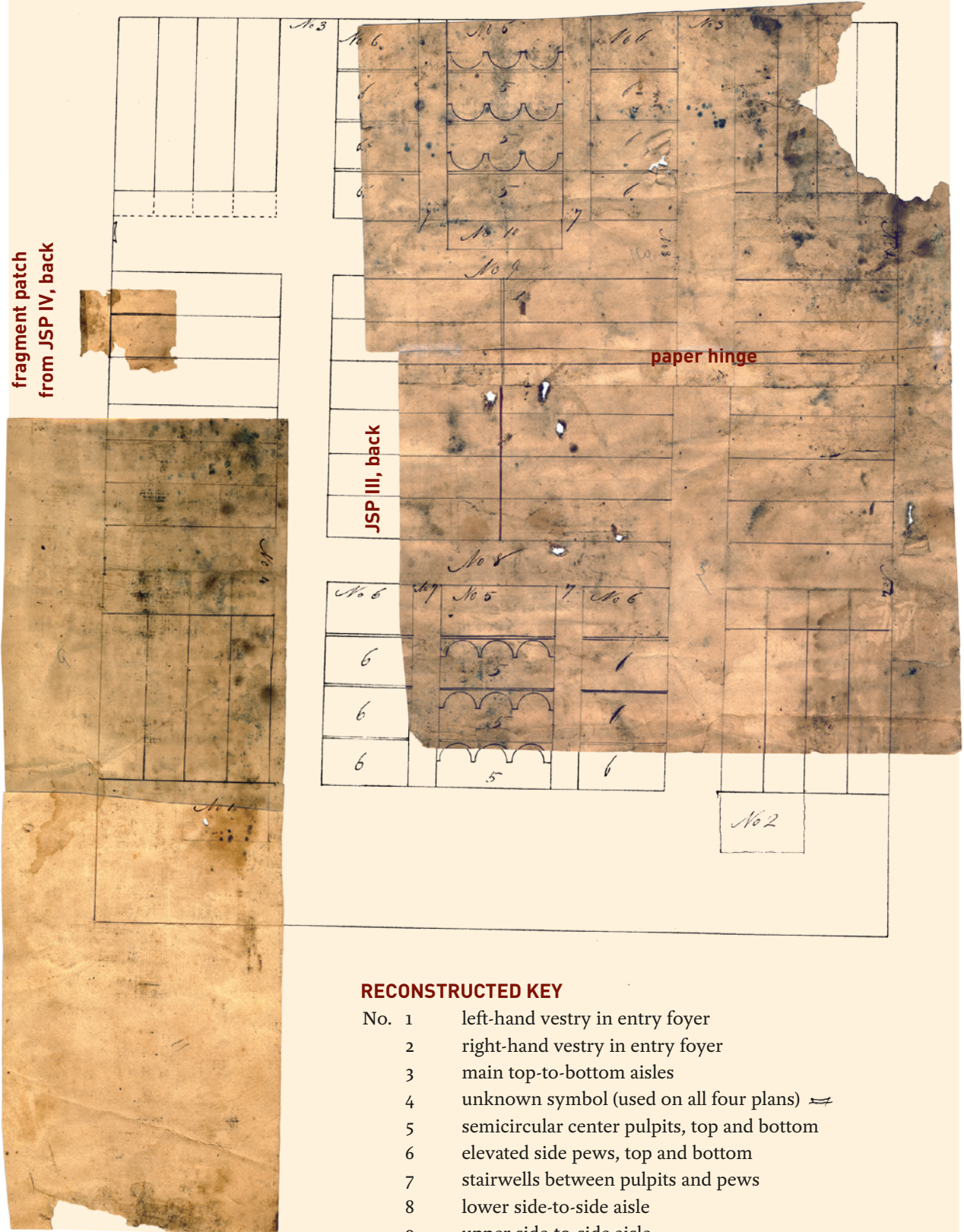


Figure 1a. Original placement of Joseph Smith Papyri I, XI, and III on the single paper used for the backing which appears on the next page. Joseph Smith Papyri © By Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Redrawn by Michael Lyon.

JSP XI, back

JSP I, back

fragment patch
from JSP IV, back



RECONSTRUCTED KEY

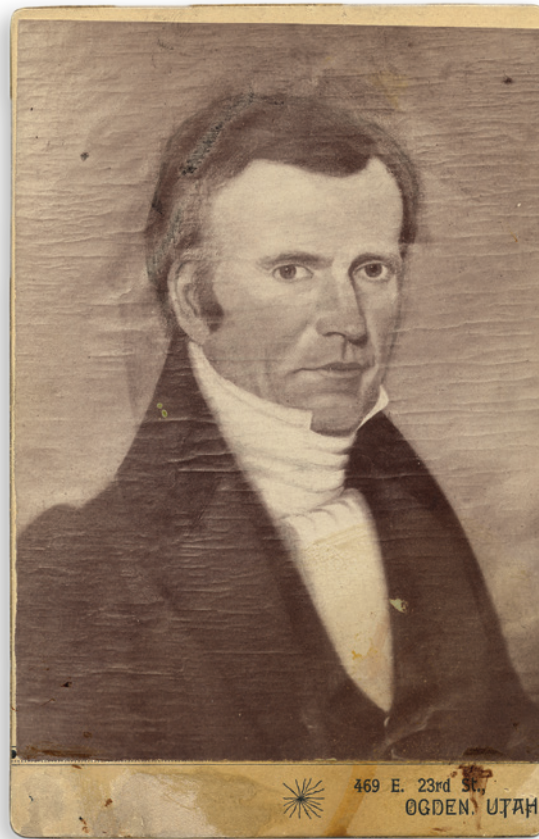
- No. 1 left-hand vestry in entry foyer
- 2 right-hand vestry in entry foyer
- 3 main top-to-bottom aisles
- 4 unknown symbol (used on all four plans)
- 5 semicircular center pulpits, top and bottom
- 6 elevated side pews, top and bottom
- 7 stairwells between pulpits and pews
- 8 lower side-to-side aisle
- 9 upper side-to-side aisle
- 10 swing table for sacrament (as in the two later plans)

Figure 1b. Backing paper repurposed from the reconstruction of a temple floor plan by Frederick G. Williams. Joseph Smith Papyri Ia, XIa, and IIIa © By Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Missing portions of plan reconstructed by Michael Lyon.

