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## Early Book of Mormon Writings Now Online

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## Early Book of Mormon Writings Now Online

The most extensive collection of writings about the Book of Mormon published between 1829 and 1844 has been made available as an online database. The collection, 19th-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon (1829–1844), includes nearly 600 publications and close to one million words of text. It is intended to comprise, insofar as possible, everything published during Joseph Smith’s lifetime relating to the Book of Mormon. Under the auspices of Digital Collections at Brigham Young University’s Harold B. Lee Library, this ambitious project can be accessed at [lib.byu.edu/dlib/bompublications](http://lib.byu.edu/dlib/bompublications).

For more than 10 years Matthew Roper, research scholar at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship and head of the project, has been collecting this literature. The collection builds upon the early efforts of Francis W. Kirkham, an educator for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. According to Roper, during the 1930s Kirkham began

collecting rare newspapers relating to early Latter-day Saint history. Subsequent researchers and historians have discovered many additional items, all of which are included in this new collection.

This valuable resource includes works by detractors as well as defenders and contains references to the Book of Mormon published in newspapers, books, pamphlets, hymns, broadsides, and early reference works, much of it formerly inaccessible to the public.

“We’ve done several things to make this collection valuable and easy to use,” says Roper. “First, we gathered all of the publications relating specifically to the Book of Mormon into one collection, saving researchers the considerable time involved in identifying articles, tracking them down, and obtaining microfilm of rare books. Second, the database includes transcripts as well as images of these publications. The collection is also fully searchable, allowing scholars to more easily identify and access those publications relating to their area of interest.” The electronic database will also be updated as more sources come to light. ♦

## “He Shall Add”: Wordplay on the Name *Joseph* and an Early Instance of *Gezera Shawa* in the Book of Mormon

In explaining the prophecies of Isaiah in which his soul delighted, Nephi sets up an intriguing wordplay on the name *Joseph*.<sup>1</sup> On several occasions he combines segments of Isaiah 11:11 and Isaiah 29:14 to foretell the gathering and restoration of Israel at the time of the coming forth of additional scripture. The most discernible reason for Nephi’s interpretation of these two specific texts in the light of each other is their shared use of the Hebrew verb *yāsap*, which literally means “to add” but can have the more developed senses to “continue” or “proceed to do” something and “to do again.”<sup>2</sup> This verb is also the source of the name *Joseph*, which means “may He [the Lord] add,” “He shall add,” or “He has added.”<sup>3</sup> Rachel, the mother of the patriarch Joseph, is said to have explained the giving of this name to her son with that basic sense in mind: “And she called his name *Joseph* [*yōsēp*], and said, The Lord shall *add* [*yōsēp*] to me another son” (Genesis 30:24; emphasis in all

scriptural citations is mine).<sup>4</sup> Thus when Nephi combined these two prophecies together through their common use of *yāsap*, he was also using a wordplay on the name *Joseph* both to remind us that it was the seed of Joseph that would be gathered and to foretell the involvement of another Joseph, Joseph Smith, in the gathering and in the coming forth of scripture.

Isaiah 11:11 states: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand *again* [*yōsēp*] the second time to recover the remnant of his people,” while Isaiah 29:14 declares: “Therefore, behold, I will *proceed* [*yōsēp*] to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder.”<sup>5</sup> Nephi’s joining of these two passages is most noticeable in 2 Nephi 25:17, where he foretells the latter-day gathering of Judah: “And the Lord will *set* his hand *again* [*yōsēp*] the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will *proceed* [*yōsēp*] to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men.” Here Nephi states that the Lord “shall bring forth his words unto [his people]” words they have not previously had, “for the purpose of convincing them of the true Messiah” (25:18) and “that the promise may be fulfilled unto *Joseph* [*yōsēp*]” (25:21).