Of Social Networks and Linguistic Influence: The Language of Robert Lowth and his Correspondents

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ABSTRACT

Analysing the unpublished correspondence of Robert Lowth, author of A *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762), this article attempts to find evidence of linguistic influence between people belonging to the same social network. Such evidence is used to try and determine where Lowth found the linguistic norm he presented in his grammar. Adding to the data presented by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) on the basis of their study of fourteen morphosyntactic items in the Corpus of Early English Correspondence, a detailed analysis is presented of eighteenth-century English. One of the results is an explanation for the presence in Lowth's grammar of the stricture against double negation at a time when double negation was no longer in current use.

KEYWORDS: eighteenth-century English; social networks; norms; influence; idiosyncrasies; historical sociolinguistics; Lowth; double negation; normative grammar.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Bodleian Library possesses a manuscript, MS. Eng. Lett. c.574 ff. 1-139, which appears to have been a personal file of Robert Lowih's (1710-1787), author of one of the most authoritative English grammars of the eighteenth century. The manuscript contains letters from various correspondents, drafts of letters to known and unknown correspondents, and miscellaneous papers. These papers include two lists of names, ff. 113-114 and 114-115, both in Lowth's own hand. The first, which is less than half the size of the second, contains a note in a different hand reading: "List of Names/ app for 'lsaiah' copies". *Isaiah,* A New *Translation* was one of Lowth's major publications, which brought him fame among biblical and literary scholars. The book was published in 1778 by J. Dodsley and T. Cadell; with his brother Robert, James Dodsley had also been responsible for the publication of Lowth's *Short Introductionto English Grammar* (1762), while after Robert's death in 1764 James Dodsley and Thomas Cadell continued to reprint the grammar down to 1795 (Alston, 1965: 42-48; see also: Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2001). From a letter to Lowth by an unidentified correspondent dated 17 August 1778, it appears that *Isaiah* came out in October of that year, for the author assures Lowth that he looks "forward to October with impatience, on account of Isaiah" (Beinecke Library, Osborn MS files, K.8319). The book must have been immediately popular, for on 5 December of that year, Lowth wrote to his brother-in-law John Sturges: "We begin printing a New Edition of Isaiah next week …. lf You have noted any mistakes of any kind, communicate. If at the beginning of either of the parts, immediately: for I have already given the first sheets of each to the Printer, who begins on Monday" (Bodl. Lib. MS. Eng. Lett. c.140. f. 30). Sturges's name appears on the first of the lists referred to above. As this list is the longest of the two, it was probably drawn up as a list of presentation copies ⸻or "presents" as Lowth would refer to them⸺ of the first impression of *Isaiah* to be distributed among friends and acquaintances. The shorter list may have been drawn up for the second impression of the book. There is some overlap between the lists; evidently, some people received more than one copy of the book.

         MS Eng. Lett. c.574 also contains five letters acknowledging the receipt of the presentation copies and praising Lowth for his achievement. All five authors of the letters, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir George Baker, the Bishops of Landaff and Ossory and Dr S. Hallifax, appear on the lists discussed. In addition, there is a letter from Lowth in a manuscript in the National Library of Scotland (MS 25299, f. 43), which is addressed to Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes (1726-1792). In this letter, dated 7 June 1779, Lowth expressed his obligation to Dalrymple "for the kind & candid reception, wch. You have been pleased to give to my Isaiah. The approbation of such Readers cannot but give me particular pleasure". Dalrymple's name appears on the shorter presentation list. The "present" of *Isaiah* led to further correspondence between the two men: with thirteen more letters from Lowth to Dalrymple, Dalrymple was one of Lowth's most frequent correspondents I have been able to identify so far.

II. LOWTH'S SOCIAL NETWORK

The presentation lists are of interest in that they help us **identify** the social network to which Lowth belonged. Both lists are headed by the **Royal** Family, and they contain the names of the Cavendish **family,** Lowth's patrons (Hepworth, 1978: **34),** bishops **and** archbishops and other members of the clergy, fellow scholars, friends and relatives. Lowth may not **have known all** individuals on the list intimately, but he had **become** Bishop of London the year before *Isaiah* was published, and he possibly used the occasion of the publication of his new book as a means to consolidate his acquaintance with a number of **important** people, the **Royal** Family, their physician Sir George Baker and the painter Reynolds included.

 Analysing Lowth's social network **is** of interest **because** Lowth was a socially ambitious man, which must **have** made him sensitive to different linguistic norms, and to what was appropriate in what kind of circumstances. Like any other speaker and writer he would **have** accommodated to the language of the people he associated with (cf. Bax, **2002),** and he may, consciously or unconsciously, **have** adopted **features** that were **part** of the linguistic norm he aspired to. Changes in his language due to influence from members of his social network may therefore **become** evident on the basis of an analysis of his **private** correspondence. **Furthermore,** Lowth was the author of a very influential grammar of English. According to Aitchison (1981: 24) the rules in this grammar "were often based on **currently** fashionable or even personal **stylistic preferences".** Aitchison **provides** no evidence for this, and I **have** already argued elsewhere on the basis of an analysis of Lowth's unpublished letters that his personal usage was **often** at **variance** with what he advocated in his grammar. Like that of any letter writer of **his** time, his language shows a considerable amount of variation, and this variation **correlates** with his relationship with the addressees of his letters (**e.g.** Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2002; **2003a).** Lowth's grammar, popular as it was, must **have** influenced many people dunng the second half of the eighteenth century and beyond. Lowth was therefore instrumental in setting up a norm of linguistic correctness, which is **still** in evidence today. But what this norm was based on has never **been** investigated. In his grammar, Lowth exposed grammatical errors of the standard authors of the time, thus **criticizing** the language of his social peers. He therefore must **have** looked for a norm of correctness not among the educated middle classes as **is** usually claimed (**e.g.** Leonard, 1929: **169),** but elsewhere.

