



# John Opie's portraits of Dr. Johnson

## Citation

Clingham, Greg. 2019. John Opie's portraits of Dr. Johnson. Harvard Library Bulletin 28 (2), Summer 2017: 57-80.

## Permanent link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:42660039>

## Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

## Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.  
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

# John Opie's Portraits of Dr. Johnson

Greg Clingham

## INTRODUCTION

SAMUEL JOHNSON IS ONE OF THE MOST PAINTED INDIVIDUALS in English literary history. Given the advanced state of the scholarship, one assumes that all lifetime paintings of Johnson have been identified, cataloged, and discussed.<sup>1</sup> We do not expect to stumble upon a new contemporary portrait of Johnson, let alone two different portraits, one by a then-unknown Lady Anne Lindsay (1750–1825), the eldest child of the fifth Earl of Balcarres, the other by the well-known portrait painter John Opie (1761–1807). The first is unknown; the second has been off the radar of both art historians and Johnson scholars. Lady Anne Lindsay's effort—a drawing in pencil and watercolor—was executed in November 1773, at the home of Sir Alexander Dick, the president of the Royal College of Physicians in Scotland and Lady Anne's great-uncle, at the end of Boswell and Johnson's Highland tour.<sup>2</sup> The Opie "discovery" occurred in Fife during a visit to Balcarres House, Fife, the sixteenth-century home of

I am grateful to the twenty-ninth Earl of Crawford and Balcarres for his kind hospitality in inviting me to Balcarres, for providing the image reproduced here, and for his general support of this research.

1 The basis of all modern scholarly accounts of the life-time portraits of Johnson is L. F. Powell's "The Portraits of Johnson," Appendix H to *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*, ed. G. H. Hill, revised and enlarged by L. F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934–1960), 4:447–464. Morris R. Brownell notes that Johnson sat for at least ten artists (and that some of them, such as Reynolds, produced several different images) in his *Samuel Johnson's Attitude to the Arts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 78. In addition to the many portraits, Johnson was also widely caricatured in the eighteenth century (see Brownell, chapter eight), and featured in at least twenty subject paintings during the nineteenth century (see Brownell, Appendix).

2 For Lady Anne's meeting with Johnson, see Greg Clingham, "Lady Anne Lindsay Meets Dr. Johnson: A (Virtually) Unknown Episode in Johnson's and Boswell's Tour of Scotland," *Johnsonian News Letter* LXVIII, No. 2 (September 2017): 25–39. For her drawing of Johnson and Boswell, see my article "I stole his likeness . . . ? An Unknown Drawing of Dr. Johnson and James Boswell," *The Burlington Magazine*, 161 (March 2019): 222–224.

Robert Lindsay, twenty-ninth Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, and also the birthplace of Lady Anne Lindsay.

Lord Crawford showed me a portrait of Johnson by John Opie, an iteration of the well-known Opie portrait of Johnson of 1783–1784. This painting, it turns out, has been exhibited only once in the last 100 years, is seldom if ever seen by the public, and is virtually unknown to scholars. Two other versions of Opie's portrait of Johnson are canonical—one in Houghton Library, Harvard University, the other in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Scholars of paintings of Johnson have assumed the existence of only two iterations, with the Houghton painting as the original and the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) as an acknowledged copy. However, the painting at Balcarres casts some doubt on these long-held assumptions. In the following observations, I explore the possibility and argue the likelihood that the portrait of Johnson at Balcarres is, in fact, the original created during Johnson's sittings in 1783 and 1784.

The painting at Balcarres—a half-length representation of Johnson with gray wig and in a brown coat and waistcoat—is oil on canvas in a contemporary ornate gilt wooden frame. In his catalog of paintings by John Opie, John Jope Rogers records three of Johnson, all variants of each other.<sup>3</sup> Two of these are the well-known paintings in London and Cambridge, Massachusetts. A third is described by Rogers as being “in an English private collection,” with no mention of Balcarres. What follows are brief notes on each of these paintings, some critical and comparative reflections on the paintings, and the contemporary engravings taken therefrom, and a conclusion.

#### NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

In describing the NPG picture (inventory number 1302), John Ingamells notes that it “is a thinly-painted version, possibly contemporary, of the Opie portrait of 1783–1784 in Houghton Library, Harvard; it differs only in showing the eyes less hooded.”<sup>4</sup> Ingamells notes that Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower bought this painting in Tunbridge Wells in 1901 and presented it to the NPG that year.<sup>5</sup> This seems to be the third of the three versions of the Opie portrait recorded by Rogers, who writes:

Painted 1783–4, commenced in 1783, interrupted by Johnson's illness, resumed in 1784, but never completed. See Croker's *Boswell's Johnson*, ed. 1847, page 777, and *Nichol's Literary Hist. of 18th century*, vol. vii, p. 459. Canvas, 35 x 28

3 John Jope Rogers, *Opie and His Works: Being a Catalogue of 760 Pictures by John Opie, R.A. Prefaced by a Biographical Sketch* (London: Paul and Dominic Colnaghi and Co., 1878), 115–117.

4 John Ingamells, *National Portrait Gallery Mid-Georgian Portraits 1760–1790* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2004), 292.

5 Ingamells, 292.



Figure 2.1. Samuel Johnson after John Opie. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

inches. In possession of Sir John Neeld, Bart., purchased by Mr. Neeld from Dr. T. Frognall Dibdin, about 1829. Head nearly in profile, to the left, eyes looking down, natural hair, in a loose dressing gown, open at throat. The light is admitted from the right.<sup>6</sup>

The NPG identifies this painting as “*after John Opie*,” and is described as being oil on canvas, with dimensions 20  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 17  $\frac{7}{8}$  inches. These measurements differ from those described by Rogers (35 x 28 inches) and Ingamells (19  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 16 inches), which differ from each other. Nevertheless, the picture under discussion appears to be that which came to the museum from Lord Gower in 1901.<sup>7</sup>

### HOUGHTON LIBRARY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The second widely known portrait of Johnson by John Opie is in Houghton Library, Harvard. L. F. Powell describes this painting in “The Portraits of Johnson”:

That which belonged to Dr. Horne, Bishop of Norwich (1730–92), then to his daughter’s husband, the Rev. H. A. Hole, whose great-grand-daughter, Miss Jane Hole, sold it in 1928; it is now owned by Dr. A.S. Rosenbach of Philadelphia, who has kindly permitted me to reproduce it for this edition.<sup>8</sup>

6 Rogers, 117. Texts referred to by Rogers are: James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.: including a Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, ed. John Wilson Croker, new ed. (London: John Murray, 1847–1848), the first edition of Croker’s text was in five volumes, published by John Murray in 1831; John Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century: Consisting of Authentic Memoirs and Original Letters of Eminent Persons; and intended as a Sequel to the Literary Anecdotes*, 8 vols. (London: Nichols, Son, and Bentley, 1817–1858), vols. 5 and 6 were published posthumously; and two more volumes [7–8] were added by John Bowyer Nichols in 1848 and 1858. For Sir John Neeld, first Baronet (1805–1891), there is no *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (cited hereafter as *DNB*) entry, but there is a Wikipedia entry: <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Neeld](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Neeld)> (accessed December 26, 2017). For Thomas Frognall Dibdin (1776–1847), English bibliographer, son of Thomas Dibdin, brother of Charles Dibdin, see *DNB*: <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7588>> (accessed December 26, 2017).

7 Lord Ronald Charles Sutherland-Leveson-Gower (1845–1916), known as Lord Ronald Gower, a Scottish Liberal politician, sculptor, and writer. See *DNB*: <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38863>> (accessed December 26, 2017).