The paper on the bottom is 24.5 cm by 17.5 cm, making it 1.4 cm narrower than the paper above it. The strip of paper that glues the two sheets together is 24.4 cm long, 1.4 cm wide at the top, and 1.6 cm at the bottom. The cut wanders slightly along both of the long edges, exhibiting both straight and jagged cuts that suggest scissors were used, although with more care than with JSP I.¹⁰ The back of these sheets contains a preliminary temple floor plan. In the process of splicing the two pieces of paper, the lines of the temple plan were slightly misaligned at the joint. It seems the papers were originally spliced together to make sheets large enough for the plan and then were later cut into smaller pieces after the papyrus was attached. The papyrus has a crack at the natural bend of the joint, indicating that it was handled substantially after being attached. One possible explanation for this crack is that this fragment was rolled in modern times and smashed flat, resulting in breaks about every 3.8 cm. The mounting paper was split, rejoined, and recut along one of the papyrus breaks. Then the top of the right-hand piece was trimmed.¹¹

A portion of the backing paper has been torn off in one corner; thus we are missing part of the temple schemata. Moreover, the tear of the paper also creates a missing portion of the papyrus glued to it, suggesting that the papyrus had been whole when it was first mounted. The paper has been cut so that it ends in the middle of the plan. The edges of the paper are cleanly cut for the most part, although two of them wander a little, and one ends at an angle, indicating that these portions had been cut freehand. A few holes have been worn in the paper.

The temple plan depicted on the JSP III backing paper is divided into sections, each with its own number. For example, the most detailed portion of the drawings shows facing pulpits for the quorum presidencies (both Aaronic and Melchizedek, based on parallels) that are labeled “No 5.” A “swing” (drop-leaf) sacrament table attached to the top end of the lowest pulpit is labeled “No 10.” The stairwells for the pulpits are marked with a “7,” with slightly smaller adjoining pews (obviously elevated) labeled “No 6.” An aisle running the entire length of the room is labeled “No 3,” while the perpendicular aisles located in front of the tiered pulpits are marked respectively “No 8” and “No 9.”

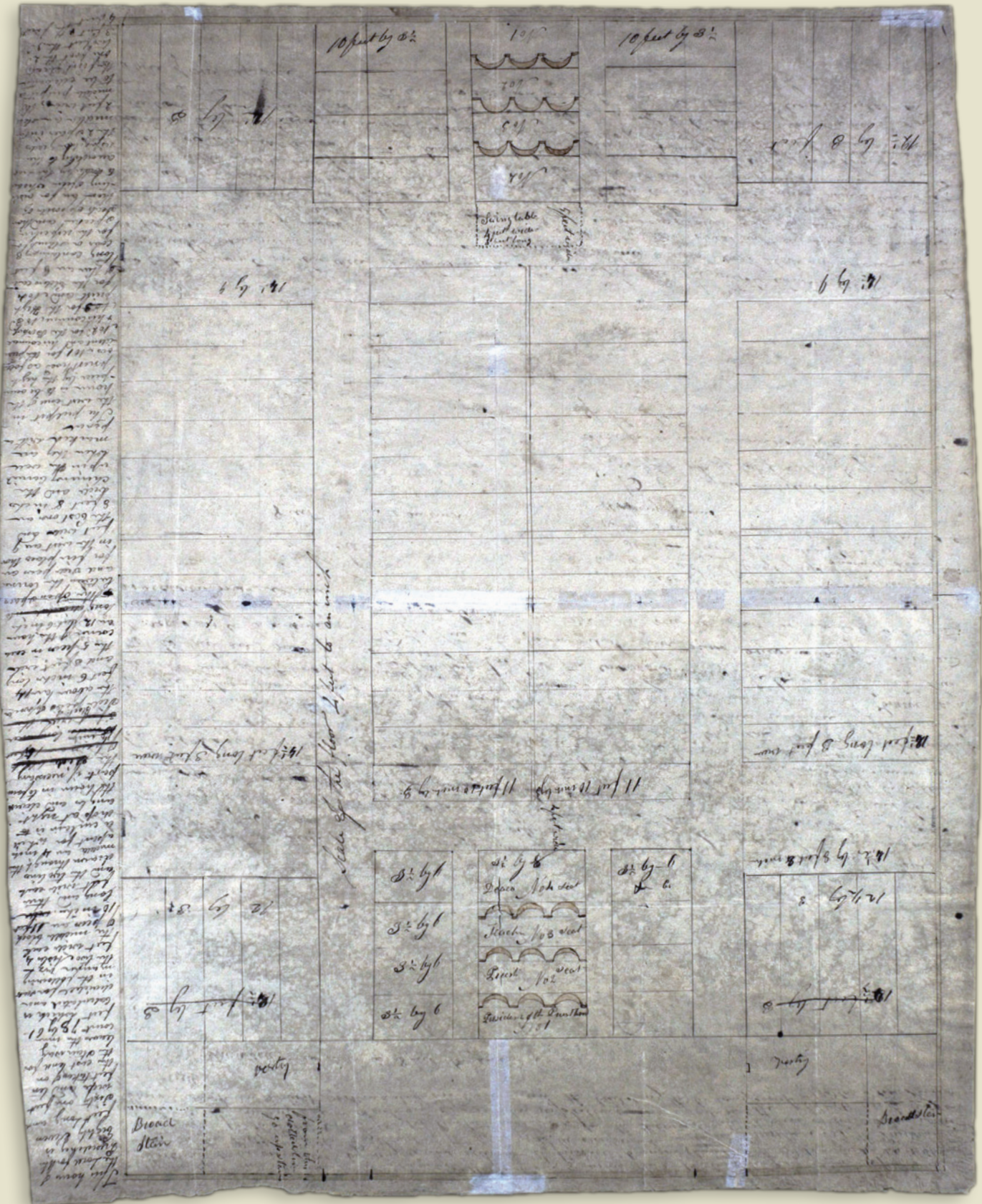


Frederick G. Williams (1787–1842). Courtesy Church History Library.