 Finding an answer to the question of where his linguistic norm **came** from **is** no easy task, given our lack of knowledge of eighteenth-century linguistic vanation noted by Gorlach (2001: 56). Though more work has **been** done on eighteenth-century English than Gorlach seems to give credit for, Late **Modern** English has recently **become** the object of scholarly interest (see: **Dossena** & Jones, **2003),** and much **is** to be expected of the expansion of the Corpus of Early English Correspondence (CEEC) to include the eighteenth century as well (**Nevala,** 2001). **In** what follows, I will therefore try to contnbute to our **growing** insight into eighteenth-century English by analysing the language of Lowth's correspondence, his own letters as well as those of the people he corresponded with and who thus belonged to his social network. **Several** of them

—Sir George Baker, the Marquis of Carmarthen, Dr S. Hallifax, Dr **Benjamin** Kennicott, the Bishops of Landaff and Ossory, Bishop Thomas Percy, Sir Joshua Reynolds, **John** Sturges, Joseph or Thomas **Warton** and Charles Geoffrey Woide— appear on the presentation **lists** of Isaiah. **William** Warburton, which whom Lowth had had a serious clash in 1756 and again in1765[1] did not, so he did not receive a copy of the **book;** but Lowth did exchange letters with him. Lowth's network consisted of friends and acquaintances (including Warburton), with **some** of whom (even Warburton) he formed such **strong ties** as to **have** possibly **been** influenced by their language. Including the language of his correspondents in the analysis will **also** show whether Lowth's usage was idiosyncratic or **not.**

For practica1 reasons **I** will focus on the linguistic items studied by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003). A more elaborate analysis of Lowth's morphology and **syntax** will be attempted elsewhere. It will be of interest to see whether the patterns identified by Nevalainen **and** Raumolin-Brunberg on the basis of their analysis of CEEC (1410-1681) continue into the eighteenth century. My data range from 1753 to 1786, the dates of the first and last letters **in** the correspondence.

III. LOWTH'S CORRESPONDENCE

Of Lowth's correspondence, only the letters to and from Robert Dodsley, seventeen **in** all, **have been** published (ed. **Tierney,** 1988). **In** addition, four letters to Dodsley's brother and successor James were reproduced **in** Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2001). Many more letters **have** come **down** to us, and thus far **I have** collected 272 of them, 202 by Lowth (ca. 79,000 words) and seventy by **thirty** different correspondents (ca. 32,000 **words).**[2] In studying the letters, **I** will take into account Lowth's relationship with his addressees, as in Tieken-Boon van Ostade **(2003a)** I found that his use of formal or informal spelling **often correlates** with the nature of their relationship. This may **also** be the case with the morphosyntactic aspects of his language dealt with **here.**

The letters are unevenly spread across time, with 92 out-letters dating from the 1750s, the **majority** being addressed to his wife, 62 letters from the 1760s, 28 from the 1770s and 20 from the 1780s. Most of the in-letters date from the 1760s **(41),** with six from the 1750s, 17 from the 1770s and six **from** the 1780s. This will complicate **treating** the **results** of my analysis diachronically, but the period spanned by the letters (ca. 30 years) **is** not much larger than the periods distinguished by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (cf. Figure 1). Though for many of Lowth's correspondents **I have** only one or two letters, whenever possible **I** will try to link specific patterns of usage to individual correspondents

IV. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE LETTERS

In what follows, **I** will discuss twelve of the items analysed by Nevalainen and **Raumolin-Brunberg (2003).Two** items, the **replacement** of YE by **YOU** and of **WHICH** by THE **WHICH,** were excluded, as both processes were completed by the end of the seventeenth century. Neither YE nor THE WHICH were attested in **Lowth's** correspondence.

IV.1. MY/MINE and THY/ THINE

According to Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 61), "the first- and second-person singular possessive determiners lost their -N inflection in Renaissance English". This is confirmed by their data. **Nevertheless, MINE** still occurs before <h> in one of Lowth's letters, i.e. the first one he wrote to his wife:

> 1. & am now gott to mine Host's (Lowth to his wife, 1755).

Several letters later, Lowth used MY in the same context, also in a letter to his wife. Possibly, the usage in (1) is deliberately archaic, expressing a kind of lightness of tone to mask the unnatural situation of having to communicate with his wife on paper. Neither MINE nor THINE are used as possessive pronouns by any of his correspondents. The appropriateness of these pronouns is the subject of a prolonged discussion between Lowth and his friend Jarnes Merrick (1720-1769), the latter being against while the former strongly argues in favour of them:

> As to mine & thine before a Vowel, there are sufficient authorities on both sides: 'tis a matter of taste & feeling, & cannot be disputed & decided by reasoning. You must consult your own ear. If your ear approve of them, pray don't be afraid of using them freely; nor give up the judgement of your sense in deference to the authorities of Milton, Dryden, Addison, Pope, &c, &c.
>
> (Lowth to Merrick, 1762)

The discussion relates to Merrick's usage in his translation of the Psalms, which would be published in 1765, on a draft version of which Lowth had been asked to comment. Eventually, Merrick gave in, unable to hold up in the light of so much pressure (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2003b).

IV.2. ITS

The rise of the possessive pronoun ITS, according to Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 62), "is one of the latest developments within the English pronoun system". Its spread was unusually rapid, for during a period of only eighty years it rose from ca. 5% to over 30% at the expense of the postnominal variants OF IT and THEREOF. In Lowth's correspondence, THEREOF is found only in the in-letters, and only in those of Edward Pearson. See e.g.:

> 2. Mr. Robson will take a Copy thereof (Pearson to Lowth, 1766).

Pearson acted as Lowth's secretary during the few months in 1766 when Lowth was Bishop of St. Davids, writing from Westminster to inform his superior about business relating to the bishopric. It therefore looks as though by the middle of the eighteenth century the word had fossilized into a kind of officialese.

Both ITS and OF IT occur in Lowth's letters and those of his correspondents. See examples

(3) - (4):

> 3. of such **importance** to us in its consequences (Lowth to his wife, 1755)
> 4. That the House may be informed of the True State of it (the Duke of Newcastle to Lowth, 1767).

