A Translation and Commentary of the Joseph Smith Hypocephalus

Michael Dennis Rhodes

My purpose in writing this paper has not been to "try to prove" that the Prophet Joseph's interpretation of the hypocephalus is correct; that proof can come only from God, and each individual must find it for himself. Rather, it has been my aim to present a translation and commentary of the hypocephalus known as Facsimile 2 of the Pearl of Great Price, drawing upon our current knowledge of Egyptian language, culture, and religion. Surprisingly (at least to some), in a number of instances Joseph Smith's interpretation accords with modern Egyptology's. In other cases, however, there is definite disagreement. I have not tried to disguise or pass over these differences; I have sought merely to present them as I see them. What significance can be attached to them, each must decide for himself.

When dealing with things Egyptian, one must constantly be on guard against making absolute statements. Our knowledge of Egyptian civilization is woefully small. As Alan Gardiner has stated, "It must never be forgotten that we are dealing with a civilization thousands of years old and one of which only tiny remnants have survived. What is proudly advertised as Egyptian history is merely a collection of rags and tatters." At best we can make "educated" guesses which are in constant need of revision and which often, when viewed in the light of subsequent knowledge, seem most ludicrous. This paper then is not meant to be a definitive and final word on the Joseph Smith Hypocephalus, but rather, in Gardiner's words: "A target for others to tilt at."

Hypocephalus is the name given to a small disk-shaped object made of papyrus, stuccoed linen, bronze, wood, or clay, which the Egyptians placed under the head of their deceased (hence the name hypocephalus, literally, "under the head"). The purpose of the

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JOSEPH SMITH HYPOCÆPHALUS

**Edge:** I am Dibisy in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis, so exalted and glorious. I am a copulating bull without equal. [You are] mighty God in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis... that mighty God.

**Left Middle:** O God of the Sleeping Ones from the time of the Creation. O Mighty God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Netherworld and his Great Waters; grant that the soul of the Osiris Sheshonk may live.

**Bottom:** May this tomb never be desecrated; and may this soul and its possessions never be desecrated in the Netherworld.

**Upper Left:** You shall be as that God, the Buanian.

**To the Left of the Standing Two-headed God:** The name of this Mighty God.

BRITISH MUSEUM HYPOCÆPHALUS

**Edge:** O Dibisy in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis, so high. A copulating bull... [may you cause fire to occur under] his head.

**Middle:** [Text obscured by wear or damage.]

**Top Left:** A copulating bull... [may you cause fire to occur under] his head.

I propose the following translation of the reconstructed text of Exsimile 2. I have tried to avoid giving too literal a translation, as I have sought rather to convey the meaning of that original as I understand it. Whenever a question arose, my reasons for translating a given word or passage so I did are given in the footnotes.

**Top Right:** As for this Mighty God, may he cause the soul of the Osiris, Bubastis, to be justified at all ages.

**Right Middle:** O Mighty God, who lives, breathes and journeys on the water, and whose word is heard to enter.

**Left Middle:** O August God, O Mighty God, who lives in Heaven.

**Bottom Left:** No one will cause jealousy of his power. A Living One to whom is given life, duration and dominion forever.

BRITISH MUSEUM HYPOCÆPHALUS 37909

**Edge:** O Dibisy in the House of the Benben, so high and glorious.

**Ocopulating bull, Mighty God, in whose majesty is distinguished.** May you grant that the soul of the Osiris, Tahtkr-ka, justified, live, who is the daughter of Taus-en-Baste, most justified.

**Top Half by Standing Figure:** I am known and I know.**

**Top Half, Left Upper Section:** You are the eight rams, you have lived.

**Bottom Half:** Tomb of the Water-reep [?]. mva.chambers.

BRITISH MUSEUM HYPOCÆPHALUS 8445C

**Edge:** O shrine in the House of the Benben, so high and glorious.

**Ocopulating bull, Mighty God, Living One who is over the Gods in...** several words are broken off here... to the Osiris, Har, justified. May you cause flame to occur under his head; [for] he is one of your followers.

