



READ THE JOURNAL

DISCOVER BLOG, NEWS & RESOURCES



WATCH & LISTEN VIDEOS & PODCASTS

LEARN ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

Book of Moses Textual Criticism 3: Was the Book of Moses Simply an Unplanned Afterthought to Moses 1?

← Previous Next →

by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw | Sep 10, 2020 | 0 comments

00:00

00:00

Podcast: [Download](#) (Duration: 23:55 — 21.9MB)

Subscribe: [Apple Podcasts](#) | [RSS](#) | [More](#)

A response to Thomas A. Wayment. "Intertextuality and the purpose of Joseph Smith's new translation of the Bible." In *Foundational Texts of Mormonism: Examining Major Early Sources*, edited by Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen and Sharalyn Howcroft, 74-100. New York City, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018.

In Thomas Wayment's chapter discussing how "Joseph Smith initiated a new and ambitious ... project" to translate the Bible, he motivates his analysis by asserting that "the reasons he began the undertaking have never been fully understood."^[1] He concludes that the impetus for Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible (JST) came, in essence, as an unplanned afterthought to his having received a revelation of the visions of Moses (Moses 1), which, it is argued, came in response to questions about Moses and the Creation that had

Subscribe

Donate Today

Recent Blog Posts

- » Hearing the Voice of the Lord in the Mind #6: Imparting Needed Information
- » Hearing the Voice of the Lord in the Mind #5: The Book of Mormon
- » Hearing the Voice of the Lord in the Mind #4: Blessing, Helping

arisen over the course of the preceding year.

I have great respect for Wayment's well-attested scholarship, and I would not want to minimize the great service he has rendered to Latter-day Saints in his edition of the JST and his New Testament writings, among others. But in this chapter, he is not at his best. While the underlying arguments are not completely without merit, they are at times overstated, and some of the counterevidence is ignored.

In this brief essay we give a four-part response to the lines of reasoning presented in the chapter. Although it discusses the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible more broadly, the present remarks will be confined to its explanation of the early origins of the JST and the portions of the JST that eventually became known as the Book of Moses:

1. *Omission of the Prehistory of the Joseph Smith Translation.* Although it is true that there is currently no direct evidence that Joseph Smith was expressly commanded by the Lord to begin a translation of the Bible, as Wayment rightly observes, multiple lines of evidence suggest that the restoration of lost truths from the Bible had been previously anticipated and possibly even specifically planned for in advance by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Regrettably, none of these elements of the well-known prehistory of the JST is mentioned in the chapter.
2. *Questionable Claims.* Section 2 provides a short discussion on some questionable claims about concurrence with the Joseph Smith Papers project that are first mentioned early on in the chapter.
3. *Was the OT1 Moses 1 Manuscript an Original Dictation or a Copy?* To further flesh out his thesis, Wayment asserts that the earliest extant manuscript of Moses 1 was a copy, not an original dictation. In section 3, we show that the received view that Moses 1 is an original dictation of the revelation is a better fit for the evidence.
4. *How does all this relate to the bigger picture?* Section 4 concludes this essay. The chapter's argument that the OT1 Moses 1 manuscript is a copy is part of a larger effort to show that that "the Bible revision was, in its infancy, a kind of editing project to bring existing canonical texts into harmony"^[2] with the revelations Joseph Smith had received prior to June 1830. I will briefly describe the primary weakness of this argument. Notwithstanding some areas of disagreement with Wayment, I believe he is correct in concluding that Joseph Smith viewed ancient and modern scripture "as consistent manifestations of the eternal and divine gospel of Jesus Christ."^[3] The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants are joint witnesses that the restoration of lost truths of the Bible, rather than being an unplanned afterthought, is the realization of prophecies given thousands of years ago.

1. The Prehistory of the Joseph Smith Translation^[4]

Had Wayment included a more complete account of the prehistory of the JST, readers would more easily realize that the impetus for the Bible revision was not the kind of sudden, unexpected development presumed in his chapter. Neglected elements of this prehistory are

and Informing
Mission Presidents
and Their Wives,
Missionaries and
Others

» Hearing the Voice of
the Lord in the Mind
#3: Blessing and
Helping Missionaries

» Hearing the Voice of
the Lord in the Mind
#2: When Ministering
and Serving

» Hearing the Voice of
the Lord in the Mind
#1 – Introduction

» A Pre-Print of a
Discussion of the
Book of Mormon
Witnesses by Royal
Skousen

» Exploring the
Symbolism of Christ
in Ancient Christmas
Carols and Traditions
4: The French
Villagers Who
Witnessed Christ's
Birth in Bethlehem

» Exploring the
Symbolism of Christ
in Ancient Christmas
Carols and Traditions
3: Adam and Christ,
Eve and Mary at
Christmastime

» Exploring the
Symbolism of Christ
in Ancient Christmas
Carols and Traditions
2: Temple Themes in
Luke's Account of the
Angels and the
Shepherds

summarized briefly below.

