

*The History of Joseph. Compiled in an Easy and familiar Way, for the Entertainment and Instruction of Youth.* Coventry and London: M. Luckman, Brooke and Macklin, and Champante and Whitrow, [n.d.]. 12mo, 94 pages, 20 woodcut ornaments and illustrations.

This retelling of the Old Testament story of Joseph provides a lesson in the providence of God and the proper way to deal with adversity. Joseph's father Jacob favors him over his brothers, who are jealous and sell him into slavery in Egypt. Jacob is told that Joseph is dead. Joseph is falsely imprisoned in Egypt, where his gift of interpreting dreams is discovered. He is released from jail to explain the dream of the pharaoh, and foretells a great famine for which the pharaoh asks him to prepare. Joseph's family is compelled to travel to Egypt for food and appeal to him for assistance. Joseph gives them food but tests them; he relents when they beg him for mercy and reveals his identity. Joseph's tale is followed by "Reflections upon the foregoing History, taken from Robertson's Scripture Characters," which conveys that those most beloved by God may suffer greatly, good fortune is not a sign of God's favor, and God's will for us is wise and not to be doubted.

This copy of *The History of Joseph* is part of the Douce Collection at the Bodleian Library. Francis Douce (1757–1834) was a British antiquary and the Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum from 1807 to 1811. His bequest of more than 19,000 volumes contained printed books from various periods, including nearly 500 incunables, as well as roughly 425 manuscripts. Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century children's books numbered among Douce's wide range of collecting specialties. The title page of this book, which is in a contemporary binding of boards covered with Dutch floral paper, has the stamp "EX DONO FR. DOUCE | BIBL. BODL." along with the inscription "James Haskoll | April 1799."

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