JSP III also shows two sets of four rows of pews in the corner sections perpendicular to and facing each of the pulpits of the priesthood. The aisles adjacent to these sections are labeled “No 4.” This material corresponds with the material on the back of JSP XI, which has a picture of this same area that is also labeled “No 4” and clearly corresponds to the area on JSP III since it was cut from the same backing paper. An unknown symbol appears in the center of each side aisle.

Identifying the Drawing on the Back Side of JSP I, III, and XI

The temple floor plan on the backing material comprising JSP I, III, and XI corresponds closely with a detailed set of interior drawings by Frederick G. Williams of the temple planned for Independence, Missouri, that was sent to church leaders in Missouri on 25 June 1833.¹² A close examination suggests that the drawing on the backing material may possibly have been a preliminary plan or perhaps a copy from which the June plan was made. A second set of Independence Temple plans drawn up and signed by Williams was sent to Missouri in early August



Frederick G. Williams. "Plan of the House of the Lord" for the Independence temple, 25 June 1833; note the text on the far left in Oliver Cowdery's hand. These images are rotated 180° to match the orientation of the earlier plan on p. 70, as noted by the location of the swing table for the sacrament below the pulpits at the top. MS 2568 FD. 1. Courtesy Church History Library.

1833. They called for an expansion of the building, although the interior design remained much the same.¹³ Since no drawings or plans of the Kirtland Temple are known to exist, we conclude that the temple plan that appears on the backing material of JSP I, III, and XI consists of a preliminary or additional drawing of the Independence Temple made by Frederick G. Williams. However, the plans may have served an additional purpose in connection with the Kirtland Temple. Elwin C. Robison, an architectural historian, surmised: "It is entirely possible the Kirtland Temple was built using only some written notes and perhaps a sketch taken from the Independence drawings, supplemented by verbal instructions."¹⁴ If this were the case, the temple plan on the backing of JSP I, III, and XI may have served as a blueprint in the construction of the Kirtland Temple. Once the building neared completion or was finished, the temple plan was no longer needed and the paper was "repurposed" as mounting paper for the Egyptian papyrus.

It should also be remembered that the front side of the backing of JSP I and JSP XI also contained a plan for the temple. Because JSP III also came from this same sheet of paper, it follows that the front of JSP III also contained a drawing of a temple plan that is no longer visible because the papyrus fragment covers the entirety of that side of the paper. We must further remember that JSP III originally consisted of two sheets of paper joined together by a small strip of paper with glue. This method must have been what created the large sheet of paper that contained the drawings on both sides of JSP I, III, and XI. It is also reasonable to suppose that when a draftsman first started to draw on this large, spliced sheet, he would have preferred to draw on the side that did not have the strip of splicing paper glued to it since it would be easier to draw in the spliced gutter of the joint than on the spliced bump of the joint. This suggests that the temple plan on the same side of the backing paper as the papyrus fragments predates the drawing on the back side of the backing paper.¹⁵