**Bottom:** Trespassed tomb of the chapel of water [?].

**Pop:** You are the eight rams of your gods.**

The interpretation of illustrations is probably the most difficult part of understanding Egyptian texts. These illustrations were not included merely for decoration; they were used to supplement and clarify the text. Their symbolic meaning, however, is often for us quite obscure and even baffling. A given symbol can have many different meanings, and trying to decide which one the author of the text was trying to convey is at times nearly impossible. For example, the Udjah-eye can represent healing, but also completion, light, totality, protection, glory, and even riches.** Add to this the fact that in many instances we have no idea what some symbols mean, and one can appreciate the magnitude of the problem only before us. Samuel Birch, after struggling to explain the meaning of several of the illustrations found on the hypostyle he was studying, finally admitted, "The esoteric meaning of some of these symbols is unknown." Following is an interpretation of the illustrations on the Joseph Smith Hypostyle:

1. A seated deity with two (or in most hypostyle, four) ram's heads. He holds in his hand the symbols of life (f²), dominion (w3) and stability (dd). On either side of the god are two cuneiform figures (nos. 22 and 23) with horned heads on their heads, in an attitude of adoration.** There are also two serpents, one on either side of the seated deity.

This seated god represents the creator god, Khnum. When thus depicted with four heads, Khnum united within himself the attributes of the gods Re (the sun), Shu (light), Geb (the earth), and Osiris (the afterworld), and he was considered to be the type of the primordial creative force, Šhâl-hâk. This four-headed version


Edge: I am Dbiay in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis, so exalted and glorious. I am a copulating bull without equal. I am the Mighty God in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis... that Mighty God.

Left Middle: O God of the Sleeping Ones from the time of the Creation. O Mighty God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Netherworld and his Great Waters. Grant that the soul of the Osiris Sheshonk... may live.

Bottom: May this tomb never be desecrated, and may this soul and its possessor never be desecrated in the Netherworld.

Upper Left: You shall be as that God, the Busiris.

To the Left of the Standing Two-Headed God: The name of this Mighty God.

BRITISH MUSEUM HYPOTHESIS

Edge: O Dbiay in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis, so high.

A copulating bull... may you live forever under his head.

I propose the following translation of the reconstructed text of Facsimile 2. I have tried to avoid giving too literal a translation.

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As for this Mighty God, may he cause the soul of the Osiris, Bubastis, justified to live.

Right Middle: O Mighty God, who lives, breathes and journeys on the water, and whose word Re enters to hear.

Left Middle: O August God, O Mighty God, who lives in Heaven.

You are one who is jealous of his power, a Living One to whom is given life, duration and dominion forever.

I propose the following translation of the reconstructed text of Facsimile 2. I have tried to avoid giving too literal a translation.

BRITISH MUSEUM HYPOTHESIS 37909

Edge: O Dbiay in the House of the Benben, so high and glorious. A copulating bull. Mighty God in... whose majesty is distinguished. May you grant that the soul of the Osiris, Tahkerth-Rhon, justified, live, who is the daughter of Taha-en-Khons, most justified.

Half to Standing Figure: I am known and I know.

Half to Left Upper Section: You are the eight rams, you have used.

Altar: Tomb of the Water-room [?] mnh:chamber.

BRITISH MUSEUM HYPOTHESIS 8445c

Edge: O shine... in the House of the Benben, so high and glorious.

A copulating bull, Mighty God, Living One who is over the Gods... several words are broken off here... to the Osiris, Har, justified. May you cause flame to ascend under his head, [for] he is one of your followers.

Altar: Trespassed tomb of the chapel of the water.

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You are the eight rams of your gods [?].

"Djebay (IWF 4.862.2) an ordinary of Osiris, perhaps meaning the provider; it can also be "Son", like Horus. The title of Noah is thought to be a borrowing from Egyptian. Cf. Frank, "Benz" 5.8.5. Broder, "Über die Namenl und die Bezeichnungen der Gottheiten des Orients". Oxford Classical Press, 1934, p. 104.

"Hypothese" the name of the funerary temple in Heliopolis. Cf. IWF 1.149.10. See also Richard Castagnoli, "Hypothese du Prince Osiris". Académie Grecque des Inscriptions, Rome. Forti, "Istituto del Museo dell' Egitto". 1934, p. 17.

These two adjectives may refer either to the House of Benben or to Dbiay, the latter seems the more likely. From earliest times the Egyptians thought of the bull as being especially strong and fertile, and both gods and kings were associated with the bull (Bubastis, Godd). 12124.