Figure 1 ssuggests that the steep increase noted by Nevelainen and Raumolin-Brunberg did not continue into the eighteenth **century** and that by Lowth's time the top of the S-cwve was reached.[3]
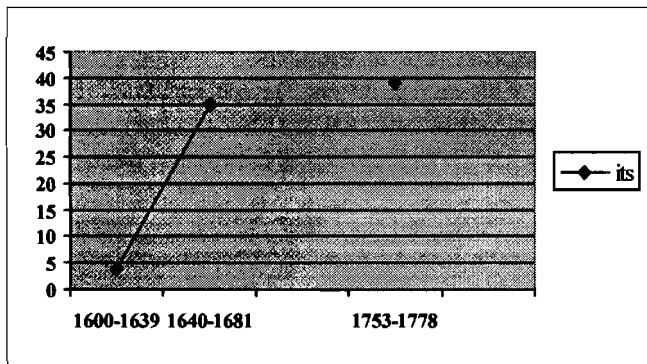

Figure 1: Rise of ITS (%) at the expense of OF IT and MEREOF; based on CEEC.

Interestingly, Lowth's use of ITS first appears in 1762, in a letter to **Merrick. Merrick is also** the first of Lowth's correspondents to use this **pronoun**. Possibly, Lowth was influenced by Merrick's usage as a result of their frequent **epistolary** contact. An analysis of **Merrick's** letters would be able to **confirm this.** In Lowth's letters, OFIT appears to be characteristic of an **informal** style, **while ITS is** equally frequent in the formal as in the informal letters. The in-letters show the **reverse picture,** with ITS **occurring** more **frequently** in formal letters and OF IT almost equally often in both types of letters (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of ITS and OF ir in Lowth's correspondence

Correspondents		*Informal*	*Formal*
Lowth	ITS (16)	8	8
	OF ir (27)	23	4
Others	irs (12)	3	9
	OF ir (14)	6	8

IV.3. The prop-word ONE

According to Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 64-65), their **evidence** from the final period of CEEC shows the development of the prop-word ONE to be characteristic of the "new

and vigorous stage" of an S-shaped curve of change. Usage in Lowth's correspondence, however, indicates a further steady increase of this feature, suggesting that this "new and vigorous stage" set in some time later. To show this, I have calculated the usage normalized per 10,000 words for Lowth's letters to his wife and to his friend Gloster Ridley and for Pearson's letters to Lowth (Table 2).

Table 2. Proo-word ONE in Lowth's corresoondence.

Letters	Date	Amount of text	N	N/10,000 words
Lowth to his wife	1755	24,470 words	22	8.99
Lowth to Ridley	1768-1769	6,560 words	7	10.67
Pearson to Lowth	1766	5,888 words	7	11,89
			Average	9.75

The figures in Table 2 possibly also suggest an increase in usage due to greater formality of style. The average figure for the eighteenth-century letters analysed indicates that the stage in the development as attested from CEEC should be reinterpreted as "incipient" (see Figure 2). More information from Late Modem English should show whether this is indeed the case.

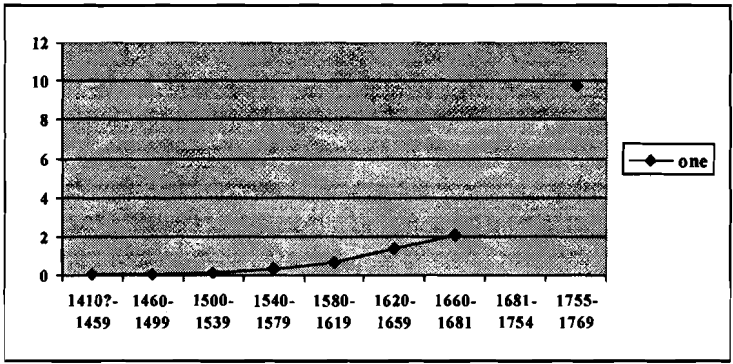*Figure 2:* Prop-word ONE Occurrences per 10,000 words; based on CEEC.

Another interesting development may be observed. Down to 1776, ONE almost exclusively occurs in Lowth's informal letters (36/39 instances):

5. & am like to make a great many new ones [i.e. acquaintances] (Lowth to his wife, 1755).

In the letters from his correspondents, however, ONE is more frequent in the formal than in the informal letters (Table 3), though almost all instances were found in Pearson's letters. See e.g.:

6. [I]] **have** found both yᶜ. **Leases** among **some** scatter'd ones [i.e. **leases**] (Pearson to Lowth, 1766).

Table 3. Prop-word ONE in formal/informal letters. The differences are **statistically significant (p ≤ 0,001).**

	ONE	Informal		Formal
Lowth	39	36	3	Woide (1776)
				James Dodsley (1778)
				Dalrymple (1781)
Others	11	3	8	7 Pearson (1766)
				1 Woide (1777)

The only other **instance is** used by Woide, a **Pole** with an imperfect command of English. Possibly, Lowth's usage of ONE spread from his informal to his formal styles as a result of his exposure to **letters** such as Pearson's. It would, moreover, be tempting to conclude on the basis of the dates of the **instances** in question that the usage of ONE was subsequently adopted by Woide, using Lowth's language as a model for his own.

IV.4. The object of the gerund

Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 65-67) discuss the use of the gerund in CEEC from two perspectives, in its function as a prepositional complement and with respect to the different forms of **its noun subject. The** second type will be discussed in **IV.5.** The **three** different **types** of construction identified by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg are illustrated by (7)-(9):

7. a chance of **getting something beforehand** (Lowth to **his wife,** 1755)
8. 1 shall be obliged to You for noting of it **(Merrick** to Lowth, 1762)
9. to the pnnting **your part** of the **correspondence (Warburton** to Lowth, 1765).
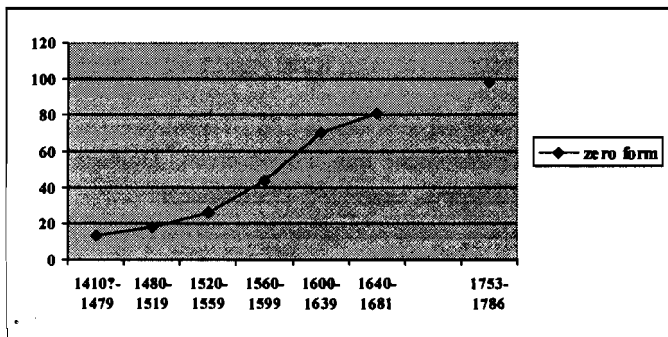

Figure 3: The object of **the** gerund: **zero forms in relation to the OF-phrase** (%); **based** on **CEEC.**

While Nevalainen and **Raumolin-Brunberg** discovered that at the beginning of the period

analysed the OF-phrase as in (7) was still predominant, the opposite was found for the end of their period. The data from **Lowth's** correspondence show that **during** the second half of the eighteenth century this change was virtually completed, thus representing the **tail** end of the S-**curve** change identified by Nevalainen and **Raumolin-Brunberg** (Figure 3).