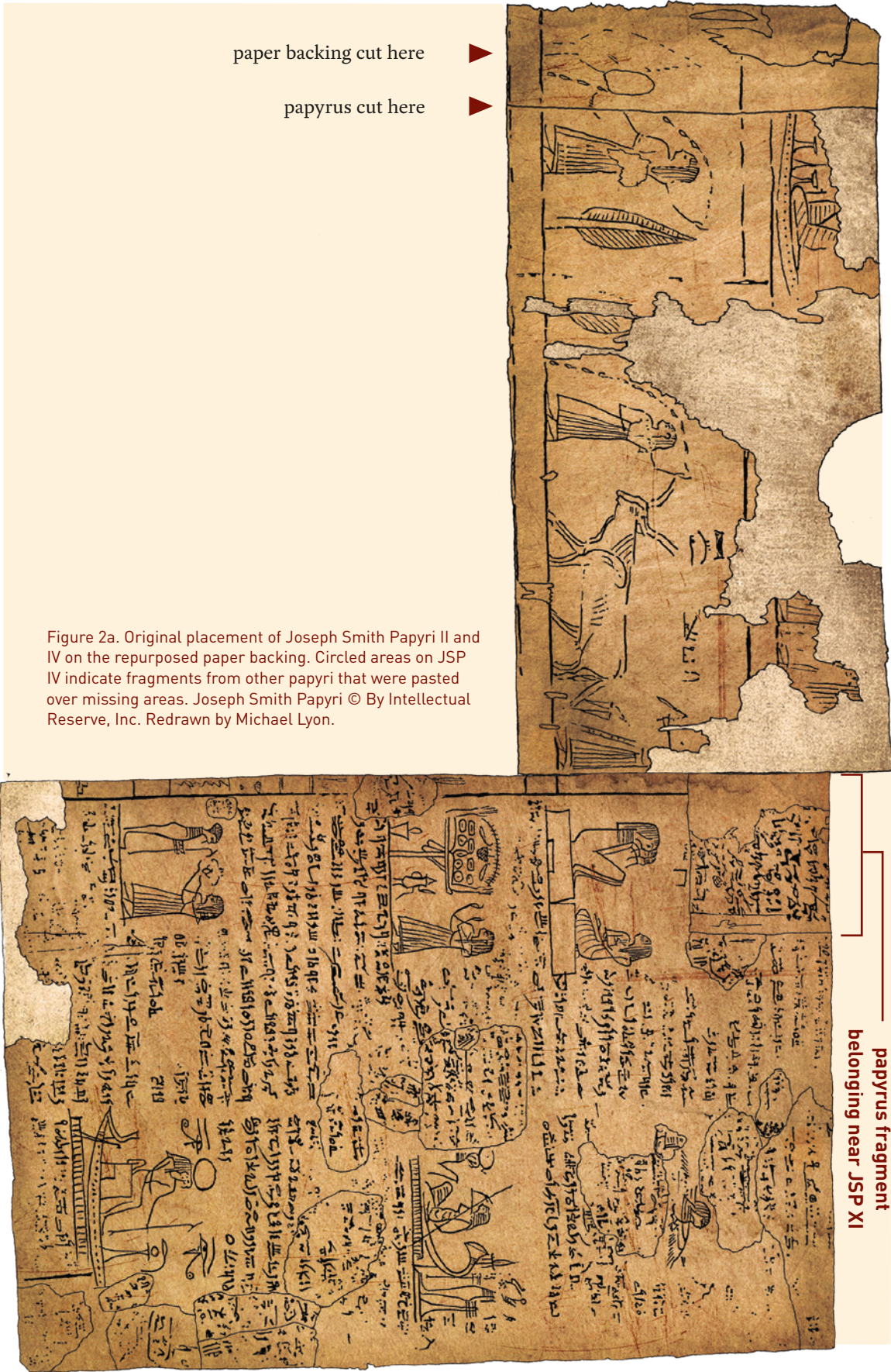
JSP II

The top, left-hand corner (when viewed from the papyrus side) of JSP II has been torn off, which likely happened some time after the papyrus was mounted. Measuring the papyrus and backing paper as if this tear had not taken place, JSP II measures

26.4 cm on the top and bottom and 12.9 cm on both sides. Similar to JSP III, JSP II was cut on all its sides, indicating that it was glued to the paper before it was cut.¹⁶ A township grid of eighty-two northeastern Ohio townships (including two partial townships) has been drawn on the back side of the mounting paper. Above the township grid is a wide, gray-colored swath, probably made using a thin, translucent wash, representing the Lake Erie shoreline. The grid system is a typical style for drawing townships at that time. In the region of Ohio known as Connecticut's Western Reserve, townships measured five-by-five square miles, although the townships bordering the Lake Erie shoreline are irregular and slightly larger or smaller depending on the geographic curvature of the lake.¹⁷ As indicated, a total of eighty-two townships are represented on the grid, with two townships (Troy and Ridgeville) only partially depicted because of cutting (see JSP IV backing). Names of seventy-five of the eighty-two townships as they were known or identified in the 1820s and 1830s are inscribed in ink in each respective township. The entire township grid includes all of present-day Ashtabula, Lake, and Geauga Counties, and portions of Trumbull, Cuyahoga, and Lorain Counties. The writing identifying the townships (as they then existed) is clearly legible and is in slanting manuscript (noncursive) form. The townships are represented in a total of fifteen complete vertical columns, a partial sixteenth column, and nine horizontal rows.¹⁸

A small part of this backing paper is missing at the center of the top, but it appears that nothing was drawn or written on that portion of the paper since no drawings appear on either side of the small tear. The edges of this paper were cleanly cut for the most part, although one of the clean cuts has since deteriorated. On two edges the cut wanders just a little, suggesting that it was possibly cut freehand with scissors and that it is not the original size of the paper. This is confirmed by the facts that only partial names of two townships (Troy and Ridgeville) are preserved on the left side of the grid system and that the wandering portion of the cut goes through the middle of the grid system.

Below the ninth row of the grid are additional vertical column lines indicating that the grid continued. An examination of the backing material of JSP II and JSP IV indicates that they were joined together



paper backing cut here

papyrus cut here

JSP II

JSP IV

papyrus fragment
belonging near JSP XI

Figure 2a. Original placement of Joseph Smith Papyri II and IV on the repurposed paper backing. Circled areas on JSP IV indicate fragments from other papyri that were pasted over missing areas. Joseph Smith Papyri © By Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Redrawn by Michael Lyon.

before being cut. The backing of JSP IV clearly indicates that the grid originally included five additional township rows.

The grid drawing also includes three meandering lines, two of which represent sections of the Cuyahoga River and several of its tributaries. The river actually originates in Leroy Township (current-day Geauga County), where it flows south (illustrated on the grid map in Hampden, Clarydon [*sic*], Burton, and Welshfield Townships) through Portage County (not shown on the map), turns north, and then reemerges in Cuyahoga County (depicted in Independence, Newburgh, and Brooklyn Townships) before emptying into Lake Erie. Another, smaller river, Rocky Creek and its tributaries, is shown in Kingsville, Middlebury, and Rockport Townships.¹⁹

JSP IV

When JSP IV came into the possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1967, it was still inside a frame.²⁰ It is possible that all these fragments had been framed at one point, although we can no longer be sure.²¹ The cuts wander a bit, again giving the impression that a straight edge was used but did not stay in place during the cutting, although carelessly used scissors could also account for this look. The wandering gives the paper a slightly irregular shape, and the fact that it was cut on all sides suggests it was originally the center of a much larger piece of paper.²² The top and bottom edges measure 20.2 cm, but the left side is 29.2 cm and the right 28.7 cm.

The paper backing was at some point torn or cut on the top corners and had other papers spliced into place to make it whole by gluing paper strips to hold them in place. The top right-hand addition is squarely cut and contains a piece of papyrus that does not belong in that position.²³ The backing of that small piece contains drawings from a temple plan. Only three partial pews are visible. This piece was clearly cut from a larger drawing of the temple plan and was originally part of the same backing material as that of JSP I, III, and XI since it is in the same scale. The top left-hand addition seems to have been irregularly torn and then reattached and is blank on the back. The bottom left-hand portion of the papyrus and backing paper began to crack or tear and was then reinforced by gluing a large strip of paper to the back. The paper backing of JSP IV is badly damaged

and contains two different drawings a temple plan and the township grid. A sizable portion of the paper is blank.

