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Musical References in the Jennens–Holdsworth Correspondence (1729–46)

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These extracts on music from the correspondence between Charles Jennens (1700–73) and Edward Holdsworth (1684–1746) reflect the authors' shared interests and (prohibited) political views. Though commonly known as the librettist of *Messiah*, Jennens was also a collector of music and art, and as such capitalized on Holdsworth's travels as a tutor of young gentlemen on the Grand Tour. Many of the letters detail musical commissions and their fulfilment by a willing Holdsworth. In return, Jennens acted as Holdsworth's financial advisor, editorial consultant and publication adviser. Other discussions centre around the public and personal rating of singers and operas, in London and abroad, and include discussions of Handel's fortunes, his borrowing of music from Jennens's collection and his health. Mentions of personnel are not restricted to musicians but also encompass members of Jennens's family and of his and Holdsworth's social circles, many of whom were supporters of Handel.

Keywords: Jennens; Holdsworth; Handel; Babington; Ottoboni

1. Introduction

The correspondence of Charles Jennens (1700–73) and Edward Holdsworth (1684–1746) amounts to a collection of 500 letters, written between 1729 and 1746, acquired from Earl Howe at auction in 1973 by the Gerald Coke Handel Collection, now in the Foundling Museum, London.¹ The earliest extant letters are all from Holdsworth to Jennens, the simple explanation being that as Holdsworth was abroad with pupils on the Grand Tour during the period 1729–35 he probably discarded the letters once he had replied to them. The earliest extant letter from Jennens to Holdsworth is dated 13 November 1735. There is no consistent pattern to the frequency of letters (as they exist) except that the two men tended to exchange letters more frequently when Holdsworth was not abroad, sometimes twice or even three times a month. From Holdsworth's acknowledgements of Jennens's letters, it seems that letters from England to Italy took between three and six weeks to arrive. But that time scale may have been increased by Holdsworth's travels, for his travel plans often changed at short notice and so letters would either have waited to be collected upon his return or have been forwarded to his new place of abode.

Prior to 1973, the letters had been handed down through various generations of descendants of Esther Hanmer, a niece of Jennens.² However, the correspondence not only consists of letters from Holdsworth to Jennens, but also includes letters from Jennens to Holdsworth, which Holdsworth's brother Henry returned to Jennens on the death of

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¹ GB-Lfom, accession no. 2702. The Gerald Coke Handel Collection is now housed in the Foundling Museum, London (Lfom).

² Anthony Hicks, 'Auction of Handelian', *Musical Times*, 114 (1973), 892.

Edward Holdsworth.³ Although excerpts have been published in a number of Handel-related publications over the years,⁴ the letters have never been transcribed or published in their entirety. Two recurrent topics in the letters – music and classics – reflect the authors' shared interests, but their shared (prohibited) political views are for the most part referred to in guarded or even coded terms. Neither man enjoyed continual good health and so discussions of health and cures pepper the letters. News of shared acquaintances and topical events also feature throughout the collection. In its entirety, the collection numbers roughly 500 pages and makes for an engaging read. However, to comment in any detail upon each of the topics is beyond the scope of a single study and so this article is concerned only with the extracts concerning music.

This said, comments on musical affairs are interwoven with references to major events, and so the reader sees through the authors' eyes events such as the 1731 earthquake in Italy, the death of King Victor Amadeus II of Savoy (1732), the wedding of Prince Frederick to Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg (1736), the excavation of Herculaneum, the War of Jenkins' ear, the battle of Dettingen (1743) and the Jacobite uprising of 1745. As a collector of music and art, Jennens capitalized on Holdsworth's travels as a tutor of young gentlemen on the Grand Tour. Many of the letters detail musical commissions and their fulfilment by a willing Holdsworth. In return, Jennens acted as Holdsworth's financial adviser, editorial consultant and publication adviser. Other discussions centre around the public and personal rating of singers and operas, in London and abroad, and include discussions of Handel's fortunes, his borrowing of music from Jennens's collection and his health. Mentions of personnel are not restricted to musicians but also encompass members of Jennens's family and of his and Holdsworth's social circles, many of whom were supporters of Handel. From such a kaleidoscope of information, it is possible to build an engaging picture of two gentlemen's lives in the eighteenth century.

Charles Jennens (1700–73)

Charles Jennens was the son of the namesake Leicestershire gentleman and Justice of the Peace and his second wife Elizabeth, daughter of baronet and Tory politician Sir Robert Burdett of Bramcote, Warwickshire. The couple went on to have two more sons and three daughters.⁵ The family estate in Leicestershire, Gopsall Hall, had been bought in 1685 by Charles Jennens junior's grandfather, Humphrey Jennens, an ironmaster from Birmingham.