8 Powell, 4:455. For George Horne (1730–1792), Dean of Canterbury and Bishop of Norwich, see *DNB*: <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13789?docPos=1>> (accessed December 26, 2017); and for Abraham Simon Wolf Rosenbach (1876–1952), an American collector, scholar, dealer in rare books and manuscripts, and cofounder of the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, there is no *DNB* entry, but a Wikipedia entry: <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.\\_S.\\_W.\\_Rosenbach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._S._W._Rosenbach)> (accessed December 26, 2017).



Figure 2.2. Samuel Johnson by John Opie, 1783–84.  
\*82M-20. Houghton Library, Harvard University.  
Harvard University Portrait Collection,  
Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., Class of 1929,  
to the Houghton Library, 1987.

This would seem to be the first of the three versions of the painting recorded by Rogers:

Painted 1782. Canvas, 30 x 25 inches. In possession of Mrs. H. M. James, Exeter, from her grandfather, Rev. H. A. Hole. . . . Seen nearly to waist,  $\frac{3}{4}$  face to left, in very bushy powdered wig, slightly stooping, the eyes dim with age, lower lip rather pouting. In brown coat and waistcoat, the latter buttoned to throat, white neck-cloth dimly seen in shadow. Very fine, solemn, thoughtful expression. Engraved by Heath fo. line, 1786, inscribed, "from an original painting by Opie, in the possession of Mr. Harrison. The sarcophagus and other ornamental parts designed by Mr. R. Smirke." Published by Harrison and Co., Paternoster Row. The portrait is inserted in an oval, wreathed, and set on a sarcophagus which has a bas relief of Hercules slaying the Hydra.<sup>9</sup>

Sometime after the death of A. S. W. Rosenbach in 1952, the painting passed to Arthur A. Houghton Jr., who bequeathed it to the great rare book and manuscript library at Harvard that he endowed in 1941–1942.<sup>10</sup> The verso of this painting bears the legend: "Arthur Houghton, 28 September 1982."

#### "IN A PRIVATE COLLECTION"

A third portrait of Johnson by John Opie, less well known to scholars because it is and has always been in a private collection, may be the portrait that Opie created from Johnson's sittings in 1783 and 1784. This is the second of the three portraits Rogers lists, the painting at Balcarres:

Painted about 1782. Exhibited No. 137 in Catalogue of British Institution, 1857, and No. 42 at Winter Exhibition of Royal Academy, 1871. Canvas,  $29\frac{1}{4} \times 24\frac{1}{2}$  inches. In possession of Lord Overstone, formerly of Sir John St. Aubyn, sold at Lime Grove after Lady St. Aubyn's death in 1856.<sup>11</sup>

9 Rogers, 115–116. Rogers's dating of the Houghton painting—as well as the Balcarres portrait—as 1782 is puzzling. As I discuss below, there is no indication in the scholarship that Johnson sat for Opie prior to the late summer of 1783.

10 Arthur A. Houghton Jr. (1906–1990), Curator of Rare Books at the Library of Congress, Vice Chairman of the Pierpont Morgan Library, a trustee of The New York Public Library, and founder of the Corning Museum of Glass (1951); <<http://www.cmog.org/bio/arthur-houghton-jr>> (accessed October 29, 2018).

11 Rogers, 116. See Thomas Smith, *Recollections of the British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom: with some account of the means employed for that purpose; and biographical notices of the artists who have received premiums, &c. 1805–1859* (London: Simpkin & Marshall, 1860) and *Royal*

This painting, L. F. Powell notes,

formed part of the St. Aubyn Collection and was bought by Lord Overstone, after Lady St. Aubyn's death, in 1856; it was bequeathed by Lord Overstone's daughter, Lady Wantage, to the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, who now owns it; there is a fine reproduction of it in the Catalogue of the Wantage Collection published in 1905.<sup>12</sup>

The historical association of the painting with the Earls of Crawford and Balcarres is long. Lady Wantage, who bequeathed the painting to the Earl of Crawford, was the Hon. Harriet Sarah Loyd (1837–1920). In 1858, she married Robert Lindsay (1832–1901), the paternal grandson of the seventh Earl of Balcarres and twenty-fourth Earl of Crawford (1783–1869); he was created Baron Wantage in 1885.<sup>13</sup> Powell also notes that, in the Balcarres painting, “the face is more refined than in the first [the Houghton copy], and the lower portion is so indistinct that Rogers thought it was intended for an oval . . . This version was long thought to be by Gainsborough; it was exhibited as his at the British Institution in 1857, at the Royal Academy in 1871, and finally at an exhibition of the works of Gainsborough held at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1885.”<sup>14</sup>

*Academy of Arts, Burlington House. Exhibition of the Works of the Old Masters, Associated with Works of Deceased Masters of the British School. 1871* (London: William Cowes and Sons, 1871). For Samuel Jones Loyd, Baron Overstone (1796–1883), banker, see *DNB* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17115>> (accessed December 26, 2017); and for Sir John St. Aubyn, fifth baronet (1758–1839), landowner and politician, see *DNB*: <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24481?docPos=2>> (accessed December 26, 2017). Rogers (47) notes that Sir John St. Aubyn was one of the pallbearers at Opie's funeral in 1807. St. Aubyn also subscribed to purchase twenty copies of Opie's posthumously published *Lectures on Painting Delivered at the Royal Academy of Arts* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1809), iii.

12 Powell, 4:455–456; referencing *A Catalogue of Pictures Forming the Collection of Lord and Lady Wantage at 2 Carlton Gardens, London [♣] Lockinge House, Berks and Overstone Park and Arlington House* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1905), 114–115, plate numbers 166, 167.

13 For Robert James Loyd-Lindsay, Baron Wantage (1832–1901), army officer and agriculturist, son of Lieutenant-General James Lindsay (1793–1855) of Balcarres, and paternal grandson of James Lindsay, seventh Earl of Balcarres and twenty-fourth Earl of Crawford (1783–1869), Tory MP for Wigan (1825–1831) and for Fife (1831–1832), see *DNB*: <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34544?docPos=2>> (accessed October 29, 2018). *DNB* is incorrect in identifying Robert James Loyd-Lindsay's grandfather as the fifth Earl of Balcarres. The fifth Earl of Balcarres was in fact James Lindsay (1691–1768); see <<http://www.thepeerage.com/p2046.htm#i20457>> (accessed October 29, 2018).

14 Powell, 4:456. For the exhibitions at the British Institution (1857) and the Royal Academy (1871), see note 11 above. *Exhibition of the Works of Thomas Gainsborough, R.A. with historical notes by F. G. Stephens . . . and a Collection of Drawings by the late Richard Doyle* (London: Doherty & Co., 1885).