A major section of the backing paper includes a township grid of all of Lorain and formerly Huron Counties (now also Erie County), and a portion of Medina and Wayne (now Ashland) Counties.²⁴ As noted in our discussion of JSP II, the grid pattern, the handwriting, and the gray, water-colored area depicting Lake Erie of the JSP II backing material correspond with the backing material on JSP IV, indicating that the two pieces were originally one document.

It is reasonable to conclude that the township grid was drafted during this time since Woodruff is likely the person who inscribed the township names.

The township grid contains eight complete vertical columns, a partial column (due to the cut), and seven horizontal rows. A total of sixty-one townships are represented on the grid. However, only fourteen of the sixty-one township names as they were known or identified in the 1820s and 1830s are inscribed in slanted manuscript (noncursive) form in the respective townships, three of which, Troy (now Avon), Ridgeville, and Holbrook (now Eaton), are only partially depicted because of cutting (see JSP II).²⁵ Three major rivers and four creeks (and their tributaries) are also represented, each of which flows into Lake Erie. Viewed from left to right they include the following: Pipe Creek, the Huron River, Old Woman Creek, an unidentified creek, the Vermilion River, Beaver Creek, and the Black River (including both west and east branches).²⁶

Identifying the Drawing on the Back Side of JSP II and IV

As noted previously, the Ohio township grids that appear on the backing material of JSP II and JSP IV correspond with each other and at one time were one document. The names written in the townships appear to be in the handwriting of Wilford Woodruff. It cannot be determined whether or not Woodruff drew the township grid, rivers, and the Lake Erie shoreline as shown on the separated maps,



Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) in the 1830s, around age 21. International Society, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.

but the written text is most likely his.²⁷ The identification of Woodruff's handwriting is significant since it provides a possible timetable for when the township grid map(s) were drawn. Woodruff came to Kirtland, Ohio, for the first time in April 1834. He remained in Kirtland only a few days before leaving with the main company of Zion's Camp to march to Missouri. At the conclusion of Zion's Camp, Woodruff remained in Clay County, where he worked for Michael Arthur, a non-Mormon, for nearly seven months. Then, beginning in January 1835, he served a twenty-two-month mission in Arkansas, Tennessee, and Kentucky before returning to Kirtland in late November 1836. Woodruff spent the next six months in Kirtland (25 November 1836 to 31 May 1837), the only period during which he spent considerable time in the area.²⁸ Given this chronology, it is reasonable to conclude that the township grid was drafted during this time since Woodruff is likely the person who inscribed the township names. It is difficult to determine why the township map was

made and why it later was no longer needed. For unknown reasons, Joseph Smith and his associates clearly considered the document more useful as backing material for the papyrus fragments. Regardless, we conclude that the final version of township map was drafted sometime between late November 1836 and late May 1837; therefore, the JSP II and JSP IV papyrus fragments could not have been mounted to Woodruff's township grid before that time.

JSP V and VI

JSP V and VI seem to have been glued to the same piece of paper, which was cut at some point and later taped together again. They were joined by what appears to be scotch tape, which did not exist in Joseph Smith's day. Thus we can conclude that it was one of the later owners who rejoined these fragments. Part of the backing paper for JSP VI was also cut at the seam, leaving a rectangular gap that is between 1.7 cm to 1.9 cm wide and 10.3 cm in length. The papyrus also shows this gap.²⁹ The lower corner of JSP V and its backing have been torn. Since the backing is torn in the same way as the papyrus, the papyrus apparently had not been torn at that place when it was mounted. Both of these fragments are fairly complete, and no drawings can be seen on the side of the paper to which they were glued. The left-hand side of the paper and the JSP VI papyrus glued to it has a series of notches cut into it. The backing paper for JSP VI is 29 cm long and 14.1 cm wide at its widest point, although with notches cut in various points on both sides, its width constantly varies. The paper on the right to which JSP V is attached is 28.6 cm long and 14.7 cm wide at its widest point.³⁰

JSP VII–X

The backing of JSP VII, not pictured here, is also completely blank,³¹ although it has a small hole in the center. The cut of three of the edges wanders, and the fourth is worn with a small tear in the corner. The cutting looks like poorly executed scissor-work, although it is so irregular it is hard to explain with any cutting method. Thus the shape of the paper is irregular. At the center, it is 15.9 cm in length and 15.4 cm in width. The fragments glued to this paper have been damaged. Under one of the missing portions of the papyrus, glue marks and small flecks of papyrus show on the backing, indicating that this portion of



Reading right to left, JSP V is on the right and JSP VI on the left. Redrawn by Michael Lyon.

the papyrus fragment was lost after it was glued to the paper backing.

The paper attached to JSP VIII is also blank;³² the papyrus has a few holes that are larger than those in JSP VII. The top edge of this paper curves, demonstrating that it was cut through the papyri at some point. The bottom edge is cleanly cut for most of its length but suddenly extends out farther on the left in an irregular shape; these rough edges suggest that it was torn rather than cut for that section. The cutting looks like it was done with scissors. The front of the mounting paper, which exhibits no signs of drawings and has broken pieces of papyrus remaining in the middle of glue marks, again indicates that more of the papyrus was present when it was first glued to the backing paper. Moreover, the cleanly cut bottom line that extends out into the torn section cuts through the papyrus, and the papyrus is on the extended torn section as well. This suggests that the papyrus was mounted to the backing paper before

it was cut and that the incision went through both paper and papyrus when it was made. At its greatest dimensions, the paper is 20.5 cm long and 12 cm wide.