Jennens attended Balliol College, Oxford, known for its Jacobite sympathies,⁶ and it was in Oxford that he met Edward Holdsworth, who was at Magdalen, and probably formed several

3 Ibid.

4 For example, Otto Erich Deutsch's monumental *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London, 1955), in which only one of the Jennens–Holdsworth letters is quoted. The current AHRC-funded project, 'G. F. Handel: The Collected Documents' (based at the Open University) aims to produce the fullest collection to date of documents relating to the composer, but the transcribers have chosen to reprint from the letters only those passages pertaining specifically to Handel.

5 John Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester* (Leicester, 1811), iv, part 2, 859. One of the sons, Robert, committed suicide in 1728, an event that must have had a profound effect on the devout Christian, Jennens jnr. Ruth Smith, 'The Achievements of Charles Jennens (1700–1773)', *Music & Letters*, 70 (1989), 181.

6 Jacobitism was a political movement that arose after James II (James VII of Scotland) was deposed in 1688. James was replaced by William III (William III of Orange) and his wife, James's daughter Mary II. Jacobites sought the restoration of James II and the Catholic Stuart line of succession. James II died in exile in 1701. His son, James Francis Edward (1688–1766), lived in exile in France (under the protection of his cousin Louis XIV) and was known as the Old Pretender. There were several Jacobite uprisings between 1688 and 1746, the most important of which occurred in 1715 and 1745. The 1745 campaign was led by Charles Edward Stuart (The 'Young Pretender', 1720–88) but its culmination in defeat at the Battle of Culloden ended realistic hope of the restoration of the Stuart throne.

of his guiding principles. Though not a Jacobite, Jennens was, like many of his contemporaries at Oxford, a Nonjuror. Nonjurors refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Protestant Succession of 1689,⁷ believing that it would violate their oath of allegiance to the previous King, James II, who was still alive and had an heir. Nonjurors believed that the right to rule was hereditary, and many believed it to be a divine right. Refusal to take the oath barred Nonjurors from all political and ecclesiastical offices. Jennens's lifelong commitment to his beliefs as a Nonjuror, and his sympathy with the Jacobite cause, is evident in his patronage of fellow Nonjurors and Jacobites. Jennens's allegiance to Protestant England (and its monarchy) and the (Catholic) Stuart throne must have been divided by his Anglican faith, but the strength of his faith is made plain by his extensive collection of sermons and theological works, and by the number of religious and biblical paintings in his estate. Even the fireplaces at Gopsall were decorated with biblical scenes.⁸ Jennens's taste was not confined to religious art, however, and his extensive collections of books, art and music (some of which survive or have been reconstructed today)⁹ suggest that he was a highly informed collector. His views on music are clear from both his collection and his comments in the letters, but his own musical ability – at least on the keyboard – can be seen in the extensive figuring of bass lines throughout his manuscript collection, and he often invited neighbouring amateur musicians to Gopsall for musical soirées.¹⁰ Jennens encouraged his friend Holdsworth's scholarship but was by no means devoid of any himself. His scholarship and literary merit can be seen in his oratorio librettos for Handel: *Saul* (1738);¹¹ *Israel in Egypt* (1738); *L'Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato* (1740); *Messiah* (1741); and *Belshazzar* (1744).¹² And later in life, his scholarship found another output in a projected complete edition of Shakespeare's works. The five plays that he edited and published before his death (*King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Julius Caesar*) met with criticism at the time,¹³ but are now considered favourably for their high scholarly standards.¹⁴

Following his father's death in 1747, his taste found a new outlet and he extended his interests to improving the estate, which included 34 properties in addition to Gopsall.¹⁵ This included rebuilding the house in the Palladian style and completely reworking the surrounding landscape and, as ever, he was not content to leave the work to others but played a significant part in the design and execution. All of the work for which Jennens was responsible shows his extraordinary aptitude for being ahead of the fashions of his time and illustrates further the scope of his knowledge and interests.¹⁶ On his death in 1773, Jennens left his collection of manuscript and printed music to Heneage Finch, Lord Guernsey (1715–77),

7 The 'Protestant Succession' is a term applied to the claim on the throne made by William and Mary after the Catholic King, James II was deposed in 1688. Oaths of allegiance to the monarch were required from those who wished to hold any political or ecclesiastical offices.