Joseph Smith became aware of the limitations of the Bible as a boy, even before his First Vision. In the Prophet's 1838 description of the "war of words" provoked by the religious excitements that preceded that Vision, he recounts the futility of "settling the question [as to which was the true church] by an appeal to the Bible" because "the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently."^[5] He had also noticed that during the visit of Moroni a few years later, the ancient prophet cited the Bible "with a little variation from the way it reads our Bibles."^[6]

Later, during the translation of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith would have noticed passages that spoke of "plain and precious things" that had been removed from the Bible^[7] and of the coming forth of "other books" in the last days that would "make known the plain and precious things which [had] been taken away."^[8] In events that presaged the involvement of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in restoring lost stories and teachings from the Bible, they had already produced what can be seen as a "new translation" of portions of John 21 in April 1829, later published as Doctrine and Covenants section 7.^[9]

In light of these and other preparatory experiences that revealed the current status of the Bible and the future restoration of truths no longer contained within it, it would have been no surprise to Joseph Smith when the Lord revealed in Moses 1 that the visions of Moses it related formed part of these lost works and words, and that he had been raised up to write them so they would be "had again among the children of men."^[10] Throughout the remainder of his life the Prophet would continue to comment on the significance of these lost texts and truths that were to be revealed, restored, or retranslated.^[11]

Significantly, there is some support for the idea that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery made specific preparations for the work of Bible translation in the year prior to its undertaking. For example, in October 1829, they purchased a Bible that was eventually used in the preparation of the JST.^[12] Though there is currently no independent evidence that this copy of the Bible was acquired with a new translation in mind, the timeframe of the purchase is suggestive. The pioneering JST scholar Robert J. Matthews did not see this idea as unreasonable. He wrote:^[13]

Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith ... did not state their purpose in purchasing the Bible at that time, but in view of the instructions and experiences they had received, it is possible that they were thinking of a new translation of the Bible even at that early date.

If we assume for a moment that the Bible was purchased in October 1829 in anticipation of a new work of translation, how can the months of delay before it started be explained? Simply put, it was not until June 1830 that Joseph Smith was able to free himself to begin the new work of translation that was intended to restore "many important points touching the salvation of men, [that] had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled."^[14] The delay is understandable in light of major events that had recently transpired: the Book of Mormon had come from the press in March 1830, the Church had been organized in April, and the first conference had been held in early June. Moreover, later in June, the same month that Moses 1 was given, tremendous opposition had begun to mount during a visit of the Prophet to the Saints in Colesville, New York.^[15]

None of the anticipatory events just described are mentioned by Wayment. Given the relevance of this material to the central arguments of the chapter, the omission of a more inclusive prehistory of the JST is both surprising and regrettable.

2. Questionable Claims About Concurrence with the Joseph Smith Papers Project

At the outset, the chapter advances some questionable claims about concurrence from the Joseph Smith Papers (JSP) project for the views it presents. For example, Wayment supports his argument that the work of Bible translation “was a natural consequence”^[16] of Joseph Smith’s having received Moses 1 “in the late spring or early summer of 1830”^[17] by a footnote to the sentence where the dating of Moses 1 and its role in motivating the JST is asserted. The footnote states: “This is the position taken”^[18] in the relevant volume of the JSP project. However, by way of contrast to the chapter’s assertion, the editors of the JSP volume do *not* draw the conclusion that the Prophet’s initial engagement in the work of Bible translation was a “natural consequence” of his having received Moses 1. Instead they provide only the cautious statement that “it is *unknown* whether JS or Cowdery originally saw this revelation as the initial step of the larger project.”^[19]

Moreover, Wayment’s assertion that Moses 1 was received “in the late spring or early summer of 1830”^[20] is equally unsupported by the JSP editors who, in the JSP volume cited, do not mention the possibility of a “late spring” date, but instead matter-of-factly refer to the manuscript as “the June 1830 revelation,”^[21] a description that agrees with the dated superscription on the earliest extant manuscript.

Of course, it will almost certainly never be possible to conclusively rule out the possibility that Moses 1 was received in the late spring or whether there was an earlier copy any more than one can assert today with confidence exactly how much Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery knew in advance about the forthcoming Bible translation project. But we can say with assurance that the cited Joseph Smith Papers volume does not provide the corroborating evidence evidently hoped for, whether for the possibility of a spring dating for Moses 1 or for unwavering support of its conjectured role as the primary spur that motivated the JST project.