The backing of JSP IX appears to be two papers attached together. A visual examination makes it appear that it was folded, but a careful tactile examination of the line demonstrates that there is indeed a splice. The backing is blank³³ and has two cleanly cut edges and another that shows signs either of wear or of being ripped. The top edge is cut with jagged notches in it. The cutting was most likely done with scissors. The front side has a few papyrus fragments attached with enough flakes left to indicate that much more was originally present on the paper. The notched cuts go through the papyrus, again indicating that the papyrus was glued to the paper before it was cut to its present shape. It is not apparent how the two sheets of paper were joined together. It is possible that glue served as the



Alex Baugh, Glenn Rowe, and Kerry Muhlestein examining the Joseph Smith Papyri, 4 April 2012. Photo by Alex Baugh.

splicing agent, although the papyrus does not extend across the two papers now, so glue would no longer serve this function. The backing paper's back and front sides, which are largely visible, are blank. There are some figures on the front side that appear to be attempted reproductions of ancient Egyptian characters and drawings.

The paper attached to JSP X seems to be one blank piece of unaltered, narrow paper. It has a tear in one edge, and one of the edges wanders in its cut. A hole has also been worn through the paper. The papyrus again shows signs of damage that probably occurred after it was glued on, and both sides of the papyrus were cut after it was mounted. No signs of drawings are visible on either side of the backing paper. The paper is generally 16.2 cm by 30.5 cm, although the cuts wander enough that these dimensions vary depending on where the measurement is taken. Either a poorly held straight edge or poorly executed scissor-cutting was employed to cut the paper.³⁴

JSP X has an interesting story that we cannot fully recover. The papyrus text is part of the same text present on JSP I and XI. However, part of the column of text that would go between JSP XI and X is missing. Additionally, JSP X seems to be mounted on a different piece of paper than the large set of drawings on which JSP I and XI were mounted. Furthermore, some of the fragments that are missing from the papyrus text show up as patches pasted

onto some of the other papyrus fragments. In other words, it appears that when JSP X was mounted, some of it was cut off, divided into smaller pieces, and then used to make other papyrus fragments look less broken. This may also have happened with some of the papyrus cut from the edge of JSP XI. Perhaps this portion of the papyrus was so broken that it was deemed unfit for framing and display and was therefore used to make other pieces more aesthetically pleasing for display purposes. Whatever the reason, the differences between the backing papers of JSP X and XI show that while the Egyptian text is almost contiguous, the fragments were not glued to the same paper and some of the missing text was cannibalized.

When Were the Papyri Mounted?

While mounting the papyri could have taken place anytime after Joseph Smith acquired them in July 1835, it seems most likely that the Prophet and his colleagues would have mounted them either while they were consistently engaged in working with them or soon thereafter. According to the Prophet's journals, the period in which they were most consistently working with the papyri was from 19 to 26 November 1835.³⁵ We have no other reference to working with the papyri again until the 1840s. However, considering the fact that the township grid that was used as backing material for JSP II and IV was produced no earlier than November 1836, and surmising that all the papyrus fragments were mounted at the same time, we suggest the mounting did not take place until after late 1836.

Having concluded that the mounting of the eleven fragments likely took place all together but no earlier than November 1836, we now turn to the latest time it could have happened. One historical account may cast further light on the timing. William S. West visited Kirtland sometime before the end of 1837. While there, he saw the papyri and recorded that "these records were torn by being taken from the roll of embalming salve which contained them."³⁶ West's statement suggests the possibility that by the end of 1837 the papyrus fragments had been deliberately cut from the long scroll, were at least in the process of being mounted, were perhaps already glued to their backing material, and were even possibly under glass by that time. These assumptions are somewhat corroborated by another account given

in December 1837 in which the writer speaks of the size of some fragments, describing them as about 8 by 12 inches.³⁷ If this made reference to the framed fragments, the mounting must have occurred at least by then. If so, we have a smaller window during which the mounting could have occurred, a period somewhere between the creation of the township maps made by Woodruff between late November 1836 and late May 1837, and the account of the fragment sizes in December 1837. Because it is unlikely that Woodruff's township maps were repurposed as backing paper as soon as he finished creating them, the mounting most likely would have happened in late 1837.

Increasing hostilities and threats of lawsuits compelled Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to leave Kirtland on 12 January 1838 and take up permanent residence in Far West, Missouri. Because of their hasty departure, many of the Prophet's important records, including the Egyptian artifacts, were left in the care of family members and close friends. Lucy Mack Smith reported it was at this time that the enemies of the church vowed to destroy the papyri, necessitating that they be moved from place to place in an effort to keep them hidden.³⁸ For a short time, the mummies and papyri were temporarily sequestered in William D. Huntington's home at New Portage, Ohio, and hidden under the bed of his seventeen-year-old daughter, Zina Diantha Huntington (later Young), with the hope that the antagonists would not likely look for them under the bed of a teenage girl.³⁹ Still later, the artifacts were moved to Edwin Woolley's home in Rochester, Ohio. Then in the spring of 1838, Edwin, his brother Samuel Woolley, and Joseph Smith Sr. made arrangements for the Egyptian artifacts to be transported to Missouri; they arrived at Far West in June or July.⁴⁰ We know that the Saints had a difficult time keeping important papers and documents safe when transporting them from Ohio to Missouri and eventually to Illinois.⁴¹ Therefore it seems unlikely that they would bring paper that was not seen as absolutely necessary. Most likely the mounting had been done (and also the papyri possibly placed under glass) by December 1837, or at the latest, in the early spring of 1838 before being packed and transported to Missouri.⁴² This is somewhat corroborated by the eyewitness accounts cited earlier that speak of fragments of papyri separately from the scrolls.

Conclusion

In summary, the backing material on JSP I, III, and XI contains a schematic temple floor plan by Frederick G. Williams. The plan is associated with similar and more detailed drawings he made in conjunction with the Independence Temple plans sent by church leaders in Kirtland to church leaders in Missouri in June and August 1833. The backing material on JSP II and IV includes a township grid of northeastern Ohio townships transcribed by Wilford Woodruff sometime between late November 1836 and late May 1837. Although in theory the papyrus fragments could have been mounted with the backing paper as early as July 1835, the backing paper itself demonstrates that it far more likely took place sometime after November 1836 but before the Egyptian artifacts were transported to Missouri in the early spring of 1838. The most likely time period seems to be late 1837 or early 1838.