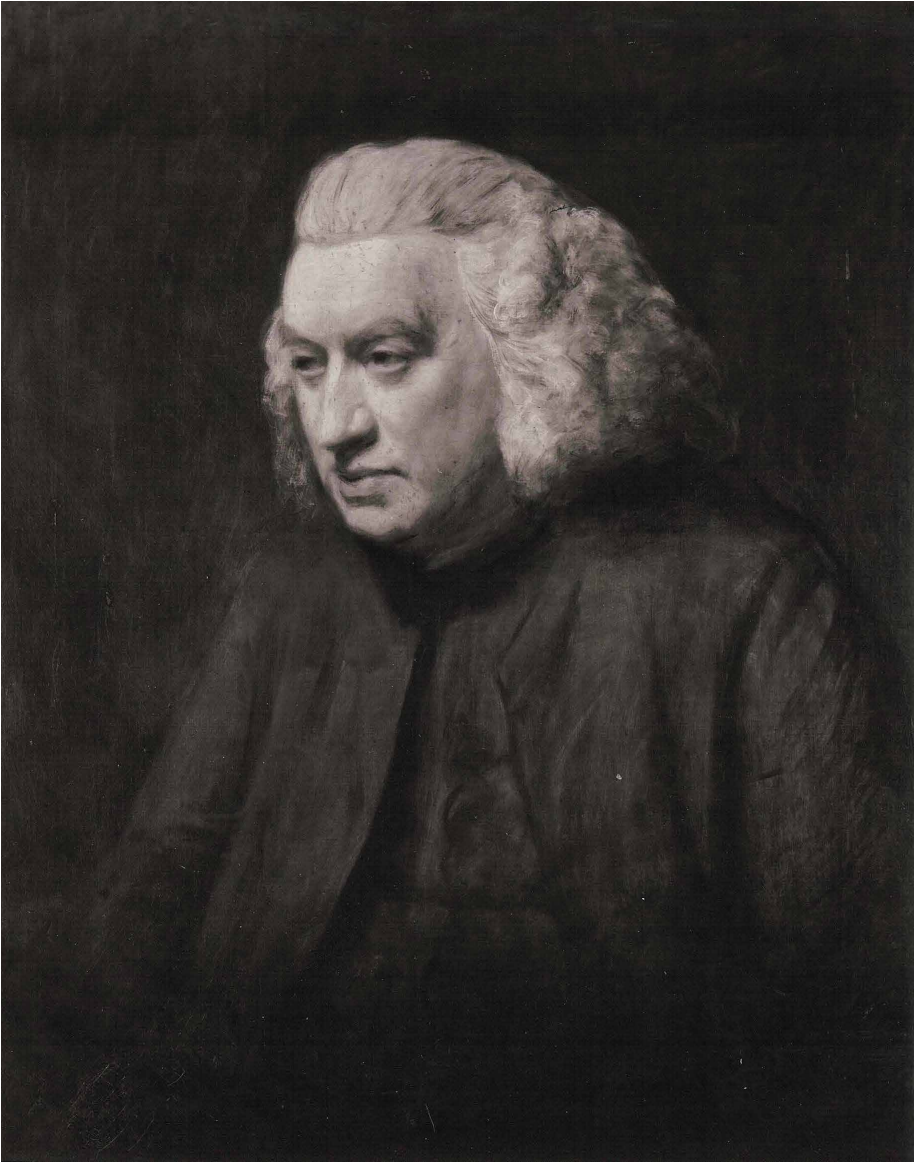


Figure 2.3. Samuel Johnson by John Opie, 1783–84. Balcarres House, Fife.

The present Earl of Crawford and Balcarres confirms the above details from the provenance for the Balcarres painting provided by Christie's and adds that the portrait was also displayed as Gainsborough's at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1933–1934. Otherwise, the painting at Balcarres has been shown (and thus seen by the public) only once in nearly a century, when the Arts Council of Great Britain exhibited it on the bicentenary of Johnson's death in 1984. The portrait appeared as item number 99 in the exhibition, noted in the published catalog as being from a "private collection."<sup>15</sup>

However, the provenance described by Lord Crawford suggests a line of transmission of the painting from John Opie himself. In a letter held at Balcarres dated December 2, 1857, Edward St. Aubyn (d. 1872 and son of Sir John St. Aubyn) writes, "I am almost certain that this portrait of Dr Johnson was bought from Opie himself by the late Sir John St. Aubyn who usually purchased one of his works every year." Sir John St. Aubyn (1758–1839), with family estates at Clowance, Cornwall, and a residence in London, was a patron of the arts. He was also a patron of John Opie, who was born near Truro in Cornwall and who painted St. Aubyn three times (and Lady St. Aubyn once). The direct line between Opie and the Earls of Crawford and Balcarres is significant and intriguing in the light of the recent argument, which I address below, that Opie's painting of Johnson was commissioned by the printer James Harrison (active 1785–1824) for the purpose of producing an engraving for his 1786 edition of Johnson's *Dictionary*.

### OPIE'S PRACTICE

Contrary to common assumption,<sup>16</sup> Opie produced three and not one portrait of Johnson. One might assume that one of the paintings came from the live sittings and that the others were studio work, and thus derivative. This may be viewing the situation too simply. It was common among eighteenth-century portrait painters—Sir Joshua Reynolds, for example—that a sketch or likeness taken at a live sitting would be finished in the studio. Reynolds often left the execution of the drapery, the background, and, sometimes, the clothing of a sitter to his apprentices in the studio. In his *Memoirs* of Reynolds (1819), Joseph Farington remarks, "Reynolds' school . . . resembled a manufactory, in which the young men who were sent to him for tuition were chiefly

15 Kai Kin Yung, *Samuel Johnson 1709–1784* (London: The Herbert Press for the Arts Council of Great Britain, 1984), 132.

16 See, for example, Herman W. Liebert, "Portraits of the Author: Lifetime Likenesses of Samuel Johnson," in *English Portraits of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Paper read at a Clark Library Seminar, April 14, 1973 (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1974), 61.

occupied in copying portraits, or assisting in draperies, and preparing backgrounds.”<sup>17</sup> There is no documentary evidence to indicate that Opie used apprentices as widely as Reynolds did,<sup>18</sup> although on at least one recorded occasion he asked Henry Thomson to finish the robes of the portrait of the Duke of Gloucester.<sup>19</sup> Opie’s wife from 1798, Amelia Alderson Opie, testifies to his working habits and to his philosophy of composition:

It was not only from inclination, but from principle, that he was industrious: he thought it vicious for any one to be satisfied in art with aught less than excellence, and knew that excellence is not to be obtained by convulsive starts of application, but by continued and daily perseverance; not by the alternately rapid and faint step of the hare, but by the slow yet sure and incessant pace of the tortoise . . . He was always in his painting room by half-past eight in winter, and by eight o’clock in summer; and there he generally remained, closely engaged in painting, till half-past four in winter, and till five in summer. Nor did he ever allow himself to be idle even when he had no pictures bespoken: and as he never let his execution rust for want of practice, he, in that case, either sketched out designs for historical or fancy pictures, or endeavoured, by working on an unfinished picture of me, to improve himself by incessant practice in that difficult branch of his art, female portraiture.”<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps, in the same vein, Opie worked diligently on several versions of Johnson’s portrait during the almost eight months between the sittings in August and September of 1783 and April of 1784.

The dates of some of the sittings are clear. On August 7, 1783, Michael Lort writes to Thomas Percy to the effect that Johnson “sat to Opie, the famous self-taught Cornish

17 Quoted in M. Kirby Talley Jr., “All Good Pictures Crack’: Sir Joshua Reynolds’s Practice and Studio,” in *Reynolds*, ed. Nicholas Penny (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986), 57. See also James Northcote, *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London: for Henry Colburn, 1819), 1:285.

18 Rogers names the following as Opie’s students: Henry Thomson, R. A., Theophilus Clarke, A.R.A., Miss Beetham, Revd. J. Owen, and Thomas Stewardson (61). However, Rogers also observes, “It would have been interesting, and every endeavour has been made, to ascertain who were Opie’s pupils. Nothing is recorded of them in any of the sketches of his life. Mrs. Opie herself is silent on the subject. Indeed it has been asserted that he had no pupils. It is difficult however to believe, that one who was so devoted to his art should not have attracted pupils to his studio, or that if they offered themselves, he would have rejected them” (60–61).