"Geb" or "Mighty God" is used to refer to Osiris and to the dead person thought of as Osiris (IWF 2.231.3.2).

"Geb" is the fear of Osiris (IWF 4.862.2).

"Geb", literally, "first born", i.e. the Creation. Cf. IWF 1.149.111. M with the verb "to enter". Cf. IWF 1.110.4.


On the identification of the Deity with Geb, see Frank, Religion, p. 111. Osiris was among other things, the god of the conventional Geb. Godg, 2.14.

"Geb", the name of several kings of Dyn. XXI. It is also used in which sense.

"Geb", a number of Geb, Busiris, a little corner of Osiris in the Delta and thus used as a number of Osiris. Cf. IWF 2.5.50.

"Geb", the name of a god's name; see footnote 15.

"Geb", a number of Geb, Busiris, a little corner of Osiris in the Delta and thus used as a number of Osiris. Cf. IWF 2.5.50.

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"Geb", a number of Geb, Busiris, a little corner of Osiris in the Delta and thus used as a number of Osiris. Cf. IWF 2.5.50.
hypocephalus was to envelope the head and body in flames or radiance, thus making the deceased divine. The hypocephalus itself symbolized the eye of Re or Horus, i.e., the sun, and the scene portrayed on it, in relation to the resurrection of the life after death, which idea is more particularly symbolized by the course of the sun. The upper portion of the hypocephalus represented the day sky, and the lower portion (the part with the cow) the night sky. Hypocephali first appeared during the Sixth Dynasty (663-525 B.C.) and their use continued down to at least the Christian era. It is in the Saite recreation of the Book of the Dead, chapter 162, that directions for the construction and use of the hypocephali are given. The section to which this chapter belongs (162-165) is found only in the late Saite version and contains many strange words and concepts. Eduard Naville considers these chapters to be of foreign origin, or at least influenced by sources outside Egypt. E. A. Wallis Budge suggests that the influence is in part Nubian.

Since the meaning of the hypocephalus is intimately connected with chapter 162 of the Book of the Dead, I will now give a translation of the whole of that chapter as it is found in Richard Lepsius' Todtenbuch.

Chapter 162

Title: A spell for causing flame to occur under the head of a glorified being.

1. To be recited. Greetings to you, mighty Part of the ladys Double name, possessor of the White crown [of Upper Egypt], equipped with the flail. You are Lord of the Ptahs! You rise constantly.

2. shining forth and never ceasing to rise. You are a master of forms, who has numerous appearances. You hide yourself from your children in [or with] the Udjat-eye. You are the strength of the midst of the Amset of the Gods. You are a powerful runner, swift of stride. You are a strong god who comes to the one who numbers him, [and comes to] the one that laments his misery

4. caused by your name, [or possibility]. Come then to my call, [for] I am IAH. Your name is in my mouth, [and] I will say: he of Hgy is your name, it is your name, it is your name

6. You placed a flame under Re's head, and behold, he is in the divine Netherworld in Helopolis. You caused him to become like those upon the earth. He is your soul, do not forget him. Come to the

7. Usris, Ifwabch, justified, [and] cause a flame to occur under his head. Truly he is the soul of the Great Body which rests in Helopolis, Bkhh-hjmt is his name, Br-bn is his name. Come indeed and

8. cause him to become like one of your followers, [for] this one, he belongs to you.

To be recited over a figure of Iah which is made of fine gold and placed around the neck of the

9. glorified being and also put in writing upon new papyrus [and] placed under his head. [If this is

10. The one who hides himself from his children, an apostle of Amun-Re at Khonsu (Chios) in the Delta. The meaning is not known.

11. From 'the unseen eye of Horus (from wsd) to be holy, exchanged'. Also of Re and generally of any god or goddess. Also, an amulet in the form of an eye.

12. And, indeed, 'the nine', but perhaps better understood as a plural of a plural.

13. of gods. (This line is suggested in my Professor Hans Gudecke.)

14. that these epithets were not at all clear.

15. And the bony head with its hair is a form of Hathor. Cf. W. J. 1:1206.

16. every god and goddess possessed a hidden identity, a mystery name. If anyone could find out this name, he would comprehension of the god or goddess. Cf. Budge, Gods, P. 1:100; and Rosner, Religions, p. 501f.

