

All four of Lowth's published books are part of the Keynes Collection, and, amazingly, in multiple editions and reprints, posthumous ones included: there are as many as 31 copies of the grammar, 13 each of *De sacra poesi* and *Isaiah*, and four copies of *William of Wykeham*. It was to have a look at the grammars that I visited New College Library in July of this year.⁵

But the Keynes Collection contains much more than those 200 or so books, and one particular if mysterious little gem is an undated letter by J. Sturges addressed to 'M^r. Cadell, Strand, London'. The letter itself reads as follows:

Sir

I return by this post the
last proof sheets for the Printer. You will therefore

Following the letter there is a list of the intended recipients of the 'presents' or presentation copies of the pamphlet that was to be printed, and that would be published by Cadell. Apart from the archbishop of York and a number of bishops (though not the bishop of Oxford) the list includes the name 'Rev^d. D^r. Lowth— George S^t.'. The Warden of New College was to receive a copy, too (see the reverse page of the letter itself). As the image above shows, all names were ticked off, which suggests that Sturges's request had been seen to. The letter may have survived because it was added to the publisher's file to serve as a record for later use.⁶

The problem with the letter is not merely that it is undated. To start with, there were two eighteenth-century publishers called Cadell: Thomas Cadell the Elder (1742–1802) and Thomas Cadell the Younger (1773–1836).⁷ But there were also two Rev^d. D^r. Lowths: Lowth's son Robert (1762–1822) was a clergyman, too. The identity of J. Sturges at least is clear: John Sturges (1735–1807) was Lowth's sister Margaret's son, and he was a clergyman as well.⁸ So if we could find a date for the letter, we would also be able to identify the publisher of the pamphlet as well as which Robert Lowth would be the intended recipient of a copy of it.

There is one important clue in the list of names, which includes the following: 'Michael Dodson Esq^r. Lincoln's Inn (the supposed Author)' (see the image reproduced above). The word 'Author' made me turn to the database Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), where a search for Michael Dodson produced a reference to *A New Translation of Isaiah* (1790) as well as:

A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Sturges, Author of Short Remarks on a New Translation of Isaiah, by a Layman; with Notes Supplementary to those of Dr. Lowth, Late Bishop of London, and Containing Remarks on Many Parts of his Translation and Notes. By . author of the new translation and notes (1791)

This title reads like a response to the pamphlet referred to in the above letter to Cadell, and indeed, searching for John Sturges as 'author' in ECCO as well produced its title:

Short Remarks on a New Translation of Isaiah, by a Layman; with Notes Supplementary to those of Dr. Lowth, late bishop of London, and Containing Remarks on Many Parts of his Translation and Notes. In a Letter to the Author. , LL. D. Chancellor of the Diocese of Winchester, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty (1791)

The publisher of these *Short Remarks* was Thomas Cadell, most likely Thomas Cadell the Elder, since his son would have been only eighteen at the time. The straightforward instructions in Sturges's letter suggest that he was dealing with an experienced publisher rather than with his very young son.⁹ ECCO, moreover, contains two earlier publications by Sturges that were also published by Cadell, again, given their dates, presumably the Elder:

A Sermon Preached in Lambeth Chapel, at the Consecration of the Right Reverend John Butler, LL.D. Lord Bishop of Oxford. On Sunday, May 25, 1777. By John Sturges, A. M. Prebendary of Winchester, and

Considerations on the Present State of the Church-Establishment, in Letters to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London.