8 Smith, 'Achievements', 176.

9 Ibid., 169. For Jennens's theological library holdings, see Tassilo Erhardt, *Händels Messiah: Text, Musik, Theologie* (Bad Reichenhall, 2008). For his collection of music manuscripts, see John H. Roberts, 'The Aylesford Collection', in Terence Best, ed., *Handel Collections and their History* (Oxford, 1993), 39–85.

10 Brenda Sumner, 'Charles Jennens' Piano and Music Room', *Handel Institute Newsletter*, 22/2 (2011), 1–3. See n. 67.

11 For an exposition of Jennens's construction of the libretto, see Ruth Smith 'Biblical Heroes in Jennens's and Handel's *Saul*', *Händel-Jahrbuch*, 52 (2006), 89–102. Also Anthony Hicks, 'Handel, Jennens and Saul: Aspects of a Collaboration', in Nigel Fortune, ed., *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean*, 203–27 (Cambridge, 1987).

12 See Smith, 'Achievements', 188.

13 Mainly from a rival Shakespeare editor, George Steevens. See below.

14 Smith, 'Achievements', 171.

15 Ibid., 166.

16 See Smith, 'Achievements', 166–9, for further details.

grandson of Jennens's uncle Sir Clement Fisher and father of Jennens's godson. Lord Guernsey later became the third Earl of Aylesford and the collection (now scattered) is known today as the Aylesford Collection.¹⁷

Edward Holdsworth (1684–1746)

Edward Holdsworth was born in North Stoneham, Hampshire. The son of a rector, he showed scholarly aptitude early in life and was elected to a scholarship at Winchester College at the age of nine. His studies at Oxford began in 1704 at Corpus Christi and the following year he gained a scholarship to Magdalen, where he completed his BA and MA. His Jacobite convictions led him, in 1715, to decline a full fellowship at the college but although he left the university he retained personal links to Magdalen and became involved in the rebuilding of the college in the Palladian style, a project initiated by his friend Edward Butler (c.1686–1745), President of Magdalen College from 1722.¹⁸ There is no evidence that Holdsworth had any experience in building design, and so his advice was probably based on his knowledge of classical architecture accumulated during his visits to Italy. However, his 'advice' did extend to drawing plans, for in a letter to Butler of 21 April 1724, he requested the assistance of the influential English architect James Gibbs (1682–1754) with his draft plans for the new building.¹⁹ A survey had been carried out in 1720 but actual work did not begin until 1733 and only one block (the New Buildings) was ever completed.

The premier Virgil scholar of the day, Holdsworth was highly esteemed as a classicist and one of his earliest and most well-known works was a humorous poem he wrote in 1709, *Muscipula* (the mousetrap). Written in the mock-heroic style, the story of the invention of the mousetrap (combined with a satire on the Welsh love of cheese) proved so popular that it was reprinted and translated throughout the eighteenth century.²⁰ After leaving Oxford, Holdsworth spent the rest of his life tutoring the sons of Nonjuring and Jacobite gentry, guiding them on the Grand Tour, a way of life that afforded him the opportunity to indulge several of his interests, one of which was the Jacobite cause. According to fellow Jacobite Thomas Hearne, Holdsworth visited the Old Pretender in Rome in 1720 (whilst conducting a Grand Tour)²¹ and a letter of 24 June 1742 addressed to Jennens mentions his purchase of a picture of the Young Pretender for his friend.²² It is perhaps not surprising that his correspondence was the subject of scrutiny by government spies.²³ From 1733–9, Holdsworth spent his time in England in Kingsgate Street, Winchester, where he ran a private school.²⁴

One of Holdsworth's duties on the Grand Tour was to attend cultural events with his pupils, and his letters often provide details of the reception on the continent of opera singers, many of whom subsequently appeared in London, from where Jennens was able to

17 *Ibid.*, 163.

18 Christine Ferdinand, *An Accidental Masterpiece: Magdalen College's New Building and the People who Built It* (Oxford, 2010), 7. The two men's careers at Magdalen overlapped. Butler matriculated at Magdalen in 1702 and became a full fellow at the college in 1710.

19 Ferdinand, *Masterpiece*, 34.

20 D. K. Money, 'Holdsworth, Edward (1684–1746)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13498 [Accessed 13 August 2011].

21 Ferdinand, *Masterpiece*, 13.

22 Smith, 'Achievements', 174. In a postscript, Holdsworth writes: 'I have brought a Drawing of a person for whom you have a great respect which I have left at y[ou]r Uncle C[otton's] for you.' See n. 219.