17. The worship of meaning in Egyptian.

18. Also meaningful.

19. Also meaningful.

20. This name is found behind the four Sons of Horus on the


22. These are two reimaginations. All of these names may be that is goldsmiths', or some other language, perhaps Nubian. See Budge, Gods, 2:71.

23. 1220, the earthly Helopolis, but rather the Heavenly Helopolis in the same site as the 'Heavenly Jerusalem'.

24. E., made alive.

25. E., others.

26. [W. J. 1] I have no suggestions for this.

Another incomprehensible name.

done,) there will be a multitude of flames all around him as it is with those upon the earth. The Eye of Horus [i.e., the hypocephalus] is a very great protection for her, Re, when he sets.

10. His throne shall be encircled by a serpents [73] army. He shall be made divine to the Necropoleos [and] he shall not be turned back from any door of the Netherworld successfully. Then shall you say [after you have placed this godess around the neck of the glorified being], "O most hidden one who is in heaven, watch over the body of your son, [and] preserve him in the Necropoleos.

12. This is a great and secret book. Do not allow any other's eyes to see it, [for] that would be an abomination. Who knows it [i.e., the book] and keeps it secret, he will continue to exist.


Hypocephali are found in several museums in Europe, but except for the Joseph Smith Hypocephali, none seem to have found their way to America. The largest single collection of hypocephali is in the British Museum, and three pieces of that collection are very closely related to the Joseph Smith Hypocephali both in layout and text. Comparing these with Facsimile 2 from the Pearl of Great Price has made it possible to reconstruct the original text of the Joseph Smith Hypocephali with only a few superficial variations.

Since the story of the finding of the hypocephali and the other scrolls and how they eventually came into the possession of Joseph Smith is given elsewhere, I will touch on it only briefly. According to David Whitmer, Antonio Lebozo was employed by Bernardo Drovetti, French Consul-General in Egypt at the time, to find


antiquities in Thebes. While digging in the area of Gurneh, he discovered a large shaft at the bottom of which he found some 400 mummies. He removed eleven of them, but died before he was able to remove any of the others. On the following day, seven were retained by Drovetti, but the remaining four were willied to Lebozo's nephew, Michael Chandler, and were shipped to him in America. When Chandler received the mummies, he unwrapped them and found several papyri with them among which was the hypocephalus we are now considering. In 1858 Chandler sold the mummies and the papyri to the Church, and Joseph Smith then began to translate and publish them in 'The Book of Mormon.' Thus it would seem from the meager evidence we have, that the Joseph Smith Hypocephali came from a tomb located in the Gurneh area of Thebes. From the text of the hypocephalus itself, it seems that the owner's name was Sheshonq.

When perusing Facsimile 2, one is immediately struck by the contrast between most of the hieroglyphic signs, which are readily recognizable, and the signs of the right third of the figure on the outer edge as well as the outer portions of the sections numbered 12-13. On closer examination, these prove to be hieratic and inverted (that is, upside down to the rest of the text). And, most surprising of all, those hieratic characters are recognizable as a fairly faithfully rendered copy of lines 2, 3, and 4 of the Church papyrus XI, which contains a portion of the Senen papyrus or Book of Breathings. Especially clear is the actual word, i.e., in section 14, and part of the name of the possessor of the papyrus, Jerusalem, repeated twice. Why this was done I am not sure. I can only postulate that those portions of the hypocephali were damaged (a common enough occurrence because of the extremely fragile condition of these documents), and someone (the printer, one of the Prophet's associates, or Joseph Smith himself) copied these characters off the Senen papyrus so that the facsimile would look complete. In support of this view is an ink drawing of Facsimile 2 in the Church Historian's Office which shows blanks in these sections.

Following is a reconstructed hieroglyphic transcription of the text of the Joseph Smith Hypocephali. As is the normal practice, it will read from left to right rather than from right to left as is found in the original text.

See translation on page 265 of this article.
Joseph Smith Hyopocephalus

Edge: I am Dibity in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis, so exalted and glorious. I am a copulating bull without equal. I am that Mighty God in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis... that Mighty God.

Left Middle: O God of the Sleeping Ones from the time of the Creation. O Mighty God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Netherworld and his Great Waters; grant that the soul of the Osiris be sheltered, may live.