3. Was the OT1 Moses 1 Manuscript an Original Dictation or a Copy?

Arguments that Moses 1 was an original dictation. When one begins to encounter the meat of the chapter’s arguments, it becomes clear how much of an uphill climb must be undertaken to support the thesis that Moses 1 was *not* initially conceived as part of the Bible revision.

Below, I will briefly argue that the earliest extant manuscript of the revelation was deliberately preserved as an integral part of the JST Old Testament 1 manuscript (OT1) from three lines of evidence:

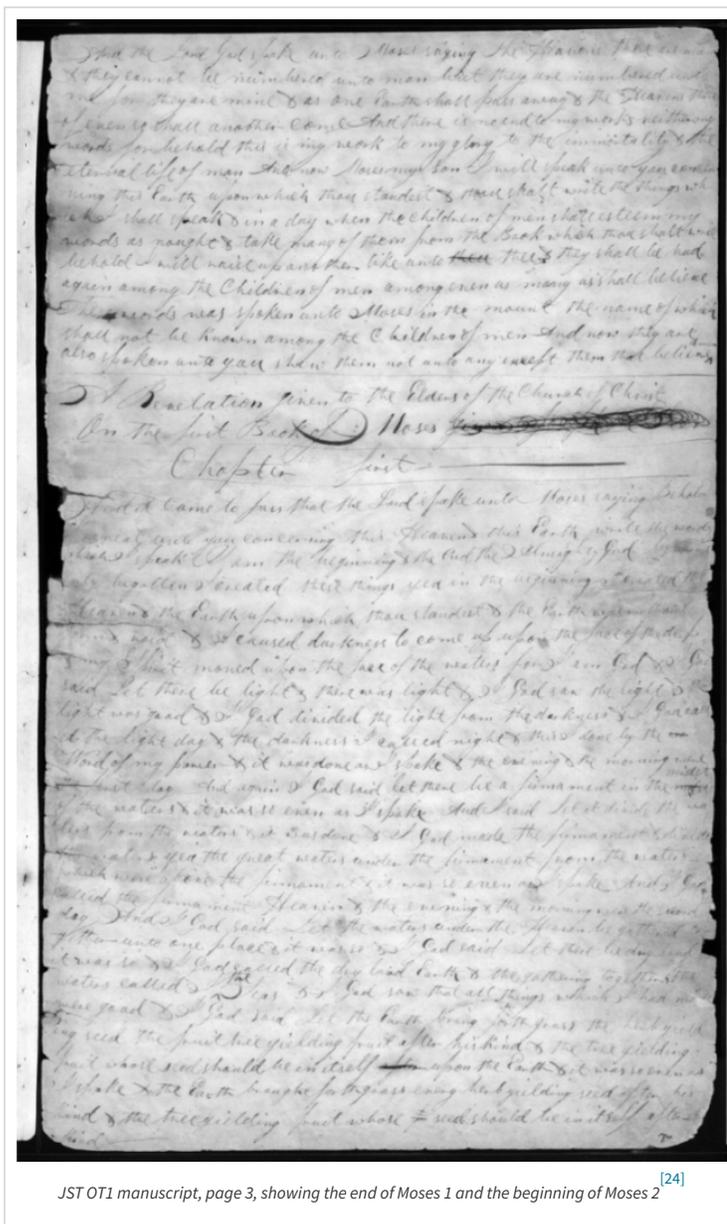
1. Physical relationship;
2. Scribal continuity; and
3. Literary continuity.

1. Physical relationship. Moses 1 was recorded on the first three pages of a fifty-two page gathering. Although it is impossible to know for certain when these pages were stitched together, it seems very unlikely that Joseph Smith would have begun to put together a folded booklet of this nature if he only anticipated a single revelation of a few pages.^[22] Otherwise, why not just begin writing on a single half-sheet?

When the text of Moses 1 finishes on page 3, after an inch and a half break containing a heading, the text of the translation of the first chapters of Genesis begins. In short, the positioning of Moses 1 within the OT1 manuscript, and in later JST manuscripts, suggests that Moses 1 may have been conceived as an integral part of the translation project from its inception.

2. Scribal continuity. Consistent with this idea is the evidence of scribal continuity in the transition between what we take to be the spontaneously revealed Moses 1 and the Bible-prompted revelation of Moses 2. By way of background, Kent Jackson describes the way in which other parts of the OT1 manuscript seem to reflect the transparent ease with which the Prophet and his scribes alternated between existing Bible text and new additions dictated by Joseph Smith. He writes that beginning with Genesis 1:^[23]

it seems evident that Joseph Smith had a Bible in front of him during the translation and that he read from it while his scribes wrote. When he came to a passage needing revision, he would dictate words not found in the printed text until he came back to that text and continued with it. The writing on the manuscripts shows no indication of when the text was coming out of the printed Bible and when it was not.



