

SAMUEL JOHNSON
BRUCE REDFORD

The Letters of Samuel Johnson

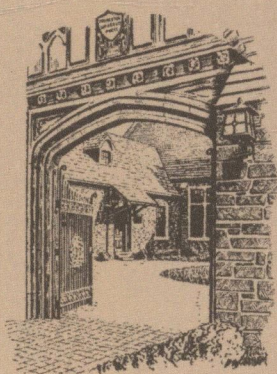
1782-1784, *Volume IV*



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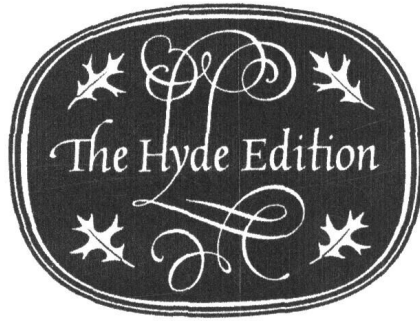
THE LETTERS OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON



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VOLUME IV · 1782–1784

Edited by
BRUCE REDFORD



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1. JOHNSON, SAMUEL-1709-1784-CORRESPONDENCE.

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SAMUEL JOHNSON

by Thomas Trotter. A chalk drawing made shortly before
Johnson's death (Hyde Collection)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"TIME hovers o'er, impatient to destroy, / And shuts up all the Passages of Joy": the last three years of Johnson's life are robbed of joy by two great calamities, the collapse of his body and the decay of his friendship with Hester Thrale, which breaks off, in July 1784, with two of his most powerful letters. On the whole, however, epistolary aggression is rare during these final years: instead, Johnson constitutes and reinforces community through correspondence, writing against solitude as he fights his rearguard medical action. The majority of the letters collected in this volume provide, in Boswell's description of the *Rambler* essays, *bark and steel for the mind*.

I too have been fortunate in my community of friends, colleagues, and correspondents, who have ministered doses less bitter than quinine and kept at bay the "secret horror of the last" (*Idler* No. 103). In addition to those singled out in Volume 1, chief among them Janet Stern and Marcia Wagner Levinson, I would like to thank Donald Eddy, David Fairer, Alvaro Ribeiro S. J., Richard Sharpe, E. Thorne, and David Weinglass. The translations of Johnson's Latin letters have been examined scrupulously by Michael Murrin, Raphael Newman, Joshua Scodel, and Peter White. To all who have contributed unstintingly: *Nemo sibi placens non lætatur; nemo sibi non placet qui vobis, literarum Arbitris, placere potuit* (To Thomas Fothergill, 7 April 1775).

BRUCE REDFORD

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

APRIL 1992

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

POLICIES of annotation and transcription have been modeled on the style sheet for the Yale Research Edition of the Private Papers of James Boswell. The most detailed version in print appears in the front matter to *The Correspondence of James Boswell with David Garrick, Edmund Burke, and Edmond Malone*, ed. P. S. Baker et al. (1986). The statement that follows adheres closely to this version.

THE TEXTS

Choice and Arrangement of Letters

The letters are presented in chronological order. Letters written for others, as well as public dissertations in the guise of letters, have been excluded. Undated letters that cannot be assigned with confidence to a specific year appear in Appendix I, where they are ordered alphabetically by correspondent. Appendix II gathers together the evidence for letters whose texts have not been recovered. Translations of Johnson's letters in Latin appear in Appendix III.

The copy-text has been the mss of letters sent, whenever such mss were available. In the absence of originals, we have used ms copies. When no mss at all have been recovered, we have used printed texts as copy.

Transcription

In accordance with the policy of the Yale Research Series, "manuscript documents in this edition have been printed to correspond to the originals as closely as is feasible in the medium of type. A certain amount of compromise and apparent inconsistency seems unavoidable, but change has been kept within the limits of stated conventions."

The following editorial conventions are imposed silently:
Addresses. Elements appearing on separate lines in the ms are

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

run together and punctuated according to modern practice. On franked covers, handwriting is that of the franker unless otherwise specified.

Datelines. Places and dates are joined at the head of the letter regardless of their position in the ms. Punctuation has been normalized.

Salutations. Abbreviations are expanded. Commas and colons after salutations are retained; in the absence of punctuation, a colon is supplied.

Complimentary closes. Abbreviations are expanded. Punctuation has been normalized. Elements appearing on separate lines in the ms are run together. Complimentary closes paragraphed separately in the ms are printed as continuations of the last line of text.