19 Allan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters and Sculptors*, 5 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), 2:181.

20 Amelia Opie, Memoir addressed “To Prince Hoare, Esq.” in *Lectures on Painting Delivered at the Royal Academy of Arts . . . by the Late John Opie* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1809), 29, 31.

painter, for his picture, and who I am told has given a just but no flattering likeness of the Doctor.”<sup>21</sup> On September 3, 1783, Johnson writes to John Taylor, “I sat to Opey as long as he desired, and I think the head is finished, but it [is] not much admired. The rest he is to add when he comes again to town.”<sup>22</sup> Johnson’s illness during the winter of 1783–1784—after recovering from a stroke on June 17, 1783, he continued to suffer from congenital heart failure, rheumatoid arthritis, emphysema, and general circulatory problems—perhaps accounts for the long interlude. The sittings were resumed around April 24, 1784, three days after Johnson was out and about after his illness,<sup>23</sup> and, as Hawkins reports, he “resumed sitting to Opie for his picture, which had been begun the year before, but, I believe, was never finished.”<sup>24</sup>

However, the question is, what did the “rest” of the painting consist of? The eight-month interlude may have given the conscientious Opie the idea of starting more than one version from the work done at the first live sittings. It is possible that Opie allotted some aspects of one, two, or all three paintings to an apprentice in the studio, although there is no documentary evidence to verify this. What is clear, however, is that the existence of the Balcarres portrait—which is manifestly not a copy—draws attention to the differences between the three canonical versions. While these three paintings all depict Johnson in the same general posture, exhibiting the same general expression, and clothed in the same general garb, they are very different from each other, and represent three quite different visions of—and attitudes toward—Samuel Johnson. What can one make of these differences?

### CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

While my starting point is the provenance of the Balcarres painting, the question of chronology naturally prompts a critical reading of the various iterations of the portrait.

21 Quoted in Sir John Hawkins, *The Life of Samuel Johnson LL.D.*, ed. O M Brack Jr. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 444, n710 and also by Yung, 132.

22 *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Bruce Redford, 5 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992–1994), 4:193. (Cited hereafter as *Letters*.) Furthermore, on June 19, 1783, Johnson had written to Mrs. Thrale, “On Monday the 16 I sat for my picture, and walked a considerable way with little inconvenience,” but Bruce Redford suggests that this could—and probably does—refer to Frances Reynolds’ portrait of Johnson (*Letters*, 4:151, n3). She had begun her painting in June 1780 (see *Letters*, 3:278), for on August 20, 1783, Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale: “I sat to Mrs. Reynolds yesterday for my picture, perhaps the tenth time, and I sat near three hours, with the patience of *Mortal born to bear*. At last She declared it quite finished and seems to think it fine” (*Letters*, 4:188). See also Powell, 4:453–454. Frances Reynolds’s portrait of Johnson is now in the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.

23 Walter Jackson Bate, *Samuel Johnson* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1978), 586.

24 Hawkins, 343.

Which of the paintings is from the live sitting? What is the relation of the Balcarres painting to that at Houghton? Forensic evidence might be decisive in answering the first question, but in its absence, one turns more readily to aesthetics and criticism.<sup>25</sup> The three iterations of Opie's painting manifestly diverge from each other. The NPG painting is a contemporary "copy" of the original. All the facial features are less fully imagined than in the other versions. One immediately notices the set, symmetrical, staring eyes, the small chin, smaller mouth, yet smaller nose, narrow face, and even narrower forehead. The NPG picture has less animation, less life than the other iterations. Without foreknowledge of where and what the picture is, one might not even recognize it as a representation of Dr. Johnson. The differences between this and the other versions of the portrait are much more significant than that offered by Ingamells, who says only, "it differs only in showing the eyes less hooded."<sup>26</sup> If, as he suggests, this painting dates from 1783, one wonders if it is the work of one of Opie's apprentices. It seems derivative, without a vision of the subject.

By contrast, both the Houghton and the Balcarres paintings have a life of their own. Yet even these more fully realized depictions of Johnson might also have been, to some extent, the work of Opie's students, who may have helped him in developing or adding finishing touches to one or both. Imagine the challenge and learning opportunity offered to Opie and his students when they found themselves with several months in which to work at several copies of a painting of the great Dr. Johnson!

Two particular ideas govern my study of these pictures: one pertains to the technical rendition of the details, both anatomical and supplementary; the other pertains to what one might call the ethos of the representation, the sense of the life, the intellectual spark embodied in the person depicted in each of these paintings. The Houghton painting is distinguished by the fuller, fleshier, sensuous face (the mouth, lips, nose, and cheeks), by the lifelike detail of the veins on the forehead, the lines, and the slight frown, and the strategic use of shadow around the eyes, the mouth, and in the cheek to create a sense of a real face and a believable presence. Crucial to the creation of the remarkable facial illumination is the contrasting use of the silver wig, the simple, somber brown clothing, and the dark background. The powerful, massive presence is animated by the eyes, which—on close inspection—are asymmetrical, suggesting not only the way healthy, functioning eyes are aligned and function in a person's head, but the particular characteristics of Johnson's eyes.

25 The following critical observations are my own, but in the course of developing them I had occasion to discuss the paintings with many people, both professional and lay, including Philip Smallwood, Pam Smallwood, Keith Crook, Roger Rothman, Merrill David, Brontë Clingham-David, and Sam Brawand, who have all helped me refine my thoughts.

26 Ingamells, 292.

Johnson had a variety of visual impairments from birth that rendered him almost blind in the left eye—which nonetheless betrayed very little apparent abnormality. He was very nearsighted in the right eye;<sup>27</sup> this, in turn, was subject to inflammation and had a habit of wandering. Yet he had remarkably penetrating gray eyes that quite counteracted any disadvantage his visual disability may have generated. Mrs. Thrale says of Johnson's eyes: "His sight was near, and otherwise imperfect; yet his eyes, though of a light-grey colour, were so wild, so piercing, and at times so fierce, that fear was I believe the first emotion in the hearts of all his beholders."<sup>28</sup> The Houghton—as well as the Balcarres—portraits both possess a sense of this animating power around the eyes.

These two portraits, however, embody quite different kinds of intellectual power that make for quite distinct pictures. While the presence in the Houghton painting is somber and serene, the composition is also more formal than the Balcarres picture, suffused as it is by a fine, distinctive light. While the eyes are alive in the Houghton painting and seem to be intent on something, the human presence is abstract, distanced, opaque and—crucially—immutable, as if this representation of the great and venerable Dr. Johnson were a public persona produced from a formal sitting for public and eternal consumption. Was this Opie's intention when Johnson sat to him in 1783?

The Balcarres portrait has the same sensuous physical details as the Houghton painting—eyes, forehead, mouth, cheeks—though slightly differently realized. Powell and Rogers's observation that the "lower portion is so indistinct"<sup>29</sup> because Opie may have intended the painting to be fitted into an oval frame, is not borne out by close inspection and comparison. The Balcarres painting exhibits precisely the same detailed attention to the clothing that is displayed in the Houghton portrait. What is different in the Balcarres painting, however, is the rendition of the sitter's presence, which here exists on a different compositional and human plane. This painting captures a man in the act of thinking, almost in real time, suggested (for example) by the tiny detail of the slightly open and slightly contracted mouth (as distinguished from the full, closed mouth of the Houghton painting). This man is mortal, not eternal. We have no idea what he is thinking, except that the look in and around the eyes suggests an inwardness not present in other renditions. There is also a greater tiredness, an agedness, and a vulnerability that make for an immediacy, a real-time authenticity that is not—or so it seems to this viewer—present in other versions. The Balcarres portrait,

27 The ophthalmological account of Johnson's eyes is to be found in L. C. McHenry Jr. and R. MacKeith, "Samuel Johnson's Childhood Illnesses and the King's Evil," *Medical History*, 10 (1966): 386–399, especially 394–395. This is elaborated on by John Wiltshire, *Samuel Johnson in the Medical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 17–20.

