

## Samuel Johnson's Will

As the copy-text for Johnson's will, the text in Hawkins's Life of Johnson has been chosen, partly because it is the first authoritative printing (outside of the newspapers) and because Hawkins was one of Johnson's executors and acted as his lawyer.

Differences have been noted between Hawkins's text and a manuscript transcription from the "Prerogative Court of Canterbury" now in the British Library (MS Egerton 24476, fols. 56-58). The "probate copy" of the will hangs on a wall Dr. Johnson's House, 17 Gough Square, London. The manuscripts use numerous abbreviations, which are expanded in Hawkins's version. These, which include *ye* for *the*, *sd* for *said*, and arabic numerals for amounts of money, are not noted.

Copy of Dr. JOHNSON'S WILL, and of the CODICIL thereto subjoined.<sup>a</sup>

In the Name of God, Amen. I SAMUEL JOHNSON, being in full possession of my faculties, but fearing this night may put an end to my life, do ordain this my last will and testament. I bequeath to God a soul polluted with many sins, but I hope purified by repentance, and I trust redeemed by Jesus Christ. I leave seven hundred and fifty pounds in the hands of Bennet Langton, Esq; three hundred pounds in the hands of Mr. Barclay and Mr. Perkins, brewers; one hundred and fifty pounds in the hands of Dr.

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<sup>a</sup> An authentic Copy of Doctor Johnson's Will, extracted from y<sup>e</sup>. Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Ms

Percy, Bishop of Dromore; one thousand pounds, three per cent. annuities in the public funds, and one hundred pounds now lying by me in ready money; all these before-mentioned sums and property I leave, I say, to Sir. Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. William Scott, of Doctors Commons, in trust for the following uses: That is to say, to pay the representatives of the late William Innys, bookseller, in St. Paul's Church-yard, the sum of two hundred pounds to Mrs. White, my female servant, one hundred pounds stock in the three per cent. annuities aforesaid. The rest of the aforesaid sums of money and property, together with my books, plate, and household furniture, I leave to the before-mentioned Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. William Scott, also in trust, to be applied, after paying my debts, to the use of Francis Barber, my man-servant, a negro, in such manner as they shall judge most fit and available to his benefit. And I appoint the aforesaid Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. William Scott, sole executors of this my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former wills and testaments whatsoever. In witness whereof I hereunto subscribe my name, and affix my seal, this eighth day of December, 1784.

SAM JOHNSON, (L. S.)

Signed, sealed, published, declared, and delivered by the said testator, as his last will and testament, in the presence of us, the word *two* being first inserted in the opposite page.

GEORGE STRAHAN.

JOHN DES MOULINS.

By way of codicil to my last will and testament, I SAMUEL JOHNSON give, devise, and bequeath my messuage or tenement, situate at Litchfield, in the county of Stafford, with the appurtenances, in the tenure or occupation of Mrs. Bond, of Litchfield aforesaid, or of Mr. Hinchman, her under-tenet, to my executors in trust, to sell and dispose of the same; and the money arising from such sale I give and bequeath as follows, viz. to Thomas and Benjamin, the sons of Fisher Johnson, late of Leicester, and — — — Whiting, daughter of Thomas Johnson, late of Coventry, and the grand-daughter of the said Thomas Johnson, one full and equal fourth part each; but in case there shall be more grand-daughters than one of the said Thomas Johnson, living at the time of my decease, I give and bequeath the part or share of that one to, and equally between, such grand-daughters. I give and bequeath to the Rev. Mr. Rogers of Berkley,<sup>b</sup> near Froome, in the country of Somerset, the sum of one hundred pounds, requesting him to apply the same towards to maintenance of Elizabeth Herne, a lunatic. I also give and bequeath to my god-children, the son and daughter of Mauritius Low, painter, each of them,<sup>c</sup> one hundred pounds of my stock in the three per cent. consolidated annuities, to be applied and disposed of by, and at the discretion of my Executors, in the education or settlement in the world of them<sup>d</sup> my said legatees. Also, I give and bequeath to Sir John Hawkins,<sup>e</sup> one of my Executors, the *Annales Ecclesiastici* of Baronius and Hollingshed's