JST OT1 manuscript, page 3, showing the end of Moses 1 and the beginning of Moses 2^[24]

The end of the Moses 1 chapter in the OT1 manuscript, shown above but regrettably not reproduced like the other two manuscript pages in Wayment’s chapter, reflects the same general uniformity in writing style described by Jackson. From the major features of the writing style alone, a reader would not suspect that there were significant differences in the revelatory processes that distinguished Moses 1 from Moses 2. In other words, though the Prophet’s dictation of Moses 2 was a mix of existing Bible verses and his own additions, and, by way of contrast, he apparently had no written source for Moses 1, the lack of important differences in the two relevant parts of the manuscript suggests that Moses 1, like Moses 2, was an original dictation, not a copy.

Though it might seem an incredible feat for the manuscript of Moses 1 to have been given, seemingly “without the slightest contemplation, hesitation, or uncertainty,”^[25] it should be remembered it was not an uncommon thing for Joseph Smith to produce new revelations by means of long, spontaneously spoken dictations.^[26]

3. Literary continuity. In addition to evidence relating to the physical relationship and scribal continuity that links Moses 1 to the rest of the JST, there are signs of a literary continuity between the visions related in Moses 1 and the story of Creation in Moses 2. Jackson notes that in the transition between the two chapters, the words of Moses 2 “do not give the impression of having been written to stand at the head of a new document, but to continue the texts that precede them.”^[27] Indeed, in further support for this idea, Mark J. Johnson adduces evidence of a chiasm that spans Moses 1:40 through 2:1, thus suggesting the idea that the end of Moses 1 and the beginning of Moses 2 form a coherent literary unit.^[28]

Counter-arguments seeking to establish that Moses 1 was a copy. To counter the generally received view of an incipient, integral connection between Moses 1 and 2, Wayment seeks to establish that Moses 1 was received as a separate revelation on a purportedly lost original manuscript. Eventually, according to this theory, a copy was made and “later *joined* to the JST documents as a type of introduction.”^[29]

An emphasis on “joining” Moses 1 “to the JST documents” is highlighted by the repetition of the idea. A little later on, we read, similarly: “In this case, Joseph Smith and his scribes sought to *join* the revelation of Moses 1 with their revision of the Bible.”^[30] Further on, it says: “Seeing Moses 1 as a document that was *added* to the Bible revision project provides an important piece of evidence in understanding the origins and initial interests of the JST.”^[31] Because the intended meaning of these statements is somewhat unclear, the repeated use of the terms “join” and “added to” may lead some readers to mistakenly conclude that after the Bible revision was already begun and some of the “JST documents” already existed, the Moses 1 text was added to it. But this is impossible because Moses 1 was received *before* any of the Genesis chapters were translated. This is witnessed by the fact described above, namely that it appears on the first three pages of the OT1 page gathering, prior to the original dictation of the translation of Genesis 1.^[32]

In favor of the idea that Moses 1 was a copy of an independent revelation that was later “joined” to the Bible revision, rather than an original dictation, the chapter identifies several characteristics of its earliest extant manuscript version. According to Wayment, the OT1 manuscript of Moses 1 features:

- *A relatively smooth rather than a ragged right edge.* While the author cites this feature as often indicating a copy rather than a dictated manuscript, he rightfully qualifies this evidence by an admission that “if the dictation is slow enough then a scribe can reasonably compensate in some instances.”^[33] As further evidence that full-length lines are not a reliable indicator that the OT1 manuscript of Moses 1 is a copy, a footnote documents the fact that in “the Book of Mormon manuscripts, which were also dictated, Cowdery does frequently use the full length of lines.”^[34] Significantly, full-length lines are also apparent for the dictated text of the first verses of JST Genesis on page 3 of the OT1 manuscript. Thus, a generally useful argument cannot be applied to the OT1 manuscript of Moses 1 with any confidence.
- *“In line” rather than “over line” corrections.* While “in line” corrections sometimes provide a good general heuristic for distinguishing copied texts from original dictations, only one instance of an “in line” correction is supplied by Wayment. All the rest of the corrections mentioned are “over line.”^[35] In other words, of all the

corrections cited, only one unequivocally favors the idea of a copied rather than a dictated text.