28 Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson LL.D. in Johnsonian Miscellanies*, ed. G. B. Hill, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), 1:344.

29 Powell, 4:456.

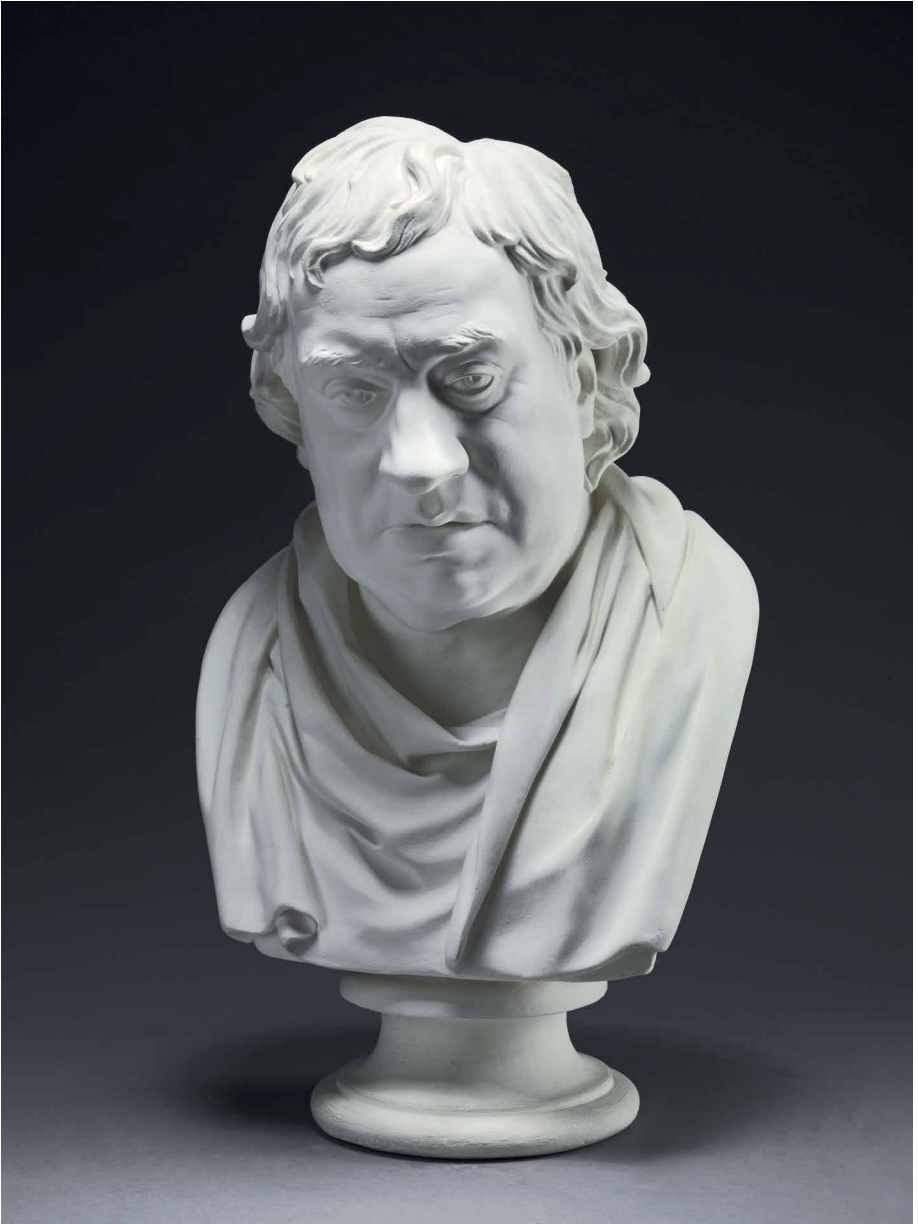


Figure 2.4. Bust of Samuel Johnson by Joseph Nollekens, 1777. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund. Photograph by Richard Craspole, via Wikimedia Commons.

in short, is sensitive to Johnson's human presence, while the Houghton portrait is a more monumental and symbolic representation, such as we have in Joseph Nollekens's bust of Johnson from 1777.

The deeper, more poignant, more human qualities of the Balcarres portrait—in which the skin is older and more vulnerable—may be clearly seen by undertaking an experimental comparison. Below is a conversion of the Houghton image to black and white at the same resolution, dimension, and depth as the Balcarres image.<sup>30</sup>

My critical account of the paintings invites the reader to look at the several paintings with renewed awareness and attention. At the same time, however, my account lends itself to at least two plausible narratives of chronology and composition. In the first narrative, the Houghton painting was taken and completed at the first sittings in August of 1783. This seems to be the view taken by Powell, who writes, "Opie painted Johnson in 1783,"<sup>31</sup> and then links that event to Lort's letter of August 7, 1783. The implication is that the Houghton painting is entirely separate from the others. This narrative also proposes that the greater immediacy and compositional suppleness (if not informality) of the Balcarres picture might be the work of the sitting in April 1784. This is after Johnson's long illness during the winter<sup>32</sup> and concurrent with a more immediate awareness of mortality<sup>33</sup> captured by Opie in the painting as vulnerability and inwardness. On April 12, 1784, Johnson writes to John Taylor:

O, my Friend, the approach of Death is very dreadful. I am afraid to think on that which I know, I cannot avoid. It is vain to look round and round, for that help that cannot be had. Yet we hope and hope, and fancy that he who has lived to day may live tomorrow. But let us learn to derive our hope only from God. In the meantime let us be kind to one another.<sup>34</sup>

However, another, less linear, less categorical, and more complicated narrative is equally plausible. The first sittings may actually have produced the painting—or its essentials—with the greater intimacy and authenticity, the Balcarres portrait. Over the winter, Opie may have produced other versions for popular consumption that were

30 Circumstances have unfortunately prevented me from obtaining a color image of the Balcarres picture. The black-and-white version of the color image of the Houghton portrait was created in Adobe Photoshop by Ms. Sam Brawand: the image was increased from the original 92 dpi to 300 dpi; the color was converted to black and white using the program's default setting and brightened by 25% to mirror as closely as possible the resolution, dimension, and depth of the Balcarres image.

31 Powell, 4:455.

32 See *Letters*, 4:308.

33 He died in December of that year.

34 *Letters*, 4:312.



