

2005 FAIR Conference

**Authentic Ancient Names and Words
in the Book of Abraham
and Related Kirtland Egyptian Papers**

John Tvedtnes
5 August 2005

John Tvedtnes is senior resident scholar at the BYU Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts. He earned a BA in anthropology, a graduate certificate in Middle East area studies, an MA in linguistics, and an MA in Hebrew at the University of Utah and did postgraduate work at the University of California (Berkeley) and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He taught for seventeen years at the University of Utah and the Salt Lake and Jerusalem centers of Brigham Young University. He has published nine books and more than 200 articles. While many of his writings have appeared in books, magazines, and journals for a Latter-day Saint audience, some of his works have been published by the University of Utah, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Pontifical Biblical Institute, and the Journal of Near Eastern Studies. He is a convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and has served in numerous positions, including a full-time mission in France and Switzerland and stake and district missions in Utah and Israel.

[This was a graphics rich presentation. This transcript does not include slides from the presentation. They can be viewed in the video of this lecture on our Youtube site. Links provided at the end of the text.]

JOHN TVEDTNES: Over the last century a number of scholars have looked at names and other transliterated words in the Book of Abraham and in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers in an attempt to determine their authenticity. In some cases it can be demonstrated that the name is actually attested in Ancient Near Eastern documents. For unattested names it is sometimes possible to postulate an etymology based on known words in Egyptian and other ancient languages in use in the time of Abraham.

While I can claim credit for some of the work contained in my presentation today, it is appropriate to acknowledge that I've drawn upon research by various others such as Hugh Nibley, A. Richards Durham, Robert F. Smith, John Gee and John M. Lundquist. Indeed one of the most thorough researchers of the Book of Abraham onomasticon is Robert F. Smith most of whose contribution is embodied in a series of unpublished manuscripts that he shared with me during the 1960s and '70s. I've mentioned some of his research in previous publications. I must

acknowledge however that I've added my own contributions and I'm the only one who can really be faulted for any mistakes here.

One of the primary sources of the names used in this study is of course the Book of Abraham as published in our Pearl of Great Price. These names have been carefully compared with the forms as found in the four extant handwritten manuscripts of the Book of Abraham, one of which you see on the left here, that's held in the LDS Church Archives.

Joseph Smith's explanation to the Facsimiles, published with the Book of Abraham though not part of the text itself, are another source of names. The third source comprises various handwritten documents prepared in Joseph Smith's day and known collectively as the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. There are ten such documents and some of them are multi-page, this includes the notebook entitled *Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language*; a smaller handmade notebook called *Valuable Discovery of Hidden Records*; and another notebook entitled *F.G.W. and William* standing evidently for Frederick G. Williams and probably William Lyon Phelps; along with other loose sheets a few of which comprise Egyptian texts copied by one or more of the scribes but with no English commentary at all. This is something that John Gee loves because he can work with those. Some of the latter include material copied from papyri that are not currently extant. Because they provide no information on names they are excluded from this present study.

Some of the names that interest us relate to ancient Egypt itself and to people who were among the earliest rulers thereof.

Abraham 1:23 and 25 notes that the founder of Egypt was the daughter of Noah's son Ham named Egyptus. It has long been noted that in the earliest handwritten manuscripts the name is written Zephtah which you can see here. As A. Richards Durham noted some years ago both forms derive from one of the Egyptian names for the capital city of Lower Egypt Memphis which was *ît-kA-Ptaú* ' (if you don't put in the right vowels) meaning the "Residence of the spirit of Ptaú"—the name appears even in that form on a Ugaritic tablet.

When the Greeks came to Egypt in the time of Alexander the Great, they had to modify the name in order to pronounce it in their own language. Greek had no 'h' sound so they simply dropped the consonant at the beginning and the end of the name itself.

The 't' had already been dropped from the end of the word for 'residence' which is how it is in Coptic—it's 'a'—often the feminine ending dropped off of those in later forms of the Egyptian language. Instead of unvoiced 'k' the Greeks used its

voiced equivalent the 'g' sound. Finally they added the masculine singular suffix 'os', this gave them the form Aigyptos which became Aegyptus in Latin. And this is the origin of course of the name Egyptus as used in the printed versions of the Book of Abraham and the English form of the name of the country itself Egypt. Ptaú whose name appears as the last element in the Egyptian form was the creator god in the story told of the ancient city of Memphis. Zeptah, the form used originally by Joseph Smith, likely means "Son or daughter of Ptaú." The Egyptian has it as, here I've written it as the masculine on the upper left hand side there you can see, (inaudible) which would be the feminine. The feminine however later on dropped the 't' so it's easier to pronounce it and they both look alike or both sound alike in later forms of Egyptian. But the Hebrew- if it has a Hebrew meaning it would've been understood as Zeh Ptaú "This is Ptaú"—in other words this is the god Ptaú or the discoverer of Egypt.