The **OF-phrase** as well as what I shall refer to as the **OF-less** phrase, illustrated by **(9)**, are more frequent in the letters of Lowth's correspondents than in his **own** (Table 4); **the** differences between them are statistically **significant** (p ≤ 0.001):

Table *4*. The objeet of the gerund in Lowth's correspondence: zero forms, and phrases with or without OF.

	Zero form		OF-phrase		OF-less phrase		total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Lowth	200	98.5	2	1	1	0.5	203
Correspondents	93	89	5	5	6	6	104

In his grammar, Lowth allows for the zero form as **well** as for the OF-phrase, both of which he illustrates with examples (1762: 111-112), but not for the **OF-less** phrase or for the **OF-**phrase without the definite article, noting that "either of those two Phrases would be a confounding of two distinct forms". It **is striking** that he used the OF-less phrase himself, though once only, in a letter to James Dodsley:

10. no objection to the publishing a new Edition of the **grammar** (Lowth to James Dodsley, 1781).

The **instance** either represents a slip, or it **is** the result of influence from the language of **some** of his correspondents: four of the six **instances** in the in-letters occur in letters from Warburton (1765) and one by John Roberts (1775). His relationship with Warburton was at **its** most distant at the time (Hepworth, 1978: **167),** while Roberts introduces himself to Lowth "as a stranger" (16 November 1775). Lowth may **have** considered the construction suitable to the kind of formal style he usually adopted in his letters to James Dodsley.

IV.5. The **noun** subject of the gerund
The rise of the genitival subject of the gerund as in (11) at the expense of the **OF-phrase,** illustrated by **(12),** as identified by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 66-67), **does** not continue into the eighteenth century (Figure 4).

11. of **Your** Lordship's being offered Canterbury (Dick to Lowth, 1783)
12. for the coming in of y". Packet that was due (Lowth to **his** wife, 1755)
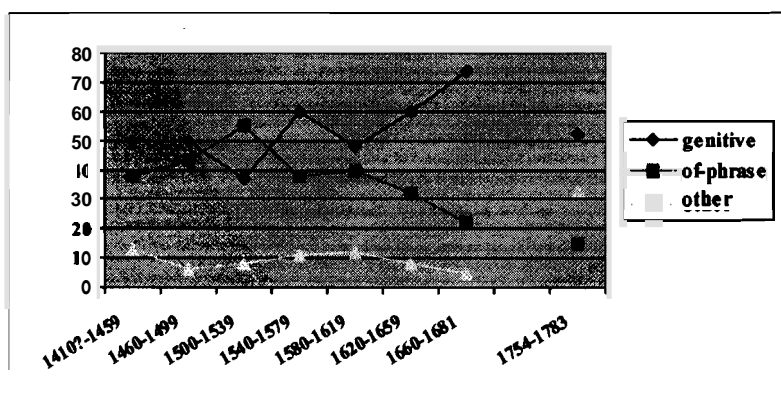13. the Dean mending upon it **all** the way (Lowth to his wife, 1755).

Figure 4: Different types of noun subject with the gerund (%); based on CEEC.

Both types of subjects decreased after the seventeenth century, while the category marked "other", illustrated by (13), rose in fiequency (from 5% to 33%). Table 5, moreover, shows that the gerund with a noun subject is far less common in Lowth's time than at the end of the period investigated by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg: 2.4 as against 4.9 per 10,000 words (2003: 47). The differences are statistically significant (p ≤ 0.001).

Table 5. The final period of CEEC compared with usage by Lowth and his correspondents.

	Genitive		OF-phrase		Other		*Total*	N/
	N	%	N	%	N	%		10,000
CEEC 1660-1681 350,000 words	126	74	37	22	8	5	171	4.9
Total 18thc 111,000 words	14	52	4	15	9	33	27	2.4
Lowth 79,000 words	10	50	4	20	6	30	20	2.5
Others 32,000 words	4	57	–	–	3	43	7	2.2

The construction with a possessive pronoun instead of a noun phrase in the genitive, as in (14), is far more common than the type illustrated by example (11): 8.1 per 10,000 words in Lowth's letters and 7.2 in those of his correspondents as against 2.5 and 2.2 (cf. Table 5). Unfortunately, I don't have any data from CEEC to be able to determine if there was a change in usage in this respect. The letters also contain six instances with a pronoun subject, as in (15) and (16):

14. without Your coming hither to kiss Hands, (Pearson to Lowth, 1766),
15. she being the Sister of his Sister of his decd. Wife (Roberts to Lowth, 1775)
16. it being now half past nine o'clock (Lowth to the Earl of Liverpool, 1780)

Among normative **grammarians** a dispute **arose** as to the acceptability of the case of the **noun** subject (Leonard, 1929: 199-200). In Lowth's correspondence, I **have** found only **two** examples with a nominative **pronoun,** both **in** letters from **John Roberts** (cf. (15)). Neither **Lowth** nor his correspondents used this construction, but l did not find any instances with the **pronoun** in the accusative either, which Lowth condemned in his **grammar** (1762: 107). I did come across three instances of the construction in Lowth's letters with the **pronoun** *it,* **being unmarked** for case (to James Dodsley, Ridley, and the Earl of Liverpool, in 1764 and **1780),** and once in a letter from **Warburton (1756),** which predates any of Lowth's own usages.

IV.6. The third person singular present tense: -S vs. -TH

By the end of the seventeenth century, third person present tense forms nearly always end in -S: Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg(2003: 68) found 92% -S forms for the period 1660-1681, instances of HAVE and DO excluded. Lowth himself never used -TH, but **in** the **in-letters** I **came** across one example of *hath* and one of *doth,* the former used in a formal context by Archbishop Secker at the age of 73, and the latter by the Pole Woide:

> 17. The Bishop of Litchfield hath accepted St Pauls (Secker to Lowth, 1766)
> 18. nor doth he intend to resign at present (Woide to Lowth, 1777).

