

customarily wrote his draft letters, addressed for example to the archbishop of Canterbury, Frederick Cornwallis, on 1 November 1768 and 20 September 1769. The two draft letters to Lowth allow us to reconstruct the sequence of the correspondence between the two men, which was initiated by Johnson, as the opening lines of the first letter demonstrate:

I humbly beg y^r. L^d

effect describes the difficulty for Americans like Johnson of keeping informed about recent publications on the subject in England. Johnson appears to have drawn on the only grammar of English that was available to him, Buchanan's *The British Grammar*, published in the same year as the one by Lowth, though the latter soon became state-of-the-art in the field of English grammar. Johnson's grammar was the first grammar of English that was published in America, as Alston's bibliography shows; the first (though unauthorised) American edition of Lowth's grammar dates from 1775,²⁰ three years after Johnson's death. Many more were to follow, most famously those by Noah Webster, published in 1784 and 1790.²¹

To conclude this journey of discovery on both sides of the Atlantic, it is thanks to the magnificent donation of books by Randal Keynes to New College Library two years ago that four

learn more about the 'other' Samuel Johnson, and consequently to throw some more light on the relationship between the two grammars he published towards the end of his life.

Ingrid Tiekens-Boon van Ostade
Professor Emeritus of English Sociohistorical Linguistics
Leiden University Centre for Linguistics