Indeed earlier Egyptologists translated the 's' as a 'z' and so if we pronounce this as the Egyptian, 'zeh' instead of 'sa' that would fit with the way they used to transliterate it.

As in most Hebrew words, the feminine suffix was often dropped in later forms of Egyptian. In the Egyptian text known as *Astarte and the Sea* the goddess Astarte, corresponding to the Egyptian goddess Isis or Isis(?), is actually called (inaudible) in other words "the daughter of Ptaú" so she has that very title.

The Semitic verb Ptah means to open, to discover. The Egyptians held that the Temple at Memphis was constructed on the first piece of land rising from the floodwaters and the same tradition was attached to various other spots where temples were built along the Nile.

An Armenian text attributed to the 4th century A.D. Christian historian Eusebius declares that 'Egypt is called Mizraim(?) by the Hebrews'—which is close, in Hebrew it's Mitzraim but he came close considering that it was Greek translated into Armenian—'and Mizraim lived not long after the flood for after the flood, Ham son of Noah begat Egyptus or Mizraim who was the first to set out to establish himself in Egypt at the time when the tribes began to disperse this way and that.' Here we have Egyptus then being a man.

A similar account is found in Abraham 1:23-24 except that here it's a woman:

- 23 The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden;
- 24 When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race.

So, I should make one point here before we move on though because somebody is probably going to look at this and then say, ‘Well why is it that you said then- why does the Book of Abraham say that it means ‘forbidden’ in Chaldean? Well my guess is that it’s analogous to what happens in Russia. Does anybody know how the word ‘Mormon’ is used in Russia? They heard about the Mormons in the United States and these were bad people because all the books they ever had on it were anti-Mormon. We start sending missionaries to Russia, the Soviet Union almost- after 1989. These missionaries come in and they said, ‘We’re Mormons’ and people say, ‘Oh you’re those awful people.’ But other people in Russia have been called Mormons for some time, it’s a group of evil-doers they say and so they’ve used the term ‘Mormon’ meaning evil-doers instead of more good if some of you like that better explanation.

Hugh Nibley has dealt with the Egyptian traditions about the goddess who discovered Egypt rising out of the floodwaters. In one text she is called ‘the daughter of Ptau’ which, as noted above, is one possible meaning of the name ‘Zeptah’. In some accounts she is Isis, sister-wife to Osiris—both sister and wife—and mother of Horus the first king of Egypt making one wonder if Egyptus married her own brother, Mizraim who is the son of Ham mentioned in the Bible and after whom Egypt takes its name in Hebrew.

Nibley draws attention to the account of Herakleides, which was unavailable to Joseph Smith, who wrote “It was first a woman named Aegyptia who established her son and introduced weaving. Because of her, the Egyptians set up an image of Athena,” the Greek goddess, “as Ephorus says in his work on Europa.”¹

About 440 B.C. the Greek historian Herodotus wrote that the Egyptian priests “told me that the first man who ruled over Egypt was Min, and that in his time all Egypt, except the Thebaic canton,” that’s Thebes, “was a marsh, none of the land below Lake Moeris then showing itself above the surface of the water.”²

In his *Chronicle*, the 6th century A.D. Christian historian John Malalas wrote that, “the first king of Egypt belonged to the tribe of Ham, Noah’s son, he was pharaoh who was called Neko.” While Malalas evidently confused the pharaoh of Abraham’s time with the pharaoh Neko of the 6th century B.C.—the time of King Josiah—it is interesting that Abraham 1:20-21 notes that “Pharaoh signifies king by royal blood. Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth.”

One of the Kirtland Egyptian Papsers notes that Abraham “was forewarned of God to go down into Ahmehstrah, or Egypt, and preach the gospel unto the Ahmehstrahans.” The word may be related to the Hebrew Mizraim—it sounds a

bit like it. The name for Egypt and for one of Ham's sons who is the eponymous ancestor of the Egyptians in Genesis 10 and 1 Chronicles 1.

The Hebrew is actually a dual form, as reflected by the suffix 'aim'—so Mizraim really means two Egypts if you will due to the fact that ancient Egypt was considered to be comprised of two parts—Upper and Lower Egypt—that were subsequently united.

Eusebius declared that Mizraim was indeed the founder of the Egyptian race and from him the first Egyptian dynasty must be held to spring.

As noted earlier, Eusebius also identified Egyptus with Mizraim. If, as the Book of Abraham says, Egyptus was a daughter of Ham rather than a son, it is possible that she married her brother just as the Egyptian traditions have. Isis marries her brother Osiris; and from them would derive the Hebrew name of Egypt. This would explain the Egyptian myths about Osiris the god who actually ruled Egypt anciently marrying his sister and that was followed by some of the pharaohs.