Three other instances occw, two in (19) and one in (20):

> 19. He flattereth, (or, dealeth deceitfully with) himself (Merrick to Lowth, 1762)
> 20. he giveth goodly words (Hallifax to Lowth, 1762).

All three are related to a discussion in poetry. None of the instances in (17) • (20) therefore seem characteristic of actual usage of the time.

IV.7. Periphrastic DO in **affirmative** sentences

Lowth's correspondence did not produce any instances of periphrastic **DO** in **affirmative** sentences. By the end of the seventeenth century the use of unemphatic DO has declined to just under 15 per 10,000 words (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 69). This decline continued, as the relatively few instances encountered in eighteenth-century **epistolary prose indicate** (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 1987: 115): 22 instances **in** 343,800 words for the penod as a whole **(0.64/10,000** words). When separated into three different periods (early, mid and late), the decline throughout the century **becomes** evident **(1.04, 0.35** and 0.53 instances per 10,000 words):
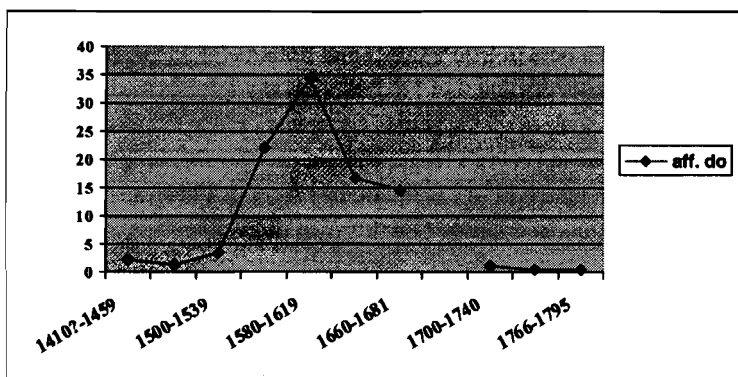
Figure 5: Periphrastic *DO* in **affirmative** statements; based on CEEC and Tieken-Boon van **Ostade** (1987: 63-125).

1V.8. Periphrastic **DO** in negative statements

In **his grammar, Lowth** discusses today's standard uses of DO: "Do and *did* mark the Action itself, or the Time of it, with greater force and distinction"(**i.e.** emphatic DO), adding that "They are **also** of fiequent and almost **necessary** use in Interrogatives and Negative sentences"(1762: 57-58). At the time, however, writers still varied to **some** extent **between** negative sentences with and without periphrastic DO. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunbergfound that by the end of the period they analysed negative DO had risen to nearly 50% (2003: 70). My **own** study of periphrastic **DO** in eighteenth-century English shows a **continuing** development, with average usage for **three** subperiods (early, mid and late) nearly reaching 80%. When added to the data fiom CEEC, **the tail** end of an S-curved **change becomes** visible (Figure 6).
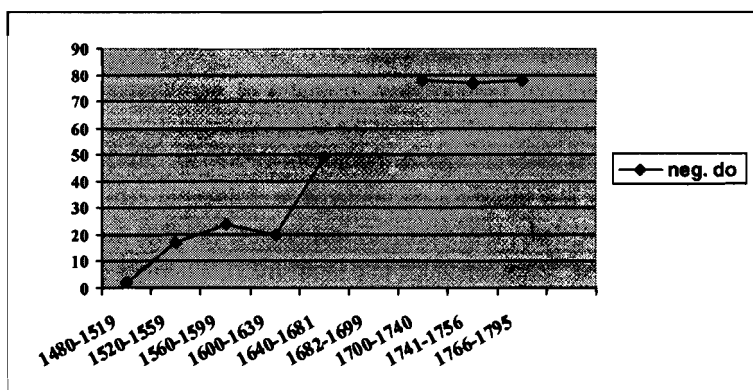

Figure 6: Periphrastic **DO** in negative statements (%); based on CEEC **and Tieken-**Boon **van** Ostate (1987: 63-1 25).

Lowth's usage of negative DO is rnuch higher: I found 139 negative sentences with DO and only **six** without **DO,** as in:

> 21. He **does** not pretend to understand the whole (Lowth to Merrick, 1762)
> 22. wᶜʰ. **I know** not where to get **here** (Lowth to **Ridley,** 1768).

This very **high** proportion, **96%,** agrees with the rule in his grammar: periphrastic DO is "of frequent and aimost **necessary** use" **here**. Interestingly, this figure aiso agrees with Sir Horace Waipole's usage (1762-1765), which **is highest** of **all** authors I looked at: 99% (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 1987: **158). Walpole** did not belong to Lowth's own social network —he was "a **friend** of a friend", as appears from a letter to **Robert** Dodsley: "Your Friend Mr. Walpole rnay perhaps be able to give You sorne **information** about it" (1761)— but if other rnernbers of the **same** social class **spoke** like him, Lowth may **have** modelled his usage on that of the social class to which he **aspired**. This rnodel he aiso prescribed in his grammar, and the rule in the grammar thus reflects the way **in** which Lowth perceived the upper **classes** to **speak**. Only three of his correspondents used DO-less negative sentences: Memck **(2), Warburton** (2) and Pearson **(1)**. When **all** instances are combined, his correspondents likewise show a higher average than that found for the second half of the eighteenth century: 88%. Possibly, they accomrnodated to Lowth's even higher usage, as would be expected in an exchange of letters.

Lowth's DO-less negative sentences occur **in formal** and informal letters, though never **in** letters to his wife.

IV.9. Multiple negation

Multiple negation was no longer very cornrnon in the language of educated **writers** of the eighteenth century. With only **three** exceptions, **all** (65) instances **I** encountered in an analysis of more than twenty years ago (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 1982) are coordinating clauses of the **types** illustrated by (23) and (24):

> 23. **1749** FIELDING *Tom Jones* (1775) 162 When wenches are so corning, **young** rnen are **not** so rnuch to be blairned **neither** (OED Online, **s.v.** *coming* ppl. a.2).
> 24. **1702** J. CHAMBERLAYNE St. Gt. Brit. II. III. vi. (1743) 416 None rnight wear silk or costly fumng [...] without license **from** the king, **nor no** other persons wear broidery, pearls, or bullion (OED Online, **s.v.** *bullion⁴).*

This agrees with Nevalainen and **Raumolin-Brunberg's findings** (2003: **72),** which show that by the end of the **period analysed** multiple negation had airnost entirely disappeared frorn simple clauses, with coordinate clauses lagging behind in the process. Neither Lowth's own letters, nor those of his correspondents **contain** any instances of multiple negation.