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<sup>b</sup> Berkeley Ms

<sup>c</sup> them Ms

<sup>d</sup> them, Ms

<sup>e</sup> Hawkins^ Ms

and Stowe's Chronicles; and also an octavo Common Prayer Book. To<sup>f</sup> Bennet Langton, Esq. I give and bequeath my Polygot Bible. To<sup>g</sup> Sir Joshua Reynolds, my great French Dictionary, by Martiniere;<sup>h</sup> and my own copy of my folio English Dictionary,<sup>i</sup> of the last revision. To<sup>j</sup> Dr. William Scott, one of my executors,<sup>k</sup> the Dictionnaire de Commerce, and Lectius's edition of the Greek Poets: to<sup>l</sup> Mr. Wyndham, Poetae Graeci Heroici per Henricum Stephanum. To<sup>m</sup> the Rev. Mr. Strahan, vicar of Islington, in Middlesex,<sup>n</sup> Mills's Greek Testament, Beza's Greek Testament<sup>o</sup> by Stephens,<sup>p</sup> all my Latin Bibles, and my Greek Bible by Wechelius. To<sup>q</sup> Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Butter, and Mr. Cruikshank<sup>r</sup> the surgeon who attended me, Mr. Holder<sup>s</sup> my apothecary, Gerard Hamilton, Esq; Mrs. Gardiner, of Snow-hill, Mrs. Frances Reynolds, Mr. Hoole, and the Rev. Mr. Hoole, his son, each a book at their election, to keep as a token of remembrance. I also give and bequeath to Mr. John Des Moulins,<sup>t</sup> two hundred pounds consolidated three per cent. annuities; and to Mr. Sastres, the Italian master, the sum of five pounds to be laid out in books of piety for his own use. And whereas the said

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<sup>f</sup> Book: to Ms

<sup>g</sup> Bible: to Ms

<sup>h</sup> Martiniere: Ms

<sup>i</sup> Dictionary^ Ms

<sup>j</sup> revision, to Ms

<sup>k</sup> executors: Ms

<sup>l</sup> Poets, to Ms

<sup>m</sup> Stephanum, to Ms

<sup>n</sup> in the county of Middlesex Ms

<sup>o</sup> Testament, Ms

<sup>p</sup> Stephens: Ms

<sup>q</sup> Wechelius^ to Ms

<sup>r</sup> Brocklesby, Dr. Butter, Mr Cruikshanks, Ms

<sup>s</sup> Holder, Ms

<sup>t</sup> Moulins^ Ms

Bennet Langton hath agreed, in consideration of the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, mentioned in my will<sup>u</sup> to be in his hands, to grant and secure an annuity of seventy pounds, payable during the life of me<sup>v</sup> and my servant Francis Barber, and the life of the survivor<sup>w</sup> of us, to Mr. George Stubbs<sup>x</sup> in trust for us; my mind and will is,<sup>y</sup> that in case of my decease before this said agreement shall be perfected, and said sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds and the bond for securing said sum, shall go to the said Francis Barber, and<sup>z</sup> I hereby give and bequeath to him the same in lieu of the bequest in his favour,<sup>aa</sup> contained in my said will. And<sup>bb</sup> I hereby empower my said Executors<sup>cc</sup> to deduct and retain all expenses that shall or may be incurred in the execution of my said will, or of this codicil thereto, out of such<sup>dd</sup> estate and effects as I shall die possessed of. All<sup>ee</sup> the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate and effects, I give and bequeath to my said Executors, in trust, for the said Francis Barber, his executors and administrators. Witness my hand and seal, this ninth day of December, 1784.

SAM. JOHNSON, (L.S.)

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<sup>u</sup> will, Ms

<sup>v</sup> me, Ms

<sup>w</sup> survivor Ms

<sup>x</sup> Stubbs, Ms

<sup>y</sup> his, Ms

<sup>z</sup> Barber And Ms

<sup>aa</sup> favour<sup>^</sup> Ms

<sup>bb</sup> will; and Ms

<sup>cc</sup> Executors, Ms

<sup>dd</sup> thereto<sup>^</sup> out of said estate

<sup>ee</sup> of: all Ms

Signed, sealed, published, declared, and delivered, by the said Samuel Johnson, as, and for a codicil to his last will and testament, in the presence of us, who,<sup>ff</sup> in his presence, and at his request, and also in the presence of each other, have hereto subscribed our names as witnesses.

JOHN COPLEY.

WILLIAM GIBSON.

HENRY COTE.

Proved at London, with a Codicil, the 16<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1784, before the Worshipful George Harris, Doctor of Laws, and Surrogate, by the oath of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knight, Sir John Hawkins, Knight, and William Scott, Doctor of Laws, the Executors named in the will, to whom administration was granted, having been first sworn duty to administer.

*Dec. 13th, 1784.*

Henry Stevens,

Geo. Gostling, } Deputy Registers.

John Greene.<sup>gg</sup>

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<sup>ff</sup> who<sup>^</sup> Ms

<sup>gg</sup> Proved at London . . . Greene Ms