In fact some of the pharaohs in order to make sure that they were marrying into the royal line married not only their sisters but sometimes their daughters and I know of at least one case where one married his mother. It's really a strange idea from our point of view but it was perfectly normal in their days, they wanted to preserve this particular line.

The term 'Rahleenos' is found in Abraham 1:14 and indicates that it means 'hieroglyphics' referring to one of the writing systems used in ancient Egypt. The word 'hierogluphikos' is Greek and means sacred or priestly writing. Perhaps it equates to Egyptian 'Ra-nes' which would mean the "tongue/language or speech of Ra"—Ra being the Egyptian sun god and head of the pantheon in the city of On or Heliopolis 'Sun city' (not Arizona—Egypt). (Laughter)

(I should apologize for those who know how Egyptian is written but the fonts I use will not let me stack these properly so you have to read it all the way across the line.)

The Egyptian 'n' often corresponds to the Semitic 'l'. The same is true also of the 'r'; the Egyptian 'r' is sometimes used for the Semitic 'l' when it transliterates Semitic words, Hebrew, Canaanite, whatever. And, in fact, sometimes the two are used together to denote an 'l'.

So when we look at 'nes' here from the Egyptian it could easily be 'las' 'ras' any of those, *lāšōn* (Hebrew), *lisān* (Arabic), I believe to be cognate with the Egyptian word. On the surface this Egyptian explanation does seem to fail because

Abraham 1:14 says that the system of Egyptian characters called ‘figures’ in that passage “is called by the Chaldeans Rahleenos, which signifies hieroglyphics.” So according to the Book of Abraham these are actually Chaldean, this is a Chaldean name not the Egyptian name but one of the manuscripts of the Book of Abraham says it was called that by the Egyptians and then the word Egyptian is crossed out and Chaldean is written above it. So it seems to me that originally it was perhaps intended to denote Egyptian.

A number of Latter-day Saint scholars have taken in hand to provide ancient etymologies for the names of the Egyptian gods inscribed in the Book of Abraham. The earliest was Hugh Nibley followed—actually there were some who did it before him—followed in the late 1960s and early 1970s by Robert F. Smith, whose work though mostly unpublished has, in my opinion, stood the test of time.

John Gee and others have more recently reexamined the names and come to similar conclusions. John M. Lundquist also noted that each of the gods or idols mentioned in Abraham 1:17 appears in the compilation of some 3,800 Mesopotamian deities published in 1950 by Anton Deimel.³ Many of these names are Akkadian a Semitic language related to Hebrew and more distantly to Egyptian.

Critics often dismiss the four gods depicted below the lion couch in Facsimile 1 of the Book of Abraham as mere canopic jars in which the viscera of a diseased person were placed during the mummification process. They put the heart and the viscera in there; the only part of the body they threw away and did not mummify was the brain. They didn’t know that’s what made you think, in fact they extracted the brain—they had a little hooked instrument they put up through the nostril and they’d pull the brain out piece by piece. The procedure is very similar to abortion by the way. Scary huh? Well at least if you’re dead you don’t feel it.

While it’s true that these were canopic jars and that the various body parts were placed in them, these do depict the four gods known as the sons of Horus though one text calls them the sons of Osiris and indeed in Facsimile 2, Fig. 6, which I have here in an insert, Joseph Smith describes them as representing “this earth in its four quarters.” Some of the sons of Horus were in fact associated with the cardinal directions and we’ll see this in our description of each of them.

There was a kind of a strange thing going on in 1912 with the Reverend Spalding who asked several Egyptologists to comment on this and Samuel A.B. Mercer came back and he said, ‘Oh he doesn’t know what he’s talking about this Joseph Smith. These aren’t the four quarters of the earth; these are the four cardinal directions not quarters. It’s a real difference.’ However another Egyptologist

Budge whom some of you have heard of also he used- he translated it as quarters- “four quarters” instead of four cardinal directions.

Well let’s look at each of them. The god whose name is rendered ‘Elkenah’ in the published versions of Abraham 1:6-7, 13, 17, 20 and 29 appears with variant spellings in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. In two of the manuscripts it is always spelled ‘Elkkene’. This is also the spelling in another of the manuscripts where it was changed later to ‘Elkenah’, that was mss 4 just prior to publication it was changed from ‘Elkkene’ to ‘Elkenah’ and that was the version that was published.

