From Dr Charles Burney, 22 February 1796

Printed for the first time from the MS draft now WSL. For the history of the MS draft, see ante 8 July 1791. The original letter is missing.

Dated by HW's letter to Dr Burney, ante 20 Feb. 1796, to which this letter is a reply. The draft is written on a leaf torn from a letter received by Dr Burney, on the verso of which appears the address 'Dr Burney, Chelsea College'; a postmark '12 O CLOCK, 18 <FEB> 96'; and an endorsement, probably by Dr Burney, 'Hetty.' The draft was much corrected, and, is, in spots, almost illegible.

Endorsed by Fanny Burney d'Arblay: Horace Walpole afterwards Lord Orford.


My Lord,

For the ease of your Lordship's conscience concerning the books\(^1\) of which I had the honour to send an early copy to Berkeley Square,\(^2\) I here solemnly protest that it was not in consequence of the conversation on the subject which passed the morning I was there,\(^3\) but from a long and premeditated desire of entreating permission to number your Lordship among those (may I say friends) whom I have ever been most ambitious to please and of whom death has, alas! so cruelly diminished the number!\(^4\) If you knew, my Lord, how flattering the approbation of such readers as your Lordship is to an author, you would not grudge him the gratification of such a small manifestation of gratitude. I have nothing to do with the sale of the work of which the copyright is consigned to the publisher.\(^5\) Nor shall I dispose of a single copy \(<\text{nor gift}>\) in the way of \(<\text{traffic}.>\) Had there not been a third person\(^6\) in the room, I should have disclosed my intention of taking that liberty\(^7\) which the purest respect and regard suggested, and which it is hoped will be pardoned, though to, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obliged,

obedient and faithful servant,

Chas. Burney

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1. Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Abate Metastasio, 3 vols, which Dr Burney published on 18 Feb. 1796.
2. See ante 20 Feb. 1796 and n. 1.
3. The date of Dr Burney's visit to HW is not known.
4. Among Dr Burney's friends and correspondents who had died were David Garrick (d. 1779), William Bewley (d. 1783), Dr Samuel Johnson (d. 1784), Sir Joshua Reynolds (d. 1792), and, most recently, James Boswell, who died on 19 May 1795.
5. The Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Abate Metastasio was published by G.G. and J. Robinson.
6. Not identified.
7. That is, of making HW a gift of the Memoirs of . . . Metastasio.