Endorsements. Handwriting is that of the recipient unless otherwise specified.

Punctuation. At the ends of completed sentences periods may replace commas or dashes and are always supplied when omitted. A sentence following a period always begins with a capital letter.

Changes. Substantive additions and deletions in Johnson's hand are recorded in the notes.

Lacunae. Words and letters missing through a tear or obscured by a blot are supplied within angle brackets. Inadvertent omissions are supplied within square brackets. Non-authorial deletions are not reported unless the reading is in doubt.

Abbreviations, contractions, and symbols. The following abbreviations, contractions, and symbols, and their variant forms, are expanded: abt (about), acct (account), agst (against), Bp (Bishop), cd (could), compts (compliments), Dr (Dear), Ld (Lord), Lop (Lordship), Ly (Lady), Lyship (Ladyship), recd (received), sd (should), Sr (Sir), wc (which), wd (would), yr (your), & (and), &c (etc.). All retained abbreviations and contractions are followed by a period. Periods following ordinals have been removed.

Superior letters. Superior letters are lowered.

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

Brackets. Parentheses replace square brackets in the text, brackets being reserved for editorial use.

Spelling. The original spelling has been retained, except for obvious inadvertencies, which are corrected in the text and recorded in the notes.

Capitalization and paragraphing. Original capitalization and paragraphing have been retained.

ANNOTATION

Headnotes. Postmarks, although partly illegible on some letters, are left unbracketed when not in doubt. Marks on the wrappers other than addresses, postmarks, endorsements, and stamped and written franks have been ignored.

Footnotes. When an abbreviated source is given, the full citation may be found in the list of cue titles and abbreviations on pp. xvii–xix. All other reference titles in the footnotes are sufficiently complete to enable ready identification; for each letter, these citations are presented in full the first time they occur and are shortened in all subsequent occurrences in the notes to that letter. Except where a work has been directly quoted, no source is given when the information is available in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, an encyclopedia, or other general reference work.

Reference to all letters is made by correspondent and date. *Post* and *Ante* references supplement but do not replace the index, which should be consulted whenever the identity of names or places is in doubt.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1709 Is born at Lichfield, 18 Sept.
- 1717-25 Attends Lichfield Grammar School.
- 1728 Enters Pembroke College, Oxford, in October.
- 1729 Leaves Oxford in December.
- 1731 Death of his father Michael.
- 1732 Usher at Market Bosworth School.
- 1733 Resides in Birmingham; translates Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia*.
- 1735 Marries Elizabeth Porter; opens school at Edial.
- 1737 Leaves for London in March; begins work for Edward Cave.
- 1738 *London*.
- 1744 *An Account of the Life of Richard Savage; Harleian Miscellany*.
- 1746 Signs contract for the *Dictionary*.
- 1749 *Irene* produced; *The Vanity of Human Wishes*.
- 1750 Begins *Rambler*.
- 1752 Death of Elizabeth Johnson; final *Rambler*.
- 1755 Oxford M.A.; publication of the *Dictionary*.
- 1758 Begins *Idler*.
- 1759 Death of his mother Sarah; publication of *Rasselas*.
- 1760 Final *Idler*.
- 1762 Is granted annual pension.
- 1763 Meets James Boswell.
- 1764 Founding of The Club.
- 1765 Meets Henry and Hester Thrale; Dublin LL.D.; *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*.
- 1770 *The False Alarm*.
- 1771 *Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*.
- 1773 Hebridean tour.
- 1774 *The Patriot*; tour of Wales.
- 1775 *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland; Taxation No Tyranny*; Oxford D.C.L.; trip to Paris.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1777 Trial of Dr. Dodd; begins work on *Lives of the Poets*.
- 1779 First installment of *Lives*.
- 1781 Death of Henry Thrale; second installment of *Lives*.
- 1783 Founding of Essex Head Club.
- 1784 Final break with Hester Thrale; dies 13 Dec.

CUE TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

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- Alum. Cant. I* JOHN and J. A. VENN, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part I (to 1751), 4 vols., 1922-27.
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- SJ's Dictionary* SAMUEL JOHNSON, *Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed., 1773.
- DNB* *Dictionary of National Biography*.

CUE TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

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- Fifer *The Correspondence of James Boswell with Certain Members of The Club*, ed. C. N. Fifer, 1976.
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- GM *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1731–1907.
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- JB James Boswell.
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- JN *Johnsonian Newsletter*.
- Later Years* FRANK BRADY, *James Boswell: The Later Years, 1769–1795*, 1984.
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