This to me suggests that ‘Elkkene’ more closely approximates the way Joseph Smith intended to transliterate it. Robert F. Smith noted that the form ‘Elkkene’ seems to correspond with the form of *El-kuni-irša* “El, the maker of the of the earth” which is found in the Hittite text. It’s actually a Canaanite title of the God El; it’s in the text about Asherah. It’s also known in the Phoenician title *l qen `rš* “El, creator of the earth” together with the name baalshemayon(sp?) which means “the lord of heaven”, so it parallels that in an eighth century manuscript from the Phoenician king Azzitawatah. The title clearly corresponds to the Hebrew *El-Elyon konei shamayim va-aretz* which means “El the most high God, creator of heaven and earth.” It’s translated “Possessor” in the King James Version, that’s from Genesis 14:19, 22; and so, the title has been around for a long time.

The Hebrew name Elkanah is found in the Bible (1 Samuel 1:1), it’s a hypocoristic form of the same name that we just mentioned dropping off the ending element of it, the God El, head of the Canaanite pantheon, was identified by the Egyptians with the hawk-headed sun god Ra in their myth of Ra and Isis where he is also called *Iry pt tA* “Maker of heaven and earth” the same title. The depiction labeled the idolatrous god of Elkenah in Abraham Facsimile 1, Fig. 5, is the Egyptian jackal-headed god who is associated with the East where the sun rises. Indeed the verb denoting the rising of the sun derives from this same root.

John Lundquist has suggested another potential source of the name Elkenah, the Akkadian *Il-gi-na*. The ^d part is just what we call a determinative, it derives from Sumerian and it refers to divine names. You don’t pronounce it though actually but it is written. So here we have the same kind of name that (inaudible) at the beginning is the same as El, it means god also and so his suggestion was that this was the origin of it, this Akkadian name.

Nibley noted the report from Bar-Hebraeus, a medieval Jewish scholar who became a Christian, that in the days of Abraham’s father, Terah, the Egyptians adopted Chaldeism and made an image in honor of Kenos(sp?). Kenos may very well be related here to Elkenah.

The god Libnah is mentioned in Abraham 1:6, 13 and 17. The god identified by this name in Abraham Facsimile 1, Fig. 6, is the falcon-headed Egyptian god who is identified with the West.

Another Egyptian god, the jackal-headed (inaudible), we usually call him Anubis in English. Anubis, who is the jackal god who is called ‘the lord of the west’ and also ‘lord of the white land’—probably “white” because this word *l^ebānāh* comes from a word meaning “white”. The jackal is a nocturnal prowler; he goes out by moonlight to find his prey and so is often associated with the moon. One of the Hebrew terms for moon, as we see here, is found in several Bible passages, three of them, it’s *lbanah*, the feminine form of *laban*, which you normally read as Laban, the brother of Rebekah in the Bible. The same term *l^ebānāh*, meaning “white, or moon”, is used in the medieval Hebrew story of Abraham to denote the moon that Abraham studied in his youth. In the Bible, Laban is one of Abraham’s great nephews while the form *Luban* from the same root is a place name in records found at Ebla near Abraham’s homeland. The Bible also mentions a Canaanite city named Libnah which is also mentioned on a list of cities conquered by the Egyptian King Thutmose III. So it’s well attested that we have here a moon god if you will.

Deriving from the same root is the name Lebanon, *Lbanown* in Hebrew, which means “white place”; probably so-called because of the snow that’s atop Mt. Lebanon. In the Zohar, a medieval Jewish text citing the Song of Solomon in the Old Testament, says of Lebanon that it should be reworded *Lbanah* thou moon who receivest thy light from the sun. Julius Levy considered Lebanon to derive from the Canaanite moon-god *Laban* while John Lundquist drew attention, again, to an Akkadian god ^d*Laban*, same name—these gods didn’t change much from one country to the other when they spoke similar languages, languages that were related—(inaudible) noted the variant forms of the name of Lebanon: *Lbanown* in Hebrew, *Libnah* in Phoenician, *Libnana* in Assyrian and (inaudible) in Hittite.

The god called Mahmackrah, in the published version of the Book of Abraham, is depicted in Abraham facsimile 1, fig. 7. He’s the baboon-headed god who represented the North—an element perhaps found in his name because the word *mútt* means “north”. Is it possible that that’s what we have at the beginning of this name? It is possible. The name used in the Book of Abraham however may be related to a Hebrew word, the word *mimkār* which means “merchandise” since Egypt’s principal trading partners were to the north. Closer in pronunciation however is the Akkadian divine name ^d*Ma-mi-hi-rat* which is in Deimel’s list again as quoted by Lundquist. A. Richards Durham has actually proposed two possible etymologies that I had not included in this and since I’m saying that now maybe I should add that there are other possibilities that are not included in

today's presentation, I just didn't have enough time to get them all together. I expect I'll do that sometime in the near future.