Bottom: May this tomb never be desecrated, and may this soul and its possession never be desecrated in the Netherworld.

Upper Left: You shall be as that God, the Bosman.

To the Left of the Standing Two-headed God: The name of this Mighty God.

British Museum Hyopocephalus

Edge: O Dibity in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis, so high. A copulating bull... may you cause fire to occur under his head.

As for this Mighty God, may he cause the soul of the Osiris, Bakheben, to justifies to live.

Right Middle: O Mighty God, who lives, breathes and journeys on the water, and whose word Re enters to hear.

Left Middle: O August God, O Mighty God, who lives in Heaven. You are one who is jealous of his power, a Living One to whom is given life, duration and dominion forever.

British Museum Hyopocephalus 57909

Edge: O Dibity in the House of the Benben, so high and glorious. O copulating bull, Mighty God in... whose majesty is distinguished. May you grant that the soul of the Osiris, Tahkeret-Khonsu, justified, live, who is the daughter of Taharqon, may be justified.

Top Half by Standing Figure: I am known and I know.

Top Half, Left Upper Section: You are the eight rams, you have lived.

Bottom Half: Tomb of the Water-room... mbsj-chamber.

British Museum Hyopocephalus 8445C

Edge: O Shire in the House of the Benben, so high and glorious. O copulating bull, Mighty God in, Living One who is over the Gods in... several words are broken off here... to the Osiris, Har, justified. May you cause flame to occur under his head... for he is one of your followers.

Bottom: Trespassed tomb of the chapel of water.

Top: You are the eight rams of your gods.

The interpretation of illustrations is probably the most difficult part of understanding Egyptian texts. These illustrations were not included merely for decoration; they were always used to supplement and clarify the text. Their symbolic meaning, however, is often for us quite obscure and even baffling. A given symbol can have many different meanings, and trying to decide which one the author of the text was trying to convey is at times nearly impossible. For example, the Udjat-eye can represent healing, but also completion, light, totality, protection, glory, and even riches. Add to this the fact that in many instances we have no idea what some symbols mean, and one can appreciate the magnitude of the problem now before us. Samuel Birch, after struggling to explain the meaning of several of the hieroglyphs in the illustration, was studying, finally admitting, "The esoteric meaning of these scenes is unknown." Following is an interpretation of the illustrations on the Joseph Smith Hyopocephalus:

1. A seated deity with two (or in most hyposthai, four) ram's heads. He holds in his hand the symbols of life (hs), dominion (msj) and stability (dd). On either side of the god are two cuneiform apes (nos. 22 and 23) with horned moonbeaks on their heads, in an attitude of adoration. There are also two serpents, one on either side of the seated deity.

This seated god represents the creator god, Khnum. When thus depicted with four heads, Khnum united within himself the attributes of the gods Re (the sun), Shu (light), Geb (the earth), and Osiris (the afterworld), and he was considered to be the type of the primordial creative force, Sd/jds. This four-headed version...
heads, and he is holding the jacksal standard of Wepwawet. To his right is an altar with offerings on and around it. In most hypocephali, he is holding the ankhs, symbol of life, in his right hand. Also to his right is a line of hieroglyphics reading: “The name of this Mighty One.”

P. J. de Horrack considers this to be Amen-Re; the two heads illustrating the hidden and mysterious power of Amen combined with the visible and luminous power of Re. William Petrie agrees that it is Amen-Re, but sees the two heads as representing the rising and setting sun. That the deity is a form of Amen is clear from the fact that he is wearing the double plume crown mentioned in chapter 162 of the Book of the Dead, but why he has jackals’ heads on his shoulders and is holding a jackal standard is not so evident. The jackal was generally used as a symbol of Amun and Wepwawet, both funerary gods. Amun being specifically the god assigned to guide the dead through the afterworld to the throne of Osiris. Perhaps due to the funerary character of the hypocephalus, it was thought that Amen should also carry emblems indicative of his power over that realm as well.

