

The Letters of
SAMUEL JOHNSON

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Edited by
BRUCE REDFORD



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The Letters of
SAMUEL JOHNSON



SAMUEL JOHNSON

by James Barry, 1778–1780 (National Portrait Gallery, London)

ILLUSTRATIONS

Samuel Johnson, BY JAMES BARRY, 1778–1780
(National Portrait Gallery, London) *frontispiece*

following page 180

TO HESTER THRALE, 15–21 SEPTEMBER 1773
(Hyde Collection)

TO BENNET LANGTON, 5 JULY 1774
(Hyde Collection)

TO JAMES MACPHERSON, 20 JANUARY 1775
(Hyde Collection)

TO HESTER THRALE, 25 MARCH 1776
(Hyde Collection)

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

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: ábt (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. xv–xvii. 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

- Adam Cat.* R. B. ADAM, *The R. B. Adam Library Relating to Dr. Samuel Johnson and His Era*, 4 vols., 1929-30.
- Alum. Cant. I* JOHN and J. A. VENN, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part I (to 1751), 4 vols., 1922-27.
- Alum. Cant. II* J. A. VENN, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part II (1752-1900), 6 vols., 1940-54.
- Alum. Oxon. I* JOSEPH FOSTER, *Alumni Oxonienses ... 1500-1714*, 4 vols., 1891-92.
- Alum. Oxon. II* JOSEPH FOSTER, *Alumni Oxonienses ... 1715-1886*, 4 vols., 1887-88.
- Baker *The Correspondence of James Boswell with David Garrick, Edmund Burke, and Edmond Malone*, ed. P. S. Baker et al., 1986.
- Bibliography* W. P. COURTNEY and DAVID NICHOL SMITH, *A Bibliography of Samuel Johnson*, 1915, 1925.
- Bibliography Supplement*
R. W. CHAPMAN and A. T. HAZEN, *Johnsonian Bibliography: A Supplement to Courtney*, 1939.
- Bloom E. A. BLOOM, *Samuel Johnson in Grub Street*, 1957.
- Burke's Correspondence*
The Correspondence of Edmund Burke, ed. T. W. Copeland et al., 1958-70.
- Chapman *The Letters of Samuel Johnson, with Mrs. Thrale's Genuine Letters to Him*, ed. R. W. Chapman, 3 vols., 1952.
- Clifford, 1952 J. L. CLIFFORD, *Hester Lynch Piozzi*, 2d ed., 1952.
- Clifford, 1955 J. L. CLIFFORD, *Young Samuel Johnson*, 1955.
- Clifford, 1979 J. L. CLIFFORD, *Dictionary Johnson*, 1979.
- Croker JAMES BOSWELL, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, ed. J. W. Croker, rev. John Wright, 10 vols., 1868.
- SJ's Dictionary SAMUEL JOHNSON, *Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed., 1773.
- DNB *Dictionary of National Biography*.

CUE TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Earlier Years</i>	F. A. POTTLE, <i>James Boswell: The Earlier Years, 1740–1769</i> , 1966.
Fifer	<i>The Correspondence of James Boswell with Certain Members of The Club</i> , ed. C. N. Fifer, 1976.
Fleeman	SAMUEL JOHNSON, <i>A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland</i> , ed. J. D. Fleeman, 1985.
GM	<i>The Gentleman's Magazine</i> , 1731–1907.
Greene, 1975	DONALD GREENE, <i>Samuel Johnson's Library</i> , 1975.
Hawkins	SIR JOHN HAWKINS, <i>The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.</i> , 2d ed., 1787.
Hazen	A. T. HAZEN, <i>Samuel Johnson's Prefaces and Dedications</i> , 1937.
<i>Hebrides</i>	<i>Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D., 1773</i> , ed. from the original ms by F. A. Pottle and C. H. Bennett, 1961.
Hendy	J. G. HENDY, <i>The History of the Early Postmarks of the British Isles</i> , 1905.
Hill	<i>Letters of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.</i> , ed. G. B. Hill, 1892.
Hyde, 1972	MARY HYDE, <i>The Impossible Friendship: Boswell and Mrs. Thrale</i> , 1972.
Hyde, 1977	MARY HYDE, <i>The Thrales of Streatham Park</i> , 1977.
JB	James Boswell.
<i>Johns. Glean.</i>	A. L. READE, <i>Johnsonian Gleanings</i> , 11 vols., 1909–52.
<i>Johns. Misc.</i>	<i>Johnsonian Miscellanies</i> , ed. G. B. Hill, 2 vols., 1897.
JN	<i>Johnsonian Newsletter</i> .
<i>Later Years</i>	FRANK BRADY, <i>James Boswell: The Later Years, 1769–1795</i> , 1984.
<i>Life</i>	<i>Boswell's Life of Johnson, Together with Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides and Johnson's Diary of a Journey into North Wales</i> , ed. G. B. Hill, rev. L. F. Powell, 6 vols., 1934–50; vols. v and vi, 2d ed., 1964.
<i>Lit. Anec.</i>	JOHN NICHOLS, <i>Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century</i> , 9 vols., 1812–15.
<i>Lit. Car.</i>	F. A. POTTLE, <i>The Literary Career of James Boswell, Esq.</i> , 1929.
<i>Lives of the Poets</i>	<i>Johnson's Lives of the English Poets</i> , ed. G. B. Hill, 1905.