- *Skipping between similar words.* Though the chapter provides one example where such skipping might have occurred, a second example points to a dictation error instead.^[36] Thus, the argument is equivocal.
- *Minor errors and corrections.* Though Wayment concludes that the examples of minor errors and corrections cited in the chapter “suggest a copied document,”^[37] alternative explanations seem equally or more probable for at least some of these. For example, Colby Townsend specifically disputes Wayment’s idea that “Cowdery mistakenly saw ‘them’ on the original manuscript, wrote that word on OT1 and then realized it was wrong and crossed it out and penned the correct ‘thee’ next to it on the same line. The problem is the manuscript clearly reads ‘thee,’ not ‘them.’”^[38]
- *Indicators of pauses in production.* Evidence of pauses in the translation are strong indicators of copying only when the pause occurs in unexpected places. The only “pause” that may fit this criterion in the OT1 Moses 1 manuscript is a stray dot of what is admitted to be “uncertain” interpretation that occurs one word before the end of a sentence. Of course, stray dots are not uncommon in manuscripts written with a dip pen.
- *Counterexamples.* Commendably, Wayment includes two additional examples that run counter to his argument for a copied text. These examples indicate an original dictation.

It will be seen that none of the points above advances a convincing argument. However, as we continue to read, this inconclusive evidence is eventually elevated to near certainty. Specifically, though the author begins carefully by admitting at the outset that the evidence is “not overwhelmingly conclusive”^[39] (more simply stated, “inconclusive”) that the OT1 version of Moses 1 is a later copy rather than an original, by the time we reach the end of the chapter, the hypothesis that the “original document ... was eventually copied into OT1”^[40] is asserted without any qualification. This confident assertion should be contrasted to the cautious statement of the JSP editors, who simply aver, after a brief acknowledgement of the possibility, that the “evidence is inconclusive.”^[41] Townsend’s analysis of the examples provided is less tentative. He states more strongly that it is “difficult to accept the idea that Moses 1 was originally dictated on a separate manuscript page from OT1.”^[42] In other words, contra Wayment, Townsend sees it as more likely that the OT1 Moses 1 manuscript is an original dictation than a copy.

4. How Does All This Relate to the Bigger Picture?

Wayment’s argument that the OT1 Moses 1 manuscript is a copy is part of a larger effort to show that “the Bible revision was, in its infancy, a kind of editing project to bring existing canonical texts into harmony”^[43] with the revelations Joseph Smith had received prior to June 1830. At first glance, however, the evidence for the connections between the revelations cited and the early chapters of the Book of Moses appear to be somewhat loose. Going further, a bigger problem with this reasoning is that the opposite of what is argued is true: the translation of the early chapters of Genesis that eventually became the Book of Moses are not simple replications or implications of prior revelations, but rather introduce doctrines that were radical innovations and, in some cases, clear departures from many things the Prophet

seems to have understood prior to that time. As Avram Shannon, citing the extensive work of Robert J. Matthews,^[44] puts it “many distinctive Latter-day Saint beliefs are actually *first* found in the JST.”^[45]

The remainder of the chapter focuses on Joseph Smith’s “interests,” “purpose,” and “intent” in producing the Book of Moses, in which it is said that he and his scribes were “revising the Bible according to their early theological interests.”^[46] The principal weight of the arguments seems to be thrown behind the thesis that Joseph Smith either “purposefully”^[47] (meaning consciously) revised Genesis to make it “a Christian salvation epic”^[48] or he did so accidentally because he was “a nineteenth-century Christian himself”^[49] and essentially was so wrapped up in his own culture that he did not realize what he was doing.

Unfortunately, the emphasis of the discussion is almost wholly on human initiative and the conscious or unconscious appropriation of biblical material as the basis for the JST revisions. Inexplicably, the author fails to mention evidence adduced by other scholars that many of the surprising and extensive doctrines, teachings, and narratives contained in the Book of Moses that have little or no biblical basis are arguably related to ancient texts from *outside* the Bible. Though, of course, the chapter is a scholarly publication, not a devotional treatise, credible studies providing evidence for both literary sophistication and ancient threads in the Book of Moses can and should be considered alongside competent scholarship documenting nineteenth-century influences.

The present essay emphasizes several differences with Thomas Wayment about the origins of the JST, however none of these differences are ultimately as crucial to faith as an agreement with him regarding the essential element of divine involvement in the revelations and translations of Joseph Smith. It is important to recognize Wayment’s well-attested scholarship and to gratefully acknowledge, as he does in the chapter, that despite the general tendency to see the JST wholly as “a result of Smith’s own New Testament worldview,”^[50] there is room to see the translation as “a process of inspiration.”^[51] The spirit of this statement from Wayment’s conclusion deserves applause:^[52]

Joseph Smith seems to have viewed all revelation, prophetic writing, and scripture — both ancient and modern — as consistent manifestations of the eternal and divine gospel of Jesus Christ.

