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Title The Sesquicentennial of Four European Translations
of the Book of Mormon

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Abstract Introduction to the following four articles on early translations of the Book of Mormon into French, German, Italian, and Welsh.



The Bicentennial of

FOUR EUROPEAN TRANSLATIONS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON



The year 1852 saw the unprecedented publication of translations of the Book of Mormon into four European tongues: French, German, Italian, and Welsh (listed in alphabetical order). A year before, in 1851, the Book of Mormon appeared in Danish, the first in a series of translations that has now grown into 56 foreign-language translations as of September 2000, along with 37 partial translations (called “selections”). The following four articles set the translation activities of 1852 into historical contexts that disclose firm ties to the church’s early missionary push into countries that would allow the preaching of the gospel. Early on, of course, mis-

sionaries and their leaders sensed the need to equip themselves with copies of the Book of Mormon—the scripture that set them and their message apart from other religions. Thus they turned their energies to translating efforts that bore fruit in terms of converts and making the Book of Mormon available to a wider public. One notable figure who moves in and out of two of the stories is Elder John Taylor of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. It becomes evident that, within a short period, he engaged in a multipronged translation initiative that affected the work of the church across Europe for decades to follow. —ED.