CUE TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Lond. Stage* *The London Stage*, Part III (1729-47), ed. A. H. Scouten, 1961; Part IV (1747-76), ed. G. W. Stone, Jr., 1962; Part V (1776-1800), ed. C. B. Hogan, 1968.
- Namier and Brooke SIR LEWIS NAMIER and JOHN BROOKE, *The House of Commons, 1754-1790*, 3 vols., 1964.
- OED* *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- Piozzi, *Letters* HESTER LYNCH PIOZZI, *Letters to and from the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, 2 vols., 1788.
- Piozzi Annotated presentation copy, given to Sir James Fellows, of H. L. Piozzi's *Letters to and from the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, 1788 (Birthplace Museum, Lichfield).
- Plomer H. R. PLOMER et al., *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1668-1725; 1726-1775*, 2 vols., 1922, 1932.
- Poems* *The Poems of Samuel Johnson*, ed. David Nichol Smith and E. L. McAdam, rev. J. D. Fleeman, 1974.
- Reades* A. L. READE, *The Reades of Blackwood Hill and Dr. Johnson's Ancestry*, 1906.
- RES* *Review of English Studies*.
- SJ Samuel Johnson.
- Sledd and Kolb J. H. SLEDD and G. J. KOLB, *Dr. Johnson's Dictionary*, 1955.
- Thraliana* *Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale*, ed. K. C. Balderston, 1942.
- TLS* *Times Literary Supplement*.
- Waingrow *The Correspondence and Other Papers of James Boswell Relating to the Making of the "Life of Johnson,"* ed. Marshall Waingrow, 1969.
- Walpole's Correspondence*, Yale ed. *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W. S. Lewis et al., 1937-83.
- Wheatley and Cunningham H. B. WHEATLEY and PETER CUNNINGHAM, *London Past and Present*, 3 vols., 1891.
- Works*, Yale ed. *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, J. H. Mordern, gen. ed., 1958-.

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The Letters of
SAMUEL JOHNSON

John Hawkins

FRIDAY 15 JANUARY 1773

MS: Houghton Library.

ENDORSEMENT in an unidentified hand: 15th Jan. 1773, Dr. Johnson to Sir John Hawkins.

Dear Sir:

Jan. 15, 1773

A young Woman of whose family I have some little knowledge, is, I believe, very injuriously and oppressively excluded from her little patrimony, for which she sues in formâ pauperis.¹ Mr. Chambers has undertaken her cause, but we are in want of an Attorney.² I know very few attorneys, and none so well as Mr. Clark,³ yet I cannot venture to ask him to do business for nothing, but should think it a great favour if you would recommend the cause to him.⁴

My compliments to Lady Hawkins.⁵ I am, Sir, Your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

1. SJ refers to "Poll" Carmichael, "a Scotch Wench who has her Case as a Pauper depending in some of the Law Courts" (*Thraliana* 1.184–85, 532); she joined SJ's household c. 1777 (*John. Misc.* 1.205 n. 2; *Life* III.462–63). *Post* To Richard Clark, 31 Jan. 1774.

2. Because Robert Chambers was a barrister, he and SJ needed to secure the services of a solicitor.

3. Richard Clark (1739–1831), a London solicitor to whom SJ had been introduced by Hawkins; Clark later became Alderman (1776), Sheriff (1777), and ultimately Lord Mayor (1784).

4. *Post* To Richard Clark, 8 Feb. 1773.

5. In 1753 Hawkins had married Sidney Storer (1726–93), youngest daughter of Peter Storer, attorney of Highgate (Bertram Davis, *A Proof of Eminence: The Life of Sir John Hawkins*, 1973, pp. 57–58).