Indeed, Joseph Smith’s inspired teachings, translations, and revelations affirm that Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, and Moses were actually Christians—the most important and central lost truth that has been restored and prominently featured in every work of Latter-day Saint scripture. And they also affirm that, as outlined in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants, the JST was not merely an unplanned afterthought to Moses 1, but rather the realization of prophecies given thousands of years ago. To accept Joseph Smith as the Prophet of the Restoration is to possess an assurance that this restored truth has a basis in material history.

[1] Thomas A. Wayment. "Intertextuality and the purpose of Joseph Smith's new translation of the Bible." In *Foundational Texts of Mormonism: Examining Major Early Sources*, edited by Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen, and Sharalyn Howcroft, 74-100. (New York City, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018) 74.

[2] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 88.

[3] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 100.

[4] Robert J. Matthews provides a useful collection of statements by Joseph Smith that reveal his understanding about the need for a new translation of the Bible (Robert J. Matthews. "A Plainer Translation": *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible—A History and Commentary*. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 4-8). Our discussions draws in part on his findings.

[5] Joseph Smith—History 2:12.

[6] Joseph Smith—History 2:36.

[7] 1 Nephi 13:24-32.

[8] 1 Nephi 13:40.

[9] See, e.g., David W. Grua and William V. Smith. "The tarrying of the beloved disciple: The textual formation of the account of John." In *Producing Ancient Scripture: Joseph Smith's Translation Projects and the Making of Mormon Christianity*, edited by Mark Ashurst-McGee, Michael Hubbard MacKay, and Brian M. Hauglid, 231-61. (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2020)

[10] Moses 1:41.

[11] See, e.g., R. J. Matthews, *Plainer*, 5-7.

[12] Kent P. Jackson. "Joseph Smith's Cooperstown Bible: The Historical Context of the Bible Used in the Joseph Smith Translation." *BYU Studies* 40, no. 1 (2001): 41-70.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol40/iss1/3/>, 41. About the use of the Bible in producing the JST, Jackson writes (Kent Jackson. "The visions of Moses and Joseph Smith's Bible translation." In *To Seek the Law of the Lord": Essays in Honor of John W. Welch*, edited by Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson, 161-69. (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation, 2017) , 167):

There is no evidence in the Bible to show that he used it for the translation before February 1832. Because he clearly used it after that date, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he used the same Bible from the beginning of Genesis as well.

[13] R. J. Matthews, *Plainer*, 26.

[14] Joseph Smith, Jr. In *The Joseph Smith Papers Project*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.net>, JS History, vol. A-1, page 183, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/189> (accessed August 23, 2020), style modernized. Cf. Joseph Smith, Jr. 1938. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1969), 16 February 1832, 10-11; Joseph Smith, Jr. 1902-1932. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Documentary History)*. 7 vols. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1978), 16 February 1832, 1:245.

The Prophet later explained, "[f]rom what we can draw from the Scriptures relative to the

teaching of heaven, we are induced to think that much instruction has been given to man since the beginning which we do not possess now” (J. Smith, Jr., “JS Papers Website”, Letter to the Church, circa March 1834, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-the-church-circa-march-1834/2#foot-notes> (accessed 23 August 2020). Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 61). See Robert J. Matthews. "The role of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible in the restoration of doctrine." In *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, edited by Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges, 327-53. (Provo, UT: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies at Brigham Young University, 2000) for an overview of this topic.

Kathleen Flake summarizes how scholarly views of the Bible have changed since the time of Joseph Smith (Kathleen Flake. "Translating time: The nature and function of Joseph Smith's narrative canon." *Journal of Religion* 87, no. 4 (October 2007): 497-527. <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/divinity/facultynews/Flake%20Translating%20Time.pdf>, 509):

Today, the Bible itself is believed to be largely the product of periodic manipulation of foundational texts. “Redaction” has become the preferred term for an invasive revision of a source that seamlessly inserts new material in an authoritative text in order to meet new exigencies. Though only a gleam in the eye of the academy at the time Smith was writing and still a source of concern for literalist readers, redaction has become the regnant explanation for the construction of the Bible as having “experienced change, accretions, and reinterpretations as it was being transmitted through centuries.”

[15] Richard Lyman Bushman. *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling, A Cultural Biography of Mormonism's Founder*. (New York City, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), pp. 116-118. Later, the Prophet (or one of his associates on his behalf, perhaps William W. Phelps) coolly summarized these circumstances and described how the revelation of Moses 1 had provided needed encouragement (J. Smith, Jr., “JS Papers Website”, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/54>, note 64 (accessed August 23, 2020). Cf. Ebenezer Robinson, Don Carlos Smith, Robert B. Thompson, Gustavus Hills, Joseph Smith, Jr., John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff, eds. *Times and Seasons*. (Nauvoo, IL, 1839-1846) Reprint, 6 vols., History of Joseph Smith, vol. 4, issue 5 (16 January 1843), page 71, <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/8417> (accessed 23 August 2020); J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, June 1830, 1:98):

Amid all the trials and tribulations we had to wade through, the Lord, who well knew our infantile and delicate situation, vouchsafed for us a supply of strength, and granted us “line upon line” of knowledge—“here a little and there a little” [Isaiah 28:10], of which the [vision of Moses] was a precious morsel.