According to Baugh and Cable (2002: **279),** "the eighteenth **century is** responsible for the

condemnation of the double negative", and they add —incorrectly (see Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1982)—   that "Lowth **stated** the rule that we are now bound by". Lowth's stricture against double negation, however ("Two Negatives in English destroy one another, or are equivalent to an **Affirmative"), does** not appear in the first edition of his grammar. This edition was a kind of **trial** edition, and **Lowth** invited his readers to send him comments and additions (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2000: 24-25). One such addition must **have been** the stncture on double negation, which first appears in the **grammar's** second edition (1763: 139-140). This indicates that the rule attributed to Lowth was most likely not his own but that of one of his critical readers who considered its omission an oversight.

The question **is** why it would **have been** an omission if the use of multiple negation was so rare at the time. Nevalainen and **Raumolin-Brunberg** (2003: 145-146) correlated their linguistic items' real-time changes with social **factors.** One interesting factor in connection with the disappearance of multiple negation **turns** out to be social stratification. The disappearance of multiple negation is already evident dunng the early stages of their material, which confirms my **own findings** based on an analysis of Malory's *Morte* Darthur. Differences between the two versions of the text, the Winchester MS (1469-1470) and Caxton's edition **(1485),** point towards a disappearing process, which I linked to **"the** development of a written medium as distinct from a spoken one, [as being] considered suitable for the more **literate** modes of expression" **(Tieken-**Boon van Ostade, 1995: 129). This **is** confirmed by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: **145),** who note that the change "was led by professional people such as **lawyers** and administrative **officers",** people for whose profession a high degree of literacy was essential. What **is** striking from their data is that dunng the final two periods analysed for this item, **1520-**1559 and 1560-1599, the change is led by social **aspirers.** In outdoing **all** other users but **particularly** those whose class they were aspiring to, these people were evidently hypercorrecting in their **preference** for the use of single negation. Dunng the sixteenth century multiple negation had thus already **become** the social marker it still is today. Two hundred years **later** it was still common in the spoken language (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 1982: **282),** and people had to learn to avoid it. **Grammars** like Lowth's were written for those wishing to **educate** themselves **(Fitzmaurice, 1998),** for the socially ambitious such as he was himself. Lowth and his correspondents did not use double negation, not even in their most informal letters. The stricture was therefore not intended for people such as them.

IV.lO. Invenion after initial adverbs, including negaton

Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 72-73) show that by the end of the seventeenth century inversion **after** negators (ne, never, neither, nor) had **risen** to almost **100%,** while inversion after other adverbials (then, therefore, thus, yet) had decreased to almost zero. In my study of **eighteenth-century** English (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 1987) I **found** that inversion after negative adverbials is standard practice; my **corpus** contained only a single case in which the coordinator nor was not followed by penphrastic do (1987: 105).

Inversion after other adverbials was rare: I came across only nine instances, with eight different authors. With one exception, *yet,* the adverbials were different from those investigated for CEEC: *during three whole days and nights, every day, in this fashion, most heartily, often, well, with this candour* and *exquisite as it was*.

Lowth's correspondence shows the same picture: inversion is standard afier negators (periphrastic *do* being used whenever no auxiliary is present), and there is no inversion after any of the other adverbs studied by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg. I did find three instances of inversion after adverbials not studied by them:

> 25. Heartily do I congratulate You on the Bp's Proposal (Kennicott to Lowth, 1766)
> 26. Heartily do I wish it (Kennicott to Lowth, 1772)
> 27. With this is a Commission to institute M^r. Lloyd to Llanigan (Pearson to Lowth, 1766).

I have already commented on Pearson's use of archaic language (IV.2); he may similarly have considered inversion after adverbials characteristic of the language of business letters. In modern English, the sentence in (27) would have the dummy subject *there:* "With this, there is a commission to …". Kennicott's letters are informal; his use of inversion may be considered an idiosyncrasy, the more so since it occurs twice in only three letters.

IV.ll. Prepositional phrases and relative adverbs

The pattern noted by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 75-76) for the distribution between relative prepositional phrases, relative adverbs such as *whereby* and *wherewith* and stranded propositions in relative phrases with the pronoun *which* continues into the eighteenth century, as appears from Figure 7.
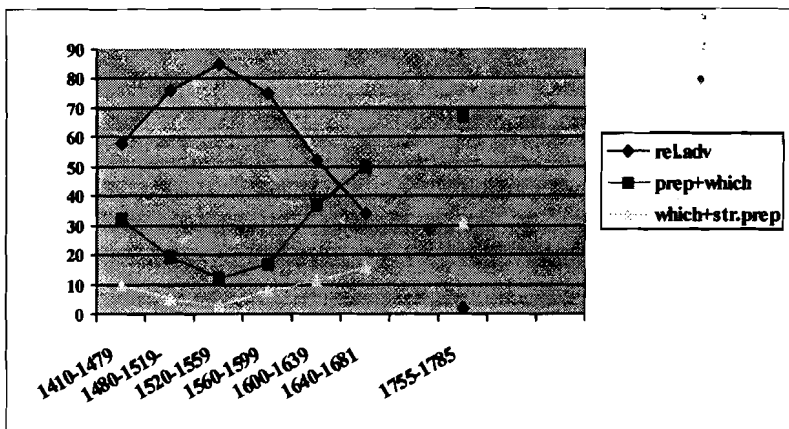

Figure 7: Prepositional phrases, relative adverbs and stranded prepositions (%); based on CEEC.

The instances found are presented in Table 6,[4] and examples from Lowih's correspondence are:

28. my Letter to Brother Spence to which I refer you (Lowth to Chapman, 1756),
29. whereby to express y^c admiration of 24 Men of Oxfd (Kennicott to Lowth, 1766)
30. for some supply of Money to subsist on (Lowth to Ridley, 1768).