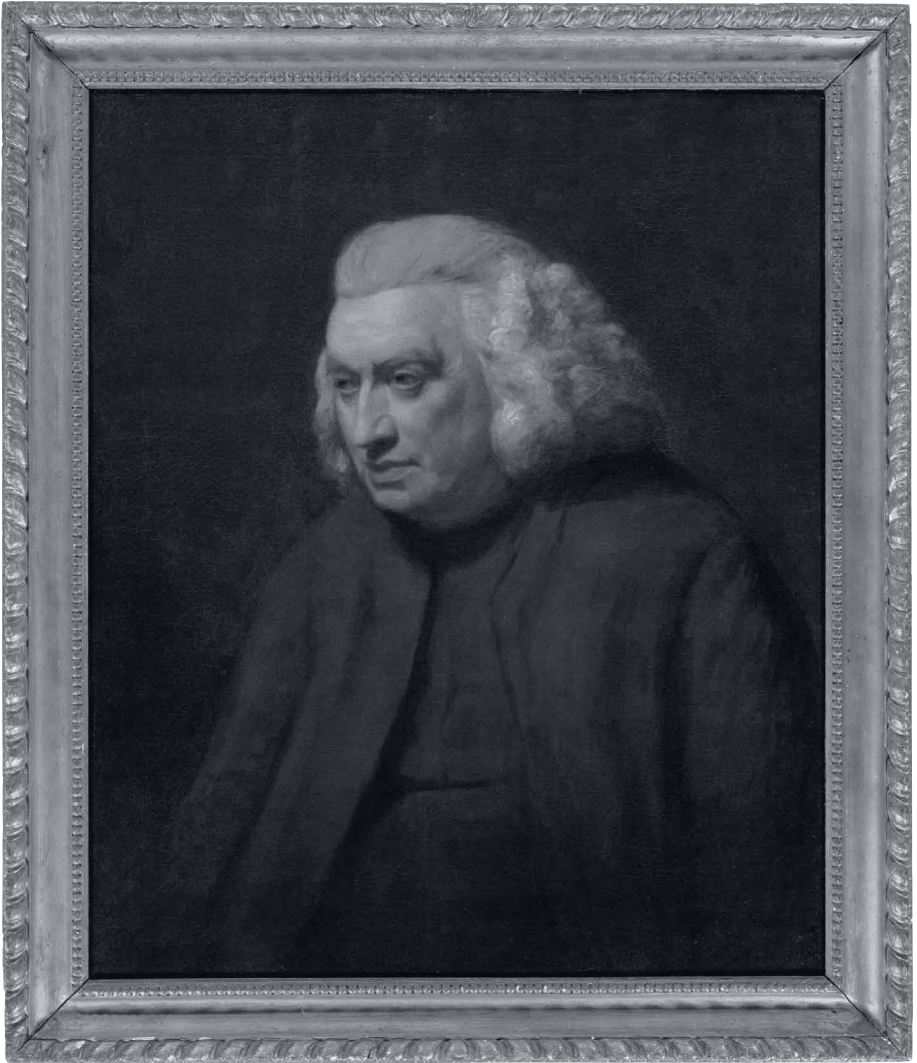


Figure 2.5. Samuel Johnson by John Opie (greyscale). Houghton Library, Harvard University.

more formal and abstract yet also based on those first sittings. On September 3, 1783, Johnson writes, “I think the head is finished.”<sup>35</sup> This may have been the Balcarres head. The wig, the clothing, and the backdrop (the “drapery”), may have come later in the studio and may have been the work of an apprentice. This may explain the near—though not actual—identity of those features in the Houghton and Balcarres paintings, if not in the NPG copy. After all, Opie’s portraits had none of the formal, social qualities of paintings by Reynolds or Gainsborough. In 1782, Horace Walpole calls Opie “a new genius . . . a Cornish lad . . . who has taught himself to colour in strong, bold, masterly style by studying nature and painting from beggars and poor children.”<sup>36</sup> According to Nathaniel West, Opie “painted what he saw.”<sup>37</sup> In Allan Cunningham’s account, he was widely admired for “freshness of look, and a rude, homely strength . . . which belong to the wide academy of nature . . . boldness of effect, simplicity of composition . . . artless attitudes, and . . . vivid portraiture of individual nature.”<sup>38</sup> But notwithstanding Opie’s reputation for unmediated genius and vigor, it is his art and application which realized such effects both from live sittings and in the studio, as witness his much-commended portrait of Charles James Fox in 1804, the likeness of which Opie had partly taken from Nollekens’s busts of Fox (1792 and 1802).<sup>39</sup> In his “Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson” (1786), prefixed to his edition of the *Dictionary*, James Harrison observes how impressed Johnson was by Opie’s painting: “He had, indeed, a great respect for this young artist, and was highly pleased with his performance.”<sup>40</sup> By contrast, as Harrison notes, he was

35 *Letters*, 4:193.

36 *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole’s Correspondence*, ed. W. S. Lewis, 48 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937–), 29:184–185.

37 Bela Bates Edwards, *Biography of Self-Taught Men* (Boston: J. E. Tilton & Co., 1859), 197.

38 Cunningham, 2:183.

39 See Edwards, 196. For Opie’s portrait, see Rogers, 93–94. Rogers notes, “Mr. T. J. Smith, in his ‘Nollekens and his times’ vol. ii, p. 289, relates of this portrait—‘It is a curious fact that Opie’s picture of Fox was not wholly painted from the life; since Opie was obliged, in consequence of the few sittings which the minister could allow him, to borrow Nollekens’ bust to finish from’ (93). See also the images at the Philip Mould Gallery, London: <<http://www.historicalportraits.com/Gallery.asp?Page=Item&ItemID=801&Desc=Charles-James-Fox-|John-Opie-RA>> (accessed January 1, 2018). For Nollekens’s busts of Fox, see the images at the Yale Center for British Art: <<http://collections.britishart.yale.edu/vufind/Record/1666341>> (accessed January 1, 2018) and at the Victoria and Albert Museum: <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O349295/the-hon-charles-james-fox-bust-nollekens-joseph-frans/>> (accessed January 1, 2018).

40 In *The Early Biographies of Samuel Johnson*, ed. O M Brack Jr. and Robert Kelley (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1974), 287 (247–290 for the entire work). Cited hereafter as Harrison, *Life*. According to James H. Sledd and Gwin J. Kolb, Harrison’s “Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson” is “a poor performance, distorted by his bitter rivalry with Longman and the other proprietors of the Dictionary.” From *Dr. Johnson’s Dictionary: Essays in the Biography of a Book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 228. However,

“exceedingly disgusted” with the Reynolds portrait that came to be known as “blinking Sam,” “the clumsy, vulgar portrait, by his friend, Sir Joshua Reynolds.” Harrison goes on to report Johnson as saying to Mr. Thrale, “I will not go down to posterity as *blinking Sam*, let Sir Joshua do his worst.”<sup>41</sup>

This second narrative, however, goes further, and it assumes that Opie retained the Balcarres painting for himself while the Houghton painting went to Harrison and became public. The provenance detailed by Lord Crawford indicates that the Balcarres painting was acquired by Sir John St. Aubyn directly from Opie, who felt warmly toward Johnson. Amelia Opie notes in her memoir that her husband “had twice the happiness of painting” Johnson, and—demonstrating his affection for Johnson—would never believe that he uttered the harsh and offensive things sometimes attributed to him by others, “for he [Opie] idolized Johnson in every point of view.”<sup>42</sup>