[16] T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 75.

[17] T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 75.

[18] T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 75.n. 4.

[19] Joseph Smith, Jr., Michael Hubbard MacKay, Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, Grant Underwood,

Robert J. Woodford, and William G. Hartley. *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828-June 1831. The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, Richard Lyman Bushman, and Matthew J. Grow. (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian's Press, 2013), 151-152, emphasis added.

[20] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 75.

[21] J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Documents 1, July 1828-June 1831*, 151.

[22] K. Jackson, "Visions of Moses", 166, emphasis added. The full description of Jackson reads as follows:

To make such a gathering, thirteen loose sheets of foolscap paper (ca. 16 x 13 inches) were folded in half and stitched in the middle to make a booklet of fifty-two pages. Normally, the writing would be placed on the pages after the booklet was created, but it is possible that sheets were folded and placed inside as the writing progressed and there is no way to know at what point the stitching was added. These uncertainties are relevant, because they speak to the issue of whether the Prophet anticipated a large writing project when the words were placed on the first page (whether it was the dictated manuscript or not). The gathering begins with the Visions of Moses, and the last page ends at Genesis 21:29.

[23] K. Jackson, "Visions of Moses", 167.

[24] Scott H. Faulring and Kent P. Jackson, eds. *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible Electronic Library (JSTEL) CD-ROM*. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2011), OT1 page 3, Moses 1:37-2:12.

[25] Kent P. Jackson. "New discoveries in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible." *Religious Educator* 6, no. 3 (2005): 149-60. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-6-no-3-2005/new-discoveries-joseph-smith-translation-bible>, 154.

[26] Sometimes the revelatory flow continued unabated after interruptions of considerable length. For example, Doctrine and Covenants 84 was received in two separate parts on two consecutive days. Parley P. Pratt gives a vivid description of another revelatory dictation (Parley P. Pratt. 1873. *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*. Revised and Enhanced ed, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2000), p. 72):

After we had joined in prayer in his translating room, he dictated in our presence the... revelation:—(Each sentence was uttered slowly and very distinctly, and with a pause between each, sufficiently long for it to be recorded, by an ordinary writer, in long hand.

This was the manner in which all his written revelations were dictated and written. There was never any hesitation, reviewing, or reading back, in order to keep the run of the subject; neither did any of these communications undergo revisions, interlinings, or corrections. As he dictated them so they stood, so far as I have witnessed; and I was present to witness the dictation of several communications of several pages each.)

Underwood appropriately qualifies Pratt's remarks as follows: "Strictly speaking, Pratt's observations refer only to the *dictation* of the revelation texts, not to what happened to them thereafter, when, as textual analysis of the [*Book of Commandments and Revelations*] makes abundantly clear, they *did* 'undergo revisions, interlinings, [and] corrections' before

publication” (Grant Underwood. "Revelation, text, and revision: Insight from the Book of Commandments and Revelations." *BYU Studies* 48, no. 3 (2009): 67-84, p. 83 n. 23).

[27] K. Jackson, “Visions of Moses”, 164.

[28] Mark J. Johnson. "The lost prologue: Reading Moses Chapter One as an Ancient Text." *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 36 (2020): 145-86.

<https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/the-lost-prologue-reading-moses-chapter-one-as-an-ancient-text/>, 161:

The chiasmic structure is well suited to report the loss of the words of the Lord and then to have the words restored as the structure swings back around. Note that verse 42 has been left out of the arrangement because it is a parenthetical aside from the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith and is not part of the vision itself. The presence of chiasmus in these verses links these two revelations together, suggesting a deliberate textual unit. The words “earth upon which thou standest” act as an inclusio demarcating the limits of the segment.

The implications for the study of the JST should be obvious. The fact that this textual unit is formatted as a narrative structure demonstrates that the text should be treated as a whole literary unit.

[29] T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 81, emphasis added.

[30] T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 81, emphasis added.

[31] T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 89, emphasis added.

[32] To believe otherwise, one must assert the unsupported idea that the pages of the OT1 manuscript were themselves a copy of a Genesis translation whose originals pre-dated Moses 1, to which Moses 1 was later joined.

[33] T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 82.