The god called Korash in the Book of Abraham and depicted in Facsimile 1, Fig. 8, is a human-headed god who represents the South. It is possible that Korash in fact is from the Egyptian *kA-rsy* which would mean "spirit of the south". Nibley noted that the Egyptian goddess Hathor was worshipped in Saba. Today we call it Yemen, which in fact is a good Arabic-Hebrew name meaning south; and that she was worshipped by the people of Quraish. The Quraish tribe is the tribe that gave birth to the prophet Mohammed and in fact there is one tradition that the person who wanted to kill Abraham, the one who wanted him to be actually slain for not worshipping the pagan gods, was a fellow named Korash. John Lundquist draws attention to another possibility, the Akkadian divine name ^d*Kur-ra-su-ur-ur* and John Gee has noted also that *KARs* (and I'm not sure if I spelled that one correctly because I don't have it written down but I remember you mentioning it) that this is attested in New Kingdom Egypt.

Here's one of my favorites, funny guy, funny name. The god Shagreel is mentioned only in Abraham 1:9 where he is said to be "the sun." In this connection, one may perhaps compare the Egyptian hawk-headed god Sokar who is a form of the sun as depicted in fig. 4, facsimile 2, with the addition of the Semitic term *El* at the end—*El* meaning of course "God." More likely, in my opinion, is Robert F. Smith's identification with the Canaanite (inaudible) "the gates of El" "the gates of God", a title of the Canaanite god (inaudible) who in the Ugaritic text is called in fact "gate of the sun." An Akkadian seal impression has *Shamash*, the sun god, rising between two mountains on each side of which are hinged doors mounted by lions. The Egyptian Sokar is sometimes accompanied by a pair of lion guards and it's (inaudible), we see them here, that's the sun god rising between the mountains- between these two- actually they look more like, to me, they look more like cheetahs because they have spots but the face is more like a lion. I think they have a lion's mane there. Anyway the name (inaudible) means "twin lions" or "twin gates." The twin lions guarding city gates were known amongst other Ancient Near Eastern peoples including the Hittites who did a lot of that and these later made their way into Western Europe and even into the United States where today they flank the entrances of libraries, museums and other public buildings and of course in Salt Lake City, the human-headed lions that guard the entrance to the Masonic Temple.

We should also compare the title Shagreel with the name *Sheariah* which in fact means the "gates of Jehovah" 'yah' in this case where 'yah' is substituted for 'El.' *Sheariah* is in fact found in the Bible, in 1 Chronicles 8:38 and 9:44. So the Hebrew form of the plural, which is not in those two passages, it has the singular

there, would be Sheariel. The Semitic name for 'gate' is also known in Egypt by the way in later text because it was borrowed from Canaanite.

The names of celestial bodies are found in the third chapter of Abraham, in the explanation of Facsimile 2 and in the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar and other Kirtland Egyptian Papers.

The star named Kolob, and it's called a star, I know that there are some websites that say the Mormons are crazy they think God lives on a planet called Kolob. The passage never says it's a planet and never says God lives there either; it says it's closest to where he lives. Anyway the star named Kolob is so-called "because it is near unto me" (Abr. 3:3) or near "the residence" (Fac. 2, Fig. 1) or "throne of God" (Abr. 3:9). Facsimile 2, Fig. 1 describes it as "nearest to the celestial." This explanation is attractive because it creates a wordplay in the Book of Abraham; a feature known from the underlying Hebrew of both the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon. The wordplay being between "near" and "Kolob" because in fact the word for Kolob can mean near; there are several possibilities to explain and I'm going to talk about those now.

Janne Sjudahl was the first to compare the name with the Arabic *qalb* "core, marrow, heart, intelligence", however because 'l' and 'r' often interchange in Semitic languages, one should also note Arabic *QRB* "proximity, near, midst" which is cognate to Hebrew *qārōb* "near" or "close." Robert F. Smith prefers the latter and notes that it appears in the sense of "near one" as a title of God in Psalm 119:151 where it parallels the word *qedem* which means the "primeval one" or the "ancient one" (that's in verse 152). Smith notes that the cognate Ugaritic *qurb* often refers to the dwelling place of *El*, the chief God, in the Canaanite pantheon in the expression "midst of the source of the two deeps" where the word rendered "midst" is in fact this same word *qurb* meaning "near".

Another possible Hebrew etymology is the Hebrew *KLB* "dog" originally pronounced *kalb* just as it is in Arabic. This is used to denote the star Regulus in Arabic while the Syriac, which is also *kalb* denotes the star Sirius, the brightest star in the heavens. There's a wonderful article that Dan Peterson, and John Gee, and Matt Roper (I think), were the three who (if I left something off that you can fill it in later) but they wrote a really nice article on Kolob and its place in the sky and what it meant for Abraham.⁴

In Arabic, this term *KLB* "dog" also denotes the constellation of Canis Major which is Latin meaning "Great Dog", we call it the Big Dipper but that's not what it was called anciently, as the brightest star in the constellation of the Big Dipper, Sirius is called *Alpha Canis Majoris* which is "number one big dog" or top dog I guess. Another name for the star is *Canicula*, a Latin word for 'Little Dog'.