This narrative derives support from another computer-generated exercise. By using Photoshop to scale the heads of the three portraits to the same size and make overlays in a gif, one may see exactly the differences by flipping from one to the other.<sup>43</sup> Using the Balcarres portrait as the base, Dr. Keith Crook and I made a semi-transparent overlay

according to Brack and Kelley (who cite Harrison’s 1786 edition of the *Dictionary* [iii]), his “Advertisement” justifies the work by exemplifying several virtues: brevity, avoidance of “heterogeneous digressions,” and the declaration that Harrison “shall omit no circumstance of importance in the Doctor’s character” (334). Harrison obtains most of his information from Hawkins, whose *Life of Johnson* appeared in 1787. Brack and Kelley concede that “the sketch cannot be dismissed . . . as a mere condensation of Hawkins. When the author had information not found in his source, he inserted it in its proper place in the narrative” (334). Oddly, Brack makes no mention at all of Harrison in his edition of Hawkins’s *Life of Johnson* (2009). In a note to *Samuel Johnson: Biographical Writings: Soldiers, Scholars, and Friends*, eds. O M Brack Jr. and Robert DeMaria Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 5, 17, the editors describe Harrison’s “Life of Johnson” as “essentially an abridgement of Hawkins’s Life.” However, strictly speaking, it cannot be an abridgment of a work that had not yet been published! Harrison has been the subject of other unusual ruminations. In *A Bibliography of the Works of Samuel Johnson Treating his Published Works from the Beginning to 1984*, prepared for publication by James McLaverty, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), J. D. Fleeman asserts that Harrison’s “Life” was “the work of William Mavor and appears to be mainly indebted to that by William Cooke, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, 1785 (2nd ed., also 1785)” (1:437). But Fleeman’s logic is unconvincing: because the “continuation” of Johnson’s *Memoirs of the King of Prussia* that Harrison claims as his own on the title page of his edition of that work (1786) was actually by William Mavor, Fleeman oddly asserts that the “Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson” affixed to the 1786 *Dictionary* is also by Mavor (1:691–692).

41 Harrison, *Life*, 287. See also Robert Folkenflik, “‘Blinking Sam,’ ‘Surly Sam,’ and ‘Johnson’s Grimly Ghost’” in *Samuel Johnson: New Contexts for a New Century*, ed. Howard Weinbrot (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library Press, 2014), 264–294.

42 Opie, 40.

43 I am grateful to Dr. Keith Crook for his ingenuity in devising this dynamic exercise.

of both the Houghton and NPG portraits. These overlays are, however, solid enough to display differences, and reveal how strikingly exact the fit is between the Balcarres and the Houghton portraits—and how different the NPG portrait is from the other two. This evidence could suggest that both the Balcarres and Houghton portraits were made by Opie from an earlier (now lost) pounced sketch of Johnson<sup>44</sup>—thus adding a third narrative to my two. However, no such original sketch is known to exist, and there is no necessary reason to posit its existence. The Photoshop exercise, however, indicates that the Balcarres and Houghton paintings were intimately linked at the studio stage, thus lending some support to my interpretive arguments.

Much, then, depends on the critical reading of the compositional and aesthetic qualities of the portraits. Such a reading influences one's understanding of the provenance of the Balcarres portrait regarding the order and method of composition. Is it the painting created at the first sitting—or at the second sitting? Is it a hybrid of the two sittings? Are both paintings the product of an earlier pounced sketch and thus wholly the product of the studio?

#### ENGRAVINGS OF THE OPIE PORTRAIT

Some scholars have argued in support of Rogers's view,<sup>45</sup> namely that Opie's portrait of Johnson was commissioned by James Harrison,<sup>46</sup> who then employed the artist James Heath to engrave it as a frontispiece for his one-volume folio edition of Johnson's *Dictionary* in 1786.<sup>47</sup> J. D. Fleeman cites a letter about this publication from Michael Lort to Thomas Percy of October 31, 1785, and notes, "SJ's death as well as the expiry of the copyright period of 28 years (2x14, from 1755 [i.e., 1783]), emboldened Harrison . . . to invade the proprietors' interest."<sup>48</sup> Supporting this argument, Morris Brownell draws attention to a notice in the *Public Advertiser* of 1786 addressed to "Purchasers of Mr. Harrison's Edition of Dr. Johnson's English Dictionary." This notice announces that "the Portrait of Dr. Johnson (most exquisitely engraved by Heath, from the original

44 A "pounced" sketch is an exact copy of an original. The National Portrait Gallery, London, describes "pouncing" as a "method of transferring a drawing or design to another surface such as canvas, panel or fresco" by piercing the sketch with holes, placing it over the ground of the painting and brushing a powder (graphite, charcoal, or chalk) to leave little dots. See, <<https://www.npg.org.uk/learning/digital/portraiture/investigating-drawing/pouncing>> (accessed March 27, 2019).

45 Rogers, 116.

46 See Robert Folkenflik, "Representations," *Samuel Johnson in Context*, ed. Jack Lynch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 70; Brownell, 82; and Powell, 4:459, no. 3.

47 See also C. R. and H. G. Harrison, *The House of Harrison; Being an Account of the Family and Firm of Harrison and Sons, Printers to the King* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1914), 6–7.

48 Fleeman, 1:437.



Figure 2.6. Samuel Johnson engraved by James Heath from an original painting by John Opie, in the Possession of Mr. Harrison. The Sarcophagus, and other Ornamental Parts, designed by Mr. R. Smirke. London. 1786. MS Hyde 76 (5.7. iii). Houghton Library, Harvard University.

painting by Opies, in the possession of Mr. Harrison) . . . will to-morrow be ready for delivery.”<sup>49</sup> Harrison confirms the dating of the painting without necessarily identifying himself as the commissioner of the work: “in the Spring of 1784, he [Johnson] sat to Mr. Opie for his portrait, which had been begun in the preceding year.”<sup>50</sup>

Certainly, Harrison’s *Dictionary* includes the Opie frontispiece with Robert Smirke’s iconic relief of Johnson as Hercules strangling the serpent.<sup>51</sup> Copies of Heath’s engraving are in the National Portrait Gallery and in Houghton Library.

In his bibliographical entries for Harrison’s edition, Fleeman notes the existence of a portrait frontispiece<sup>52</sup> but does not specify “Heath after Opie,” as with the Harvard Libraries catalog entry describing the copy in the Hyde Collection. Like Fleeman, the Bodleian catalog also does not identify Harrison’s frontispiece as Heath’s engraving, though it does register the presence of a portrait in their copy. (Later, abridged, and miniature editions of the *Dictionary* also include engravings of an Opie portrait of Johnson as frontispieces, though many of these are poor replicas of the fine images considered here).<sup>53</sup>

However, two further questions arise. The first is, if Harrison commissioned the Opie portrait to have it engraved for his edition of Johnson’s *Dictionary*, what circumstances explain why the volume appeared in March 1786 when the painting was completed in April 1784, and the work came out of copyright in 1783? The answer to this question lies beyond the scope of this essay, and the historical and biographical information to answer it definitively may be unavailable. The second question is, which of the paintings did Opie sell to Harrison to be used by Heath for the engraving—the Houghton or the Balcarres portrait? I have supported the provenance described

49 Brownell, 82, n13.

50 Brack and Kelley, 287. In her unpublished memoir of nine folio volumes, Lady Anne Barnard reproduces this frontispiece on page fifty-six of volume seven, a volume given over to “Sketches from original portraits and Prints belonging to Six Volumes of Manuscript,” and she notes: “I should use this Colossus of literature ill by conveying him in colours, . . . No . . . the Hero of the press shall appear in black and white . . . amongst 50 portraits at least of the Doctor I have chosen this as the most amiable and least uncouth,—the History of his life which I have been reading has so many traits in it of benevolence, and simple hearted goodness as to mollify me much towards the poor Bear;” National Library of Scotland, MS Acc 9769, 27/4/13 (7 of 9), fo. 56.