[34] T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 82 n. 13.

[35] See T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 82-83.

[36] T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 83-84.

[37] T. A. Wayment, “Intertextuality”, 84.

[38] Colby Townsend. "Returning to the sources: Integrating textual criticism in the study of early Mormon texts and history." *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 10, no. 1 (2019): 55-85. <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/imwjournal/vol10/iss1/6/>, 74-75:

On page 84 of his essay Wayment argues that the scribe, Oliver Cowdery, made a visual copying error when copying Moses 1 from the original manuscript to OT1.⁴⁷ According to Wayment Cowdery mistakenly saw “them” on the original manuscript, wrote that word on OT1 and then realized it was wrong and crossed it out and penned the correct “thee” next to it on the same line. The problem is the manuscript clearly reads “theee,” not “them.” Wayment notes the accurate transcription from Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews in footnote 21 on the same page. In OT1 on the line above what Wayment transcribes as “them” and over three words to the left you find an example of the scribe’s handwriting for “them.” After the “e” the handwriting arcs vertically to the right to make the first upward hook of the “m,” and the letter has three rounded upward hooks altogether. The example of the error is not similar to the uncontested example of “them” at all. After the initial “e” in

the error Wayment describes there are only two upward hooks, not three. Unlike the curved and unconnected hook, these two upward hooks are looped to the left exactly like two cursive letter e's. The reading that Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews offered was correct, the scribe wrote "theee them."

[39] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 82.

[40] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 99.

[41] J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Documents 1, July 1828-June 1831*, 150.

[42] C. Townsend, "Returning to the Sources", 75.

[43] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 88.

[44] E.g., R. J. Matthews, "Role of JST".

[45] Avram Shannon. "Mormons and midrash: On the composition of expansive interpretation in *Genesis Rabbah* and the Book of Moses." *BYU Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (2015): 15-34.

<https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/mormons-and-midrash-composition-expansive-interpretation-genesis-rabbah-and-book-moses>, 31, emphasis added. The resemblances in the three revelatory precursors to Moses 1 described in Wayment's chapter to motivate the idea that the Prophet was preoccupied with the themes of Moses 1 in the prior year (Doctrine and Covenants 19:1-4; 20:17-18; and the Canadian Copyright Revelation [J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Documents 1, July 1828-June 1831*, Revelation, circa Early 1830, 108-112]) are loose and relate more closely to commonly understood biblical themes than they do to the more radical teachings about God, humankind, and the universe found in Moses 1.

[46] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 89.

[47] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 89.

[48] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 89.

[49] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 89.

[50] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 92.

[51] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 92.

[52] T. A. Wayment, "Intertextuality", 100.

by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw | Sep 10, 2020 | 0 comments

About Jeffrey M. Bradshaw



Jeffrey M. Bradshaw (PhD, Cognitive Science, University of Washington) is a Senior Research Scientist at the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition (IHMC) in Pensacola, Florida (www.ihmc.us/groups/jbradshaw; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeffrey_M._Bradshaw). His professional writings have explored a wide range of topics in human and machine intelligence (www.jeffreybradshaw.net). Jeff has been the recipient of several awards and patents and has been an adviser for initiatives in science, defense, space, industry, and academia worldwide. Jeff has written detailed commentaries on

the Book of Moses and Genesis 1–11 and on temple themes in the scriptures. For Church-related publications, see www.TempleThemes.net. Jeff was a missionary in France and Belgium from 1975–1977, and his family has returned twice to live in France. He has served twice as a bishop and twice as a counselor in the stake presidency of the Pensacola Florida Stake. Jeff is currently a temple worker at the Meridian Idaho Temple and has been assigned to work on the history of the Church in Africa as a service missionary for the Church History Department. Jeff and his wife, Kathleen, are the parents of four children and fourteen grandchildren. From July 2016–September 2019, Jeff and Kathleen served missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo Kinshasa Mission office and the DR Congo Kinshasa Temple. They currently live in Nampa, Idaho.

[View all papers by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw →](#)

THE JOURNAL

Home
All Journal Articles
Volume Index
Journal Indexes
Submissions
Subscriptions

BLOG, NEWS & RESOURCES

Blog
News & Events
Come, Follow Me
Conferences
Books
Reprint Series
Book of Moses Essays
Gospel Doctrine Resources
Bibliographies
Article & Blog Indexes

VIDEOS & PODCASTS

Interpreter Radio
LDS Perspectives
Videos
Roundtables

THE FOUNDATION

The Foundation
Stay Informed
Subscription Updates
Contact Us
Donate
Expenses
Copyrights & Content
Privacy Policy



Copyrights | Responsibility for
Content



© 2021 The Interpreter Foundation.