Again, we can compare here the significance ascribed to these characters by the Egyptians. Where the hypocephalus depicts the two-headed deity holding the symbol of life or power over death, Joseph mentions “holding the key of power.” Where an altar is shown, Joseph identifies the principle of “sacrifice upon an altar” and associates it with Abraham. A hidden power seems to be associated with the name of the two-headed God, who probably serves as a guide for the dead to bring them into the presence of God. This might concur with Joseph’s explanation that this figure “stands next to Kolob,” as a guide surely must do if he is going to be able to lead the dead to God.

3. Hawk-headed Re with the sun disk on his head, seated on the solar bark. On either side of him is an Udjat-eye. In his hand he holds the adz-sceptre, symbol of dominion, and in front of him is an altar with a lotus blossom on it.

Re seated in his bark represents the sun in its daily journey across the sky and symbolizes resurrection and rebirth, since the sun was thought to die and be reborn each day. The lotus on the altar in front of him is also symbolic of rebirth and the rising sun. The Udjat-eye was symbolic of light and protection (among other things), and is thus not out of place in this context.

Here again certain similarities may be detected in Joseph Smith’s explanations. Where we may identify a royalty seated god holding the sceptre of dominion, Joseph describes a god sitting on his throne clothed with power and authority. The sun disk on the god’s head and the Udjat-eye, symbolic of light and protection, somewhat track in meaning Joseph’s mention of “a crown of eternal light ... also the grand key-words of the holy priesthood.” No explicit mention of resurrection imagery is made by Joseph Smith here or elsewhere in his explanations, but his entire discussion assumes an immortal prospective.

4. A mumiform hawk with outward wings, seated upon a boat. Represents either Horus-Soped or Sokar, both hawk gods, which are symbolized by a mumiform hawk. De Horrack suggests that it symbolizes the resurrection of the body or soul, but this does not seem to be very convincing to me. One outstanding feature of this figure is its outward wings, which are not normally found in representations of these two gods. Some connection with Horus, the personification of the sky, seems clear. The association with Sokar, the ancient god of Memphis, is even more interesting. In the festival of Sokar, which was celebrated in many parts of Egypt, a procession was held in which the high priest would place the Sokar-boat on a sledge and pull it around the sanctuary. This procession was symbolic of the revolution of the sun and other celestial bodies. Unfortunately, no texts have come down to us explaining this symbolism in more detail.

Joseph Smith sees here symbolism for the expansion or firmament of the heavens, which, as concept, stated above, the Egyptians often represented by a hawk god (especially Horus). Also, Joseph’s explanation that this figure represents the revolutions of Kolob, and Olibiah agrees favorably with what we know of the symbolism of the Sokar-boat in the festival of Sokar at Memphis.
is well to remember that to the Egyptians these were all aspects of the One God who manifested himself in many forms.

CONCLUSION

Although we can, with the help of other similar texts, reconstruct the text and figures of the Joseph Smith Hypothesis with a fair degree of accuracy, we are still far from completely understanding the message which the Egyptians meant to convey by it. The text of the hypocephalus itself seems to be an address to Osiris, the god of the dead, on behalf of the deceased, Shenkon. As is the case with most Egyptian texts (especially religious texts), it is a reference to matters either obscure or unknown to us, although undoubtedly clear to the Egyptians. Needless to say, much work is still to be done before we can fully understand the import of the Joseph Smith Hypothesis, and hypocephali in general. Unfortunately, there has been little or no work done on them since the end of the last century. I hope, however, that I have been able to contribute to our knowledge of this interesting group of texts.


Everybody is Ignorant, Only on Different Subjects

Eliot Butler

It is presumptuous, of course, to attempt to describe and discuss the educated person. I take comfort, however, in the observation that one is not required to be that when one describes. It does seem easier to get directly to the opposite of the educated person. James Thurber had a classmate whom he described clearly: “While he was not dumber than an ox,” Thurber said, “he was not any smarter either.” I guess that we all have known that boy. In my attempt to reach a definition of the educated person I have kept you and me in mind. If the standard set by the definition is so high that almost none of us can achieve it then the standard is clearly too high and there is no point in discussing it, except as an academic exercise. One is tempted to consider as educated only Renaissance men, those great scholars whose knowledge and superior ability swept across many fields. There is no doubt that Leonardo was an educated man. And one stands in awe of Christopher Wren, who was mathematician and astronomer, and who appears to have picked up architecture only as an afterthought—and then designed beautiful churches, cathedrals, libraries, hospitals by the score. Thomas Jefferson’s breadth of excellence was such that at a dinner in the White House honoring Nobel Prize winners, President Kennedy could describe his guests (those Nobel laureates) as, “The most extraordinary collection of talent, of human knowledge, that has ever been gathered together at the White House—with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone.” But, let us face the truth. Renaissance people are not crowding the world.
As for this Mighty God, may he cause the soul of the Osiris, Bukeheben, justified to live.