Presumably, Joseph Smith and his associates felt that mounting the fragile papyrus fragments on sturdier paper and putting at least some of them under glass would help preserve them from additional wear and deterioration. The fact that the eleven mounted fragments are the only papyri known to exist from the Prophet's original collection is at least a partial attestation to that effort. ■



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NOTES

1. See, for example, Michael D. Rhodes, *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002); Rhodes, *Books of the Dead Belonging to Tshemmin and Neferirnub: A Translation and Commentary* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2010); John Gee, "Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri," *FARMS Review* 20/1 (2008): 113-37; Kerry Muhlestein, "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham," *Religious Educator* 11/1 (2010): 90-106; and Muhlestein, "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham: A Faithful, Egyptological Point of View," in *No Weapon Shall Prosper*, ed. Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 217-41.
2. Hugh Nibley, "Phase One," *Dialogue* 3/2 (1969): 101-2, gives cursory treatment, noting one thing about one of the papers. For a preliminary examination of the backing for the papyri, see T. Edgar Lyon, "The Sketches on the Papyri Backing," *Improvement Era*, May 1968, 19-23. While we acknowledge the historical contributions made by Lyon, our purpose in this study is to provide a more in-depth and detailed analysis than that given by Lyon. We also wish to acknowledge the contributions to this paper of his grandnephew, Michael P. Lyon, along with those of John Gee. As we tried to piece together and conceptualize the visual and textual elements of the papyri and their backing paper, these gentlemen sat down with us; together we were able to sort out some of the story hidden behind the various drawings, cuttings, and pastings that make up much of what we are saying in this article.
3. See H. Donl Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995). Soon after the museum transferred the papyri to the Church, Dr. Henry G. Fischer, curator of the Egyptian Collection at the Metropolitan Museum, suggested that a study should be made of the backing paper to which the papyri were mounted. See "An Interview with Dr. Fischer," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 2/4 (1967): 56-58, 64.
4. John Gee, "New Light on the Joseph Smith Papyri," *FARMS Review* 19/2 (2007): 247-50.
5. According to Doyle L. Green, "New Light on Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papyri," *Improvement Era*, February 1968, 40, "The 12 pieces of papyrus have now been numbered and labeled by Dr. Hugh Nibley."
6. Most of the backing papers of the papyri have a number lightly penciled on them. This number does not seem to be part of the original context of the backing papers but was likely added later, probably even after they left Joseph Smith's possession. Because we know little about these numbers and because they do not add to the discussion, we will not refer to them in the body of the text. In order to be complete, however, we will include this detail in a note for each papyrus backing paper since some may find it useful. The backing of JSP I has an "11" penciled on it.
7. A "9" is penciled on the backing paper of JSP XI.
8. The authors express appreciation to Michael P. Lyon for this observation.
9. The authors express appreciation to Michael P. Lyon for this observation.
10. A "2" is penciled on the backing paper of JSP III.
11. This idea is supplied by Dr. John Gee. We are grateful for his help.
12. "Plan of the House of the Lord," circa June 1833, side text by Oliver Cowdery, text and drawing by Frederick G. Williams, MS 2568, fd. 1, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. Although the drawings and the accompanying description are unsigned, an analysis of the handwriting shows it to be that of Frederick G. Williams. In a letter accompanying the temple drawings under the date of 25 June 1833, church leaders in Kirtland wrote: "We send by this mail, a draft of the city of Zion, with explanations, and a draft of the house to be built immediate in Zion, for the Presidency, as well as for all purposes of religion and instruction." See Joseph Smith Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed., rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:363. See also Elwin C. Robison, *The First Mormon Temple: Design, Construction, and Historic Context of the Kirtland Temple* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1997), 9.
13. "Plan of the House of the Lord," circa August 1833, text and drawing by Frederick G. Williams, MS 2568, fd. 2, Church History Library.
14. Robison, *First Mormon Temple*, 9.
15. The authors express appreciation to Michael P. Lyon for this observation.
16. A "10" is penciled on the backing paper of JSP II.
17. US townships generally measured six by six miles square (thirty-six square miles or 23,040 acres). However, in 1796, when the Connecticut Land Company subdivided its Ohio lands (known as the Connecticut Western Reserve), it surveyed the land in five-mile-square townships (twenty-five square miles, or 16,000 acres). See Thomas Aquinas Burke, *Ohio Lands: A Short History* (Ohio: Ohio Auditor of State, 1994), 6-7.
18. Beginning in the extreme upper right portion of the grid (column 1, row 1) and reading from top to bottom and right to left, the following townships are identified. Column 1: blank (now Conneaut), Salem (now part of Monroe), Monroe, Peirpoint [*sic*], Leon (now Richmond), Andover, Williamsfield, Kinsman, and Vernon. Column 2: Kingsville, Sheffield, Denmark, Millsford (now Dorset), blank (now Cherry Valley), Wayne, Gustavus, and Johnston. Column 3: Ashtabula (written vertically with Wrightsburg struck out), blank (now Plymouth), Jefferson, Lenox, Lebbanon [*sic*] (now New Lyme), Phelps (now Colebrook), Green, and Mecca. Column 4: Wrightsburgh (written vertically, now Saybrook), blank, Austinburgh, Morgan, Rome, Leffingwell (now Orwell), Bloomfield, and Bristol. Column 5: Geneva, Harpersfield, Trumbull, blank (now Hartsgrove), Windsor, Mesopotamia, and Farmington. Column 6: blank (now Madison), Madison (now Thompson), Thompson, Montville, Huntsburgh, Baravia (now Middlefield), and Parkman. Column 7: Perry, Leroy, Hampden, Clarydon (Claridon), Burton, and Welshfield (now Troy). Column 8: Painsville, Concord, Chardon, Munson, Newdury [*sic*], and Auburn. Column 9: Mentor, Kirtland, Chester, Russell, and Bainbrige [*sic*]. Column 10: Chagrin (now Willoughby), Mayfield, Hoadly