Akkadian sources call Sirius (inaudible) the “dog of the sun”. In ancient Egypt the Nile began to rise at the helical rising of Sirius, that is when it came up just before the sun and bringing the annual torrent of Nile water laden with rich volcanic soil from the south and depositing it on the cultivated land.

I should mention by the way you notice how the one has a ‘q’ the other has a ‘k’? That’s very important, at least in Arabic, it’s not as important in Hebrew but I always try to get my Hebrew students to pronounce the two differently. In Israel they pronounce the two ‘k’ just that- it’s just like a regular ‘k’ in English. But in ancient times they were pronounced quite differently. One is pronounced way in the back of the throat, the other is pronounced farther up and in Arabic they make a big distinction and my reasoning with my students was, if you don’t make the distinction and you speak in Arabic and you want to tell a girl, “I love you with all of my heart” which is the word that’s coming up next, you don’t want to end up saying “I love you with all of my dog.” (Laughter) I think that struck a note with most of them.

So, this is the other one I want to have *QLB* which is “heart” in Arabic. There are some Egyptian equivalents to that, I didn’t put them up here. There’s a couple of cognates that are related directly to that. In the Sumerian text known as the *Descent of Inanna*, one of the more ancient texts from the Middle East, the goddess Inana goes down into the Underworld to free her husband Dumuzi who is the god who brings rain during the season of rain, and on the way back to heaven she stops at a place called Kulab which is designated as a tree of some sort. We don’t know why this happens there but there Dumuzi gets to sit on his throne and puts on his royal apparel which he has not been wearing while he’s been in prison.

The term *Olea* is used to denote the moon in Abraham 3:13. It resembles the Hebrew term *yārēaú* which is just one of two words meaning “moon” or “month.” Even in English month comes from the word moon by the way, as does Monday—Moon’s Day. The Egyptian word for moon is *Iah* which is cognate to the Semitic term. In Facsimile 2, Fig. 1, the moon’s name is given differently however, it’s called *Floese*. This name is similar to the *Kli-flos-is-es* that we find in some of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. *Kli* makes a lot of sense. *Kli* is a good Hebrew word, it means a vessel in the sense of a plate or a bowl or even a spoon or a tool, a tool of any kind, a hammer or whatever. The word looks like it is finishing in the name of the Greek goddess, or the Greek form I should say, of the Egyptian goddess Isis; and I have no clue what *flos* is supposed to mean unless any (inaudible) here could explain that to us. (Laughter) The second one as well, I don’t have a clue on that one but we’ve got some starts here, somebody research that one and give us a report next year.

Shinehah is an interesting one (Abr. 3:13) calls the sun Shinehah which seems to be related to the Hebrew word *šānāh* which means “year.” The year is defined by the annual circuit of the earth about the sun and to the ancients was determined by where the sun rose each day during the year. The Semitic verbal form means “to change,” that is to change seasons and other changes, or “to repeat” and is the source of the numeral two because you start over—once you finish a cycle you start over again so it’s the second cycle. The Egyptian cognate is the verb *šni* which is “to encircle, enclose or surround” and the noun from that is *šnw* which means “circuit or circumference”. From this also we get the name of the ring (inaudible) which is depicted with the little (I don’t think I did that one up there did I? No, I didn’t. Sorry you won’t see that one.) Hugh Nibley followed by Robert F. Smith and Kerry Shirts have suggested that the name Shinehah derives from the Egyptian term plus the Egyptian word ‘heh’ or ‘nhh’ meaning “eternity, or eternal” and so that would be then the “eternal circuit” or as Nibley put it “one eternal round” which book we hope to see soon.

Janne Sjodahl suggested that the name *Olahā Shinehah* mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 117:8, from July 8, 1838, is related to the terms for “moon” *Olea* which we saw a moment ago and *Shinehah* for the “sun.” These were used as code words in early days of the Church beginning with the first Doctrine and Covenants in 1835.

There are several other terms that are related to the sun in the Book of Abraham materials, I just don’t have time to go into all those and they are not as certain as some of these that I’m looking at.

The explanation to Facsimile 1, Fig. 12 reads (and I’m going to pronounce this correctly) *Raukeeyang*, the spelling there came from Joseph Smith’s association with his Hebrew teacher Joshua Seixas who transliterated things in this way but anybody who knows that transliteration method knows how the Hebrew word is actually spelled. Anyways the explanation reads, “Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify Shaumau, to be high, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word, Shaumahyeem.” Which is a dual form—two heavens. This Hebrew word *rāqīa* does in fact mean expanse. We get the term firmament by a mistake that was made by St. Jerome when he was translating the Bible into Latin, he spelled it- he translated it *firmamentum* and so it came across that way in later times too. It’s true that the verb *raqa*(?) can mean to hammer out a sheet of metal like gold and make it a thin sheet but it can mean actually to expand in other ways as well.

