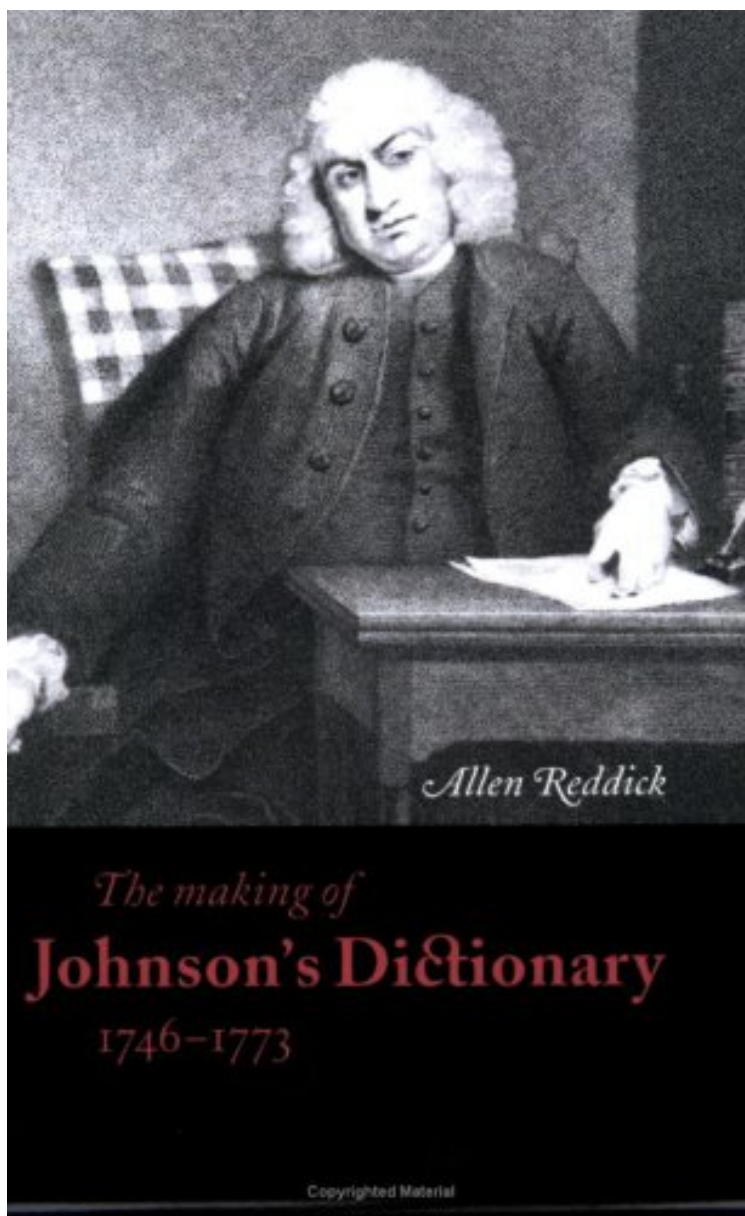


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The Making of Johnson's Dictionary 1746-1773 (Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History)

Allen Reddick

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Allen Reddick : The Making of Johnson's Dictionary 1746-1773 (Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Making

of Johnson's Dictionary 1746-1773 (Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Foundational Document in Modern Johnson Scholarship By James Bartholomew Hamster If there is one realm in which Reddick's work particularly shines, it is in grounding the creation of Johnson's Dictionary in the humanity of its creator. Readers frequently find themselves in the workplace of Johnson and his amanuenses, enduring the continual task of compilation even as the passage of nine years for the Dictionary's original creation (and several more in revision) alter the circumstances of those involved in the enterprise. In this way, the Dictionary serves as the means for assembling a biography of Johnson during the span of his involvement - and, through Johnson, a biography of his associates - and recontextualizing the contents of the Dictionary in light of this understanding. Let there be no mistake, however: Reddick's account of Johnson's work is highly meticulous. The emphasis on the human effort behind the Dictionary is made possible through painstaking analysis of what often prove minute details within the primary source texts: namely, original published editions and manuscripts of the Dictionary, most notably the unfinished Sneyd-Gimbel manuscript. For example, much of Reddick's interpretation of the impact of Johnson's theological and political leanings on the Dictionary comes out of a comparative analysis of the first published edition and the author's revised fourth edition; similarly, gaps between the releases of copy to Johnson's printer are used to corroborate or complicate biographical information made available from other sources such as Johnson's personal correspondences. While Reddick's footwork is quite comprehensive and seldom proves contentious, the juxtaposition of this intense lexicographical analysis and its practical biographical conclusions can prove jarring for those not already well-versed in study of the primary source material. The overall structural attempt toward a chronological account of the making of the Dictionary is at times confusing, as the analysis compares the work-in-progress of a very specific moment in the Dictionary's creation to a version several years later or prior, mixing the sense of chronology somewhat and resulting in an occasionally difficult reading experience. However difficult it is to glean a comprehensive understanding of Reddick's account from an initial read, the value of this book is clear on the basis of two characteristics. First, the holistic impression Reddick assembles of the interrelation between Johnson's biography and the Dictionary as a fundamentally personal and human labour rather than a detached academic or commercial enterprise is one which fundamentally shapes the reader's understanding of Johnson's work. Second, the often-dense analyses of primary texts in support of Reddick's interpretations prove useful as critical references and primers for further research. For those looking to engage in their own detailed scholarship on Johnson's Dictionary, Reddick's work in linking together the extant primary source materials forms a set of guideposts in identifying how to approach new avenues of textual analysis for a text whose breadth and complexity can prove frightening.

Following the discovery of manuscript materials, including hundreds of unpublished additions and changes, for Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language, Allen Reddick describes the conception, composition, writing, and subsequent revision of the first great English dictionary, and the only dictionary created by a great writer. In this second edition of his acclaimed study, Reddick incorporates new commentary and scholarship, and situates *The Making of Johnson's Dictionary* in current critical and scholarly debate.

"...a major contribution to Johnsonian studies sure to endure the test of time." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* "...a fascinating and wonderful piece of scholarly detective work....The chapter that Reddick bases solely on his new discoveries...is as good a single chapter as anyone has written in any book on Johnson of the last thirty years." *The Age of Johnson* "An important, exact, and fascinating book." *Bibliographical Society of America*