Table 6. Prepositional phrases, relative adverbs and stranded prepositions in Lowth's correspondence'

	Relative Adverb		Preposition + WHICH		WHICH + stranded prep		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	Total
Lowth 1755-1780	0	-	21	62	13	38	34
Correspondents 1756-1785	1	7	12	80	2	13	15
All (1755-1785)	1	2	33	67	15	31	49

Stranded prepositions are frowned upon by normative grammarians, the pied-piping variant of (30), "... on which to subsist", being preferred. Lowth, according to Leonard (1929: 285), was the first to discuss stranded prepositions, observing that the usage "prevails in common conversation, and suits very well with the familiar style in writing; but the placing of the Preposition before the Relative is more graceful, as well as more perspicuous; and agrees much better with the solemn and elevated Style" (1762: 127-128). Tongue in cheek (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, forthc.), he used a stranded preposition in this very passage ("This is an Idiom which our language is strongly inclined to"). But the figures in Table 6, which can be augmented by many instances with prepositions not studied by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, suggest that Lowth was a frequent user of stranded prepositions. The majority of them (10/13) do indeed appear in his "familiar style in writing", his informal letters, as do the two instances found in the in-letters.

IV.12. Indefinite pronouns
The final item discussed by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 76-78) is the rise and development of the indefinite pronoun with singular human antecedents: pronouns ending in –BODY (somebody, anybody, nobody, everybody), –ONE (someone, anyone, no one, everyone) and –MAN (*some* man, any man, no man, every man, each man), as well as *some* (other), any (other), none (other), every and each ("other"). The data from CEEC show a decline for the pronouns in –MAN as well as, after an initial rise, of those in the category "other", while for the pronouns in –BODY and –ONE there is a steady increase. This pattern continues only for the pronouns in –ONE and the category "other", while the –MAN pronouns remained stable. For the pronouns in –BODY a decline in usage set in (see Figure 8). One other pronoun was found, which does not appear to have been included in the analysis by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, i.e. –PERSON:

31. whether any person thinks it worth while (Pearson to Lowth, 1766).

That this **instance** occurs in a letter by Pearson contributes to the impression that **his** language is somewhat **unusual** (see 4.2 and 4.10).
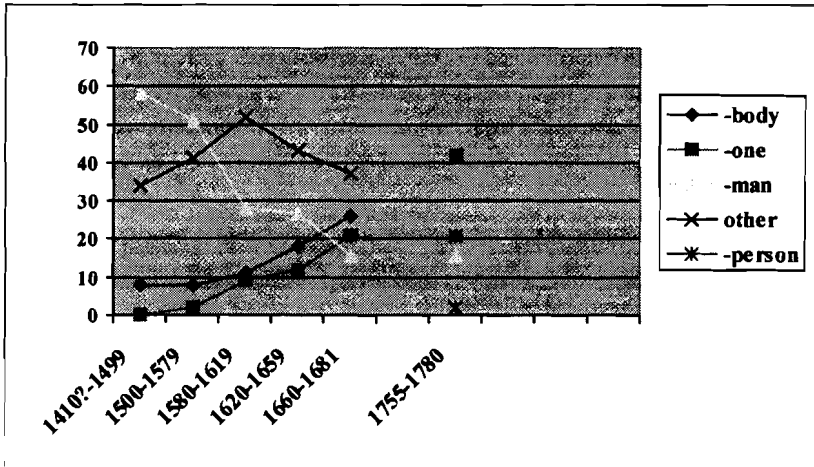

Figure 8: Indefinite pronouns (%); based on CEEC.

Though the differences in **usage between** Lowth and his correspondents for the overall pattern are not statistically **significant, Lowth's** use of -ONE pronouns **is** more than **twice** as **high** as that of his correspondents (52% vs. 23%) (Table 7):

Table 7. Indefinite pronouns in Lowth's correspondence: out-letters vs. in-letters.

	All letters		Out-letters (=Lowth)		In-letters (=others)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
-BODY	10	21	7	23	3	18
-ONE	20	42	16	52	4	23
-MAN	7	16	4	13	3	18
-PERSON	1	2	0	–	1	6
"other"	10	21	4	13	6	17
Total	48		31		17	

Another interesting **feature** is the **presence** in Lowth's letters of sixteen instances of **generic** ONE, and **fourteen** instances of what **Rissanen** (1997: 114-116) refers to as "one with a personal-non-specific(non-generic) referent". See **e.g.**:

32. one [**i.e.** 1] is always in **pain** about him (Lowth to Robert Dodsley, 1757)
33. One [**i.e.** someone] of excellent Judgement properly situated to be **well-inform'd** about things (Lowth to his wife, 1755).

The latter type of **pronoun** according to Rissanen **arose** in the fourteenth century, and gave nse to generic ONE, which has **been** attested since the fifteenth century. Given **its** rather formal status in present-day English (Quirk *et* al., 1985: **386),** it is striking that generic ONE predominates (14116) **in Lowth's** informal letters. The in-letters contain only one instance of genenc ONE, in a letter by Warburton. When normalized to 10,000 words, Lowth's use of this **pronoun** and that of Warburton (though with one instance only) would be about equally frequent (1.95 for Lowth and 1.7 for Warburton). Warburton's letters **also** contain **two** personal-non-specific **instances** of ONE, one of which is a repetition of Lowth's words from a letter of the previous day:

> 34. But you come down at last … and say, – … how could it be esteemed such, on one who has in a manner so notorious … abused Writers of **all** ranks … (Warburton to Lowth, 1765).

V. CONCLUSION

Almost **all** linguistic items discussed **here** continue their development as predicted by the data **in** Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003). Two of them, **affirmative DO** and multiple negation, no longer occur in Lowth's correspondence, while two, possessive MINE and THINE and third person singular present tense **-TH,** are used **in** poetic contexts only. Three items, ITS, the object to the gerund, and negative DO, continue into the tops of the **S-curves** identified by Nevalainen and **Raumolin-Brunberg,** thus nearing completion in Lowth's time; the **same** applies to inversion **after initial** adverbs and prepositional phraseslrelative adverbs. Two cases are **slightly** more complicated, while a third one is of particular interest. To begin with, the use of indefinite pronouns (somebody, someone) only **partly** shows a continuation of the change; the differences between the final stage of the CEEC data and those for Lowth's correspondence, however, are not significant. Secondly, the **noun** subject of the gerund continues the change found on the basis of the data from CEEC only for the **-OF** phrase; the genitive and **the** category "other" move in a different direction. By this time, the **construction had become** an issue among normative grammarians. Finally, my data suggest that the change of the prop-word ONE, which Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg **identify** as "new and vigorous", should be reconsidered as "incipient" instead. **It** will be interesting to see whether this will be confirmed by the **eighteenth-**century extension of CEEC.