The normal Hebrew word for heaven or sky is actually a dual form *shamayim* which Joseph Smith here transliterated as you can see. The Arabic cognate is in

the singular, it's *samā* as is the Akkadian *šāmū*, it's in the singular. Hebrew is the only one that has it in this dual, as far as I know. Mitchell Dahood, a very well-known scholar now deceased from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, probably the only Arab who ever was associated with that group, actually proposed that for Palm 68:4 that instead of reading *shemo*, which would mean "his name", the word should read *shameh* which would be "the heaven" in a singular form.

Abraham 3:13 defines *Kokob* as "star" and *Kokaubeam* as "stars, or all the great lights, which were in the firmament of heaven." When first published in the Times & Seasons, the passage read "Kolob" in error. They'd written Kolob so many times that the typesetter thought that's what belonged here. The manuscripts however have *Kokob* corresponding to the Hebrew word that we have written here *kōkāb* and denotes in the one singular and the other in the plural. The plural is also found two other times in the Book of Abraham and it's called in Facsimile 2, Fig. 5 and also Abraham 3:16 it lists *Kokaubeam* or *kōkābīm* in Hebrew. The correct pronunciation (inaudible) means "the" so it's "the stars." Lundquist noted that one of the deities in Deimel's list was ^d*Kakob* meaning "star". Similar, *Kakkab* is the name of one of the god's mentioned in the Ebla records discovered in northwestern Syria.

Kae-e-vanrash there's an interesting one, I'm still scratching my head over parts of this. In Facsimile 2, Fig. 5, we read about *Kae-e-vanrash* "which is the grand Key, or, in other words, the governing power, which governs fifteen other fixed planets or stars, as also Floeese or the Moon, the Earth and the Sun in their annual revolutions." The element *Kae* may here be the Egyptian word *kA* which we saw earlier meaning "spirit" and the element *rash* at the end looks very much to me like it's a Semitic term. In Hebrew *rō's* but in Arabic *Rās* and *ra'as* (it doesn't have the should, it has a (inaudible) sound for the cognates in Arabic) and that word means "head, or chief" and so I'm suspecting that that's what is going on here. Now if I can only figure out what this is in the middle, so if any of you have suggestions send me email.

The Book of Abraham and associated Egyptian Papers mention the names of specific individuals whom Abraham evidently encountered during his brief sojourn in Egypt. Some of them such as *Shulem* and *Olimlah* are listed in the explanation of Facsimile 3 while others are found in the Abraham text or other texts associated therewith. I'm not going to go into all those names however.

I'd like to give some ideas on this one, Abraham 1:11 describes *Onitah* as "one of the royal descent directly from the loins of Ham" whose three daughters were sacrificed because they would not worship the Egyptian gods. The name may be the same as *Onitos* and *Onitas* in the Valuable Discovery notebook where there is an 's' at the end instead of the 'h.' there he is said to have been king of Egypt

while the chapter 1 of Abraham says he was of the “royal descent.” It may correspond to the name *Wenis* (or usually pronounced Unas by those who transliterate it from the Egyptian). He was a pharaoh of the 5th dynasty of Egypt. He is not our man however because Unas lived long before Abraham’s time, he lived a few centuries before that, but there is an Egyptian text that indicates that the pharaoh Unas ate the boiled body parts of gods by which most Egyptologists have assumed that it means he was a cannibal—he was eating not gods, but humans and if that be the case it does make it look a little suspicious if this is the guy in whose day his daughters are being offered in sacrifice.

Two related Egyptian terms may give us clues about the meaning of the name Unas. The first is *wnwt* meaning “priesthood” and the second *wnwty* meaning “astronomer” both of which play an important role in the Book of Abraham which describes Abraham’s teachings of astronomy to the Egyptians and the rival claims of Abraham and Pharaoh to patriarchal priesthood authority.

The name Katumin also appears in the Valuable Discovery notebook, and the first passage reads, “Katumin, Princess, daughter of On-i-tas [Pharaoh] King of Egypt, who began to reign in the year of the World 2962.” The second reads, “Katumin was born in the 30th year of the reign of her father, and died when she was 28 years old, which was the year 3020.” I’m presuming she was sacrificed but the text doesn’t say that. It also appears in the form of *Kah tou mun* as an alternative. It may derive from the Egyptian *KA-tA-Mn* which would be the “spirit of the land of Min.” Min was one of the Egyptian gods; he was a fertility god in fact, who is closely associated with the land. Various classical writers claim that the first king of Egypt was named *Mēnēs* and that name has often been tied in with the name of the god Min.