Right Middle: O Mighty God, who lives, breathes and journeys on the water, and whose word Re enters to be heard.

Left Middle: O August God, O Mighty God, who lives in Heaven. [You are] one who is jealous of his power, a Living One to whom is given life, duration and dominion forever.

BRITISH MUSEUM HYPOCERATUS 37909

Edge: O Djatay in the House of the Benben, so high and glorious. O copulating bull, Mighty God in . . . whose majesty is distinguished. May you grant that the soul of the Osiris, Tahkered-Khons, justified, live, who is the daughter of Tama-en-Bastet, most justified.

Top Half: By Stating Figure: I am known and I know.

Top Half, Left Upper Section: You are the eight rams, you have lived.


BRITISH MUSEUM HYPOCERATUS 8445c

Edge: O shank [8] in the House of the Benben, so high and glorious. O copulating bull, Mighty God, Living One who is over the Gods in . . . (several words are broken off here) . . . to the Osiris, Har, justified. May you cause flame to occur under his head, [for] he is one of your followers.

Bottom: Trespassed tomb of the chapel of water [7].

Top: You are the eight rams of your gods [7].


**Read as distinct rather than in a b.

***Just what this might be, I don't know.

**Mry with house determinative. Not found in the Wb. Cf. IF 180, 3:561-6. This lacks the seated god determinative found in the other hypoglyphs. See footnote 11.

*Read as distinct of 1.

**This is almost verbatim from chapter 162 of the Book of the Dead. See translation on pages 260-61 of this article.

*Have no idea what this refers to.

**Sense gathered.

PACEMILE 2 BY THE NUMBERS

The interpretation of illustrations is probably the most difficult part of understanding Egyptian texts. These illustrations were not included merely for decoration; they were used to supplement and clarify the text. Their symbolic meaning, however, is often for us quite obscure and even baffling. A given symbol can have many different meanings, and trying to decide which one the author of the text was trying to convey is at times nearly impossible. For example, the Udjer-eye can represent healing, but also completion, light, totality, protection, glory, and even riches. Add to this the fact that in many instances we have no idea what some symbols mean, and one can appreciate the magnitude of the problem; through we know before us. Samuel Birch, after struggling to explain the meaning of several of the illustrations found on the hypoglyphs he was studying, finally admitted, "The esoteric meaning of these scenes is unknown." Following is an interpretation of the illustrations on the Joseph Smith Hypoglyphus:

1. A seated deity with two (or in most hypoglyphs, four) ram's heads. He holds in his hand the symbols of life (wb), dominion (w3t) and stability (dd). On either side of the god are two cynocephalic apes (nos. 22 and 23) with horned moondisks on their heads, in an attitude of adoration. As there are also two serpents, one on either side of the seated deity. This seated god represents the creator god, Khnum. When thus depicted with four heads, Khnum united within himself the attributes of the gods Re (the sun), Shu (light), Geb (the earth), and Osiris (the afterworld), and he was considered to be the type of the primeval creative force, S1·w·k·k. This four-headed version


**Samuel Birch, "Hypoglyphs in the British Museum Nos. 8445; P.B. 6 May 1884, p. 183.

***See, e.g., British Museum hypoglyph 17900. 8445a. 8445c, etc. For another hypoglyph with only two heads represented see P.B. 1897, plate II. Also, in another hypoglyph, the god is wearing one or more Self crowns.

†The number of spots varies from two to as many as eight.

‡These snakes often have circles drawn around them. For example, see British Museum hypoglyph 8445a.


‖) de Hortack, "Hypoglyphs in the Museum of Louvre," P.B. 4 March 1884, p. 128. Winke, however, in Borshe, Reallexikon, p. 569, considers it to be a representation of the psychic Aton Re.

*]UDGE, GODS, 2:51; [W3t, 4:456, 11]; BORNM, REALLEKION, pp. 139-58.

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