While my analysis of Lowth's correspondence supplements the picture presented by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, it has **also** produced other results. To begin with, I discovered that Lowth's own usage **largely** agrees with that found in the letters of his correspondents. Only a handful of idiosyncrasies were identified:

> • as the object to the gerund Lowth uses far fewer OF-phrases and OF-less phrases than his correspondents

> • his usage of negative DO is higher than that of his correspondents or that of other contemporaries, the only exception being Sir Horace Walpole
> • **Lowth** shows a **preference** for stranded prepositions, particularly in his informal language
> • his use of **indefinite** pronouns in -ONE is twice as high as that of his correspondents
> • apart from Warburton, Lowth is the only one to use generic ONE.

Two other **writers also** showed **some** idiosyncrasies: Pearson (THEREOF, prop-word ONE, inversion after adverbials) and Kennicott (inversion after adverbials).

A second point relates to the question of whether Lowth might **have been** influenced by the language of people in his social network. Though this is not easy to establish with complete certainty, **I have** found five cases in which influence might **have** occurred:

> 1. the **pronoun** ITS is first found in a letter to **Merrick,** who was **also** the **first** of **Lowth's** correspondents to use this **pronoun**
> 2. possibly under the influence of Pearson's use of the prop-word ONE, Lowth's usage spread from his informal to his formal letters; Woide, in **turn,** rnay **have** modelled himself on Lowth
> 3. **Lowth** rnay **have** picked up his single and **unusual instance** of the gerund with an OF-**less** object from Warburton or from Roberts; **all three** of his instances occur in a formal context; his use of unmarked *it* as subject is predated by Warburton
> 4. Lowth's use of negative DO is nearly as high as that of Walpole, who, as a member of the aristocracy, rnay **have** represented the linguistic norm Lowth aspired to; Lowth's correspondents possibly accommodated their usage to that of Lowth
> 5. Lowth's use of generic ONE **is unusual** for the time, but, **in** as far as we can **tell** on the basis of the instances found, **as** high as that of Wartburton, the only one who used it **besides** Lowth.

The latter case suggests that **it is difficult, if** not impossible, to **prove** that influence actually took place: it rnay **have** travelled from either to the other. One way in which influence might occur is by copying parts or **all** of a letter received. Example (34) **is** such a case, representing an idiosyncratic usage of Lowth's copied by Warburton. More letters from Warburton need to be analysed in **order** to be able to decide whether his usage changed as a **result** of his correspondence with Lowth in this respect.

Influence rnay **take** place consciously or unconsciously. Conscious change rnay occur if one wishes to adapt to a different linguistic norm, as in the case of negative DO (point 4), though Walpole need not **have been** Lowth's linguistic model **here.** Similarly, the Pole Woide, one of **the** scholars with whom Lowth collaborated closely (Hepworth, 1978: 144-145), rnay **have** regarded Lowth **as** his linguistic model, adopting his language accordingly. Conscious change

may **also** travel from someone with whom the person in question has a strong tie (cf. the case of Richardson and Johnson discussed in Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1991), such as Memck, a **close** friend of Lowth's (point 1). Elsewhere **I have** argued that Lowth's **spelling** was possibly influenced by that of his friend Ridley (Tieken-Boon van Ostade **2003a)**. Unconscious change may occur by persistent exposure to a different linguistic norm, as in the case of Pearson, who sent **Lowth** almost two letters a week between 3 July and 1 September 1766 (point 2). In this case the change can only **have been** unconscious. **because Lowth** would not consciously **have** adapted himself to someone lower in **rank.** The **same applies** to Warburton as a **source** of change, **because** of the animosity between them. In this case, too, many letters were exchanged between the two men during two brief periods (1756, **1765),** and both repeatedly copied **parts** of each other's letters.

A final point of interest relates to Lowth's treatment of a number of controversial issues in his grammar. Multiple negation is one of them. Though it is **usually** considered as such, the stricture was possibly not of Lowth's own making. He appears to **have** included it in the grammar **despite** the fact that **multiple** negation was no longer in general use at the time **because** it functioned as a sociolinguistic marker, its use betraying the speaker's lack of education and, consequently, social standing. To keep people from making mistakes such as these was precisely the function of **grammars** such as Lowth's. Lowth was therefore not the innovator he is usually considered to be but, in the terms of social network analysis **(Milroy 1987),** an early adopter. **His** grammar subsequently **came** to be regarded as having imposed a norm of **correctness** in this respect.

Two other items, the gerund with **noun** subject and the stranded preposition, **became** hot items in subsequent discussions among normative grammarians (cf. *The New Fowler S Modern English Usage).* **In** these **instances,** Lowth's grammar was the **first** to **include** the strictures. For both items my analysis has shown an increase in usage at the time. Whether the normative grammarians' attempts to **fight** this increase was **successful** will be **worth** investigating.

NOTES:

1 **Hepworth (1978: 104) calls it "the greatest literary battle of the century"**

2 **The sources of the letters are: Beinecke Library Joseph Spence papers, Osborn MS 4.20 and 21, Beinecke Library Osborn MS files 16,979, 17,429, K.8319, L.9290 and W.16335; Bodleian Library MS Eng. Lett. c.140,572,573, 574; Bodleian Library MS Montagu d.17; British Library Add. MSS 4297, 28,060, 28,104, 32,329, 32,954, 32,972, 32,976, 32,982, 35,339, 35,618, 37,222, 38,214, 38,217, 42,560, 48,707 and 48,708; Durham University Library Add. MS 451; National Library of Scotland MSS 962,2521 and 25,299; and Pitts Theological Library Collection Lowth MSS 105.**

3 **Apart** from THEREOF, the differences in usage between Lowth **and** that of his correspondents are not statistically significant.

4 My figures are **based** on an analysis of the same prepositions as those studied by Nevalainen and **Raumolin-Brunberg** (2003: 75): *about*, *after*, *by, on, to*, *unto, upon* and *with.*

5 The differences in usage are not statistically significant.

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