A few specific places are named in the Book of Abraham and associated Kirtland Egyptian Papers. Of these, Egypt and Ur of the Chaldees are also known from the biblical account of the life of Abraham.

Here, we’ll look at two important place names associated with Abraham that are not in the Bible because neither place is in Egypt, these names are not derived from the Egyptian language. The plain of Olishem is named in the Abraham 1:10 as the place in Ur of the Chaldees where the Egyptians had erected an altar on which they sacrificed human beings. John L. Lundquist has noted that the name is attested in a record of Naram Sin, a 23rd century B.C. king of Akkad as *Ulisum* and is listed with the (inaudible) mountains and the city Ebla in northwest Syria not far from Abraham’s homeland.

Akkadian and Hebrew are both part of the Semitic language family by the way and the exchange between the ‘o’ and ‘u’ is well attested in Semitic languages.

Here's one I kind of like- Kalsiduniash. The name *Kalsiduniash* is spelled in various ways in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. In one it appears as *chalsidon hish*(sp?) and is identified as the land of the Chaldeans. This meaning is also given in another of the text where it is spelled as *Za Ki-oan hiash*, and also *chalsidon hiash*(sp?). It appears in other spelling forms as well in those documents.

The ending 'iash' is interesting to me. It is known from the name of the Cassite (inaudible) and the names of the Cassite kings of Babylon (inaudible). The Cassites controlled Mesopotamia during the 17th century B.C. This of course post-dates the time of Abraham—he was 20th century B.C.—but it's hard to ignore the fact that the Cassites called Mesopotamia *Kar-Duniash* which closely resembles the name found in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers with the interchange of the 'l' and the 'r' again which are common between Semitic languages and those in the broader language family which includes Egyptian called Afro-asiatic.

A Falasha text called Teezaza Sanbat (Commandment of the Sabbath), Falasha by the way, those are the Black Jews of Ethiopia, in describing Nimrod's attempt to kill Abraham because he would not worship the idols noted regarding the furnace into which he was tossed, 'From that day until today it is called (inaudible)' (which sounds very much like these two- not identical but it's similar. The name is evidently to be tied to the Akkadian term (inaudible), a people identified with the biblical Chaldeans, or Kasidim in Hebrew, in whose land Abraham lived at the time he was brought for sacrifice. According to the conflict of Adam and Eve, and early Christian texts, among the magi who came to visit the newborn Jesus, one account names *Karsundas*, king of the East. I have his name at the bottom of the list but look how closely it corresponds to the others. There's something below the surface here and I'm not quite sure what it is but we'll continue to work on it.

As we have seen many of the names associated with the Book of Abraham and related documents have valid ancient etymologies. To be sure, there remain unanswered questions particularly about the so-called Alphabet and Grammar but it is hard to ignore the hits in the Book of Abraham. The number of names that are authentically ancient far outnumber those for which we cannot at present establish an etymology making coincidence and improbable explanation. That holds for the names, not necessarily for the words that are found, for example, in the Grammar materials.

Q: Is *Rahleenos* an authentic Chaldean word and if so does it mean hieroglyphics?

TVEDTNES: As far as I know it is not Chaldean. The term Chaldean is rather confusing anyway. In Joseph Smith's day the term Chaldean usually referred to

Aramaic. Some of the books of the Old Testament are in Aramaic rather than in Hebrew and some are part Hebrew and part Aramaic.

Daniel, for example, beginning with chapter 2:5 (I think it is) and all the way through to the end of chapter 6 is all in Aramaic. The rest of it is in Hebrew. So does it mean ‘that’ Chaldean? Or does it mean Chaldean the language that was spoken by the people we call Chaldeans? Hard to say because those people spoke Akkadian; that’s what we call it at least. I don’t know what they called it.

But the question isn’t phrased in such a way to really give it a good answer, but as I did mention, the original manuscript does say (inaudible) in Egyptian and as I said, I don’t think it has anything to do with it meaning specifically that in Chaldean whatever that is, but it does make sense if it is the language of god, which would be hieroglyphics—the language of the priests.

Watch this presentation, including all of the slides, on our Youtube site.

Pt. 1- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUb04NFCIO>

Pt. 2- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJk_cNFqE_E

Pt. 3- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kff_q7IW5wM&playnext=1&list=PL324F03A81448DE56

Pt. 4- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imTI8vqbwcA&feature=watch_response_rev

Pt. 5- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMykjlSwCo&feature=watch_response_rev

Pt. 6- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFp4CgASwOc&feature=watch_response_rev

[Transcriber’s endnotes.]

¹ Hugh Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], 193 - 194.

² The Persian Wars by Herodotus, Book 2 – EUTERPE.

³ 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).

⁴ See *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid. Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Provo, Utah, 2005.