51 See Brownell, 90.

52 Fleeman, 1:436–437 [55.4D/7].

53 For example, Wilson’s *Abridged Dictionary*, 8<sup>th</sup> impression (1834) [Fleeman, 56.1DA/61], Wilson’s *Abridged Dictionary*, 9<sup>th</sup> impression (1838) [Fleeman, 56.1DA/69], the *Miniature Dictionary* (based on Walker) of 1832 [Fleeman, 56.1MD/138], and the *Miniature Dictionary* of 1833 [Fleeman, 56.1MD/140] that Fleeman fails to record as having a frontispiece [from Opie], but which in fact does have one (I own a copy).

by Lord Crawford, and argue that the aesthetic evidence suggests that Opie kept the Balcarres portrait for himself while making the Houghton portrait public.

Additional support for this view arises, serendipitously, from a second contemporaneous engraving of Opie's Johnson, and the similarity of the Johnson depicted therein to the Johnson depicted by Heath. This is the mezzotint (now in the British Museum, with a copy in the National Portrait Gallery) by Charles Townley of 1792, dedicated to Boswell, and appearing in the second revised, octavo edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.<sup>54</sup>

As Powell notes, "this mezzotint is after the version of the Opie painting that belonged to Dr. Horne"<sup>55</sup>—that is, the Houghton painting. The similarity between Heath's Johnson (1786) and Townley's Johnson (1792) suggests that they both worked from the Houghton painting, and not from that at Balcarres, which remained private.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

L. F. Powell records two versions of the Opie painting, one at Harvard and one at Balcarres: "There are two known versions, but which of the two was actually painted from the life I cannot definitely determine."<sup>56</sup> Herman Liebert, O M Brack, Bruce Redford, Kai Kim Yung, and other scholars all subscribe to Powell's conclusion, and all have taken the Houghton painting as the one "painted from life." The evidence, however, suggests that the situation is more complicated, and that both paintings may, and probably were, painted from life; and, furthermore, that Opie may have worked on both paintings at both the 1783 and the 1784 sittings. Still, for reasons aesthetic, chronological, and historical, the Balcarres portrait seems to be the earliest. Certainly, it appears to have been drawn from life in 1783, but Opie also may have returned to

54 1793; 3 volumes; the mezzotint is found at 3:702. The *DNB* has no article for the engraver Charles Townley, but see John Chaloner Smith, *British Mezzotint Portraits; Being a Descriptive Catalogue of these Engravings from the Introduction of the Art to the Early Part of the Present Century*, 4 vols. (London: Henry Sotheran & Co., 1883), 3:1381–1393 (for the Johnson mezzotint, see 1385–1386). We learn from Chaloner Smith: "Charles Townley is stated by Redgrave to have been born in 1746, son of Rev. James Townley, headmaster of the Merchant Taylor's School, who died in 1778. He practiced at first as a miniature painter, then went to Italy and studied in Rome and Florence, returning to London and practicing for some years there, removing to Berlin from about 1786 to 1792, when he again came back to London" (1381–1382). The British Museum cites Chaloner Smith on the background to this mezzotint.

55 Powell, 4:462, no. 15.

56 Powell, 4:455.



Figure 2.7. Samuel Johnson, L.L.D., 1792. Mezzotint by Charles Townley.  
© National Portrait Gallery, London.



work on it in 1784. The Balcarres picture seems to be the representation that most fully reflects Johnson's human vulnerability in 1784.<sup>57</sup>

John Ingamells, however, mentions three versions: first, that at Houghton (primary); second, that at the NPG, "a thinly-painted version, possibly contemporary" of the Houghton painting; and, third, "a replica . . . in an English private collection" exhibited at the Arts Council in 1984.<sup>58</sup> Ingamells's "English" collection probably refers to Haigh Hall, Lancashire, the home of the Earls of Crawford and Balcarres between 1840 and 1947 (where Opie's portrait would have gone in 1856, and where, in 1946, James Lees-Milne saw the painting and considered buying it for the National Trust for display at Montacute House, Somerset).<sup>59</sup> But "replica"? In this essay I have presented a contrary case. The aesthetic qualities of the Balcarres painting, its vision of Johnson, the circumstances of its creation, and its provenance all strongly suggest that it is the original.

57 One further copy of the Opie portrait exists, dating from 1783, sold by Philip Mould & Company, London, in 1998 from a private collection in Cornwall. According to director Lawrence Hendra, prior to Cornwall this painting had been in the possession of "the Taylor family" (by descent), Charles McCamick of South Carolina, and the Sessler Gallery in Philadelphia. No further information as to provenance is available. The image on the Philip Mould website has been reversed. See <<http://www.historicalportraits.com/Gallery.asp?Page=Item&ItemID=779&Desc=Dr-Johnson-%7C-John-Opie-RA>> (accessed August 29, 2018). The comparatively coarse rendering of both the facial features and clothing in this version suggests either its derivativeness or an unfinished, studio version by Opie and his apprentices.

58 Ingamells, 292.

59 See James Lees-Milne, *Diaries, 1942-1954*; abridged and introduced by Michael Bloch (London: John Murray, 2006), 245-246.

# Contributors

GREG CLINGHAM (PhD, Cambridge) is the Director of the University Press and Professor of English at Bucknell University. He is the author of *Johnson, Writing, and Memory* (2002), the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Samuel Johnson* (1997), and the co-editor of *Johnson After 300 Hundred Years* (2009), among many other publications on Johnson and his circle. He is presently preparing a volume of his unpublished essays on Johnson—"Dr. Johnson's Enlightenment"—and writing a book on Lady Anne Barnard, *Enlightened Orientalism: Lady Anne Barnard and the Cultures of the Cape*.

HENRIKE LÄHNEMANN is Professor of Medieval German Literature and Linguistics at the University of Oxford. Her current research focuses on late medieval devotional writing by Northern German nuns, editing the prayer-book *Dombibliothek Hildesheim Ms J 29* (Medingen 1478); she also edits with Eva Schlotheuber the letters of the nuns of Kloster Lüne which are available open access at the Digital Library of the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel. In 2014, she was the Charles A. Owen, Jr. Visiting Professor at the University of Connecticut, and the article in this volume was co-authored with the Graduate Students on the Medieval Studies Program.

GENNIFER DORGAN worked on the Medingen manuscripts at Harvard while pursuing her M.A. in Medieval Studies at the University of Connecticut. A writer and independent scholar in Worcester, Massachusetts, her research interests include gender, childhood, and spirituality in medieval English and German literature. She has published "The *Visio Pauli* as a Source for the Old English Homily *Be Domes Dæge*" in *American Notes and Queries*.

LAURA GODFREY is a PhD candidate in Medieval Studies at the University of Connecticut where she is finishing her dissertation "Be Wholly Out of Body': Astonishment in Late Medieval English Literature." Her research focuses on the use of medical knowledge and terminology in medieval spiritual texts.

MICAH JAMES GOODRICH is a PhD candidate in Medieval Studies at the University of Connecticut. His research explores ideologies of production in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. His article, "Lolling and the Suspension of Salvation in *Piers Plowman*" is forthcoming in *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* in 2019.

JOSEPH MCLAURIN LEAKE is a PhD candidate in Medieval Studies at the University of Connecticut. His research focuses on Germanic and Celtic literature and languages, medieval etymology, and on the interaction between vernaculars and Latin in glosses and translations.

HANNAH WEAVER is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University. Her dissertation, “Revisionary Histories: Interpolation and Ellipsis in Narratives of the Past,” focuses on the medieval manuscript transmission of British historiography in France and England. She has published on Wace, Lawman, and dismembered manuscripts in *Arthuriana*, *Viator*, and *Manuscript Studies*. Her work on the Houghton Library fragments of Jean de Vignay began when she was a Pforzheimer Fellow in 2017.