- (now Orange), and Mileni (?) (now Solon). Column 11: Euclid, Warrensville, and Bedford. Column 12: Cleaveland [*sic*], Newburgh, and Independence. Column 13: Brooklyn and blank (now Parma). Column 14: Rockport and Middlebu[r]y. Column 15: Dover and Kingsville (now Olmsted). Column 16 (partial): Troy (now Avon) and Ridgeville. See Ohio Township Map, State of Ohio, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geological Survey, accessed at <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/portals/10/pdf/cotwpmmap.pdf>. The map also includes current county boundaries.
19. The names of the rivers were obtained by examining an 1836 map of Ohio. See H. S. Tanner, "A New Map of Ohio with Its Canals[,] Roads & Distances," in *Tanner's Universal Atlas* (Philadelphia: Tanner, 1836), 24.
 20. The frame is visible in the photographs taken of the papyrus at that time.
 21. At least two accounts of the papyri during Joseph Smith's day speak of a number of fragments being inside frames. See S. M. Bartlett, "A Glance at the Mormons," *Quincy Whig*, 17 October 1840; and "The Mormons," *New York Daily Times*, 28 September 1852.
 22. No penciled numbers are visible on the backing paper of JSP IV.
 23. Ritner states that the patch belongs "in P. JS 1, Paragraph I"; Robert K. Ritner, *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition* (Salt Lake City: The Smith Pettit Foundation, 2011), 275; for Ritner's complete list of patches that had been made in the papyri, see 275-77. On the other hand, Rhodes maintains that the fragmentary patch fits textually to the left of JSP XI, col. 2; Rhodes, *Hor Book of Breathings*, 36. The drawing of partial pews on the backing paper matches precisely with Rhodes's position. Thus, based solely on the important evidence on the backing paper, we can conclude that the patch was indeed from JSP XI. The drawing of a temple plan allows us to pinpoint exactly where this fragment came from.
 24. See Ohio Township Map.
 25. The names of the remaining townships are as follows: Blackriver (now Sheffield), Elyria, Beaver (now Amherst), Brownhelm, Vermilion [*sic*], Florence, Huron, Avery (now Milan), Perkins, Oxford, and Patterson (now Margaretta). See Ohio Township Map. The cut separating JSP II and JSP IV caused breakage in the lettering of Troy, Ridgeville, and Holbrook townships. The letters "Tro" (no "y") and "Rid" (no "geville") appear on JSP IV. However, on JSP II, the "y" from "Troy" is just slightly visible, as is "geville" from "Ridgeville" (because of spatial constraints the latter three letters, "lle," were written above the main word). "Holb" appears on JSP IV, but because of the location of the bottom cut on JSP II, the remainder of the township name, "rook," does not appear.
 26. Tanner, *Tanner's Universal Atlas*, 24.
 27. Robin S. Jensen and Michael H. MacKay, research historians in the LDS Church Historical Department and experts in the area of early Mormon handwriting, confirmed to the authors that the handwriting of the backing material on JSP II and IV is characteristic of Wilford Woodruff.
 28. See Alexander L. Baugh, "Wilford Woodruff Chronology," in *Banner of the Gospel: Wilford Woodruff*, ed. Alexander L. Baugh and Susan Easton Black (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; and Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010) 366-67.
 29. It is possible that souvenir seekers cut off the strip.
 30. JSP V has a "4" penciled on its backing, and JSP VI has a "7".
 31. A "6" is penciled on the backing paper of JSP VII.
 32. A "5" is penciled on the backing paper of JSP VIII.
 33. No penciled numbers are visible on the backing paper of JSP IX.
 34. An "8" is penciled on the back of the backing paper of JSP X. Additionally, "front end" and a "o" and "2" are penciled on the front of the backing paper in a different handwriting than the numbers penciled on the back side of the backing papers.
 35. Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832-1839*, vol. 1 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008), 107-11.
 36. William S. West, *A Few Interesting Facts, Respecting the Rise Progress and Pretensions of the Mormons* (Ohio: by the author, 1837), 4-5.
 37. Luman A. Shurtliff, "Biographical Sketch of the Life of Luman Andros Shurtliff, 1807-1864," typescript, 27, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections).
 38. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (London: published for Orson Pratt by S. W. Richards, 1853), 215; also in Lucy Mack Smith, *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir*, ed. Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 613-14. John and Nicholas Markell stated they seized the papyrus and mummies and then returned them. See John Markell and Nicholas Markell, affidavits, MS D155, bx. 5, Perry Special Collections.
 39. "Aunt Zina' D. Young Sought After as 'Angel of Mercy,'" *Church News*, 30 November 1963, 16. See also Oliver Boardman Huntington, "History of Oliver Boardman Huntington," typescript, 13, Perry Special Collections.
 40. See Ray L. Huntington and Keith J. Wilson, "From Kirtland, Ohio, to Far West, Missouri: Following the Trail of the Mormon Mummies," *Religious Educator* 2/1 (2001): 98-100. William Swartzell, who was also en route from Ohio to Missouri at this same time, reported on 24 May 1838 seeing Joseph Smith's "box of mummies" at the landing in Richmond, Missouri. See William Swartzell, *Mormonism Exposed, Being a Journal of a Residence in Missouri from the 28th of May to the 20th of August, 1838* (Pittsburgh: Ingram Jr. Printer, 1840), 9.
 41. For an example of this, see F. M. Cooper, "Spiritual Reminiscences—No. 2: In the Life of Sister Ann Davis, of Lyons, Wisconsin," *Autumn Leaves* 4 (January 1891): 18.
 42. The eleven papyrus fragments were undoubtedly mounted and put under glass before April 1840 since an eyewitness specifically speaks of seeing the framed fragments in Quincy, Illinois. See Bartlett, "Glance at the Mormons," 1.