23 Sir Horatio Mann claimed that Holdsworth was 'known to debauch the sentiments of the young English', presumably by indoctrinating them with his Jacobite views (Ferdinand, *Masterpiece*, 15).

24 Letter of 26 August 1735. Ferdinand, *Masterpiece*, 17.

report in turn on their reception there. Though not independently interested in music, Holdsworth appears from the letters to have enjoyed introducing, or accompanying, his pupils to musical events, and was keen to obtain music and music-related news for Jennens. Holdsworth's musical knowledge and experience appear to have been extensive enough to enable him to suggest the purchase of specific works or works by certain composers and to find out how and where to get specific works copied. He also had the ability to spot a bargain, as shown by his purchase of 150 lbs of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni's library for 40 shillings. Holdsworth's efforts were not always appreciated by Jennens, who had very decided tastes and could be very critical. Over the course of the letters, Jennens takes a dislike to Italian opera (of which he preferred the full score to be copied for possible performances in London), and his comments in a letter of 4 February 1741/2 appear to have little regard for Holdsworth's effort in securing copies of several Italian operas:

By what I have seen of the Italian Opera's you sent me, they seem to be of the usual stamp, very defective both in Judgement & Invention, contriv^d without Art, & executed without Spirit; the Harmony thin; the Airs dry & inexpressive, yet capricious; passages frequently repeated, tho' tiresome at the first hearing; & all this stuff intermix^d with such long tedious Recitative, that I think I could not bear to sit out one of the Italian Operas, or if I did, it must be for Penance, not for Entertainment.

Holdsworth, however, is very generous to his friend and brings humour to the situation by suggesting that Jennens could give the next batch of music to his housekeeper to cook on if it is not to his taste.²⁵

Holdsworth's enthusiasm for Virgil is plain from his excitement at the prospect of seeing Virgil's tomb (so called),²⁶ and extensive travel on the continent encouraged and enabled his studies of the poet. Discussions of the exact location of two key battles (Pharsalia and Philippi) in the Roman civil wars (based on Virgil's account in *Georgics* 2) occur throughout the letters from 1736 to 1742 and Jennens persuaded Holdsworth to assemble his thoughts in a collection published under the title *Pharsalia and Philippi: or the Two Philippi in Virgil's Georgics Attempted to be Explain'd and Reconcil'd to History*.²⁷ In the preface to the 1749 edition, editor 'R.R' confirms Holdsworth's scholarly status as one who was 'much better acquainted with Italy as classic ground, and understood Virgil in a more masterly manner, than perhaps anyone of this age'.²⁸ Jennens not only enthusiastically contributed to Holdsworth's work in progress but also oversaw its publication in London. After his friend's death in 1746 he provided documents to aid Joseph Spence in the publication of an expanded version of the *Letters (A Dissertation upon Eight Verses in the Second Book of Virgil's Georgics, 1749)* and *Remarks and Dissertations on Virgil* (1768).²⁹

Jennens's and Holdsworth's mutual respect for, and understanding of, each other, appears to have allowed them to overcome the difference in their social standing. At times Jennens does adopt an imperious tone towards the lowly born Holdsworth, who, in turn, sometimes adopts the self-effacing attitude appropriate to his status as a commoner, and tutor to the aristocracy. Furthermore, references made by Holdsworth to members of the gentry with whom he came into contact make it clear that he did not mix with them as an equal. However, overall, the letters reveal Jennens and Holdsworth to have had a very strong and mutually

25 Letter of 4 May 1742.

26 See letter of 20 December 1730.

27 Published London, 1742.

28 Edward Holdsworth, ed., R. R., *A Dissertation upon eight verses in the second book of Virgil's Georgics in which that author is vindicated, from several mistakes, which all his Commentators and Translators have imputed to him, either directly or consequentially* (London, 1749), ix.

29 Smith, 'Achievements', 166.

supportive friendship. Jennens suffered from periods of depression and loneliness, referred to throughout the letters, and Holdsworth's replies to letters written during these periods are always unfailingly kind and supportive, but also constructive. During one of Jennens's disagreements with Handel, for example, Holdsworth appeals to Jennens's better side in the knowledge that his friend's attitude is coloured by his state of mind.³⁰ In turn, Jennens is equally generous, paying Holdsworth's debts, lending him a horse and encouraging him to make use of his London residence and wine cellar.³¹ In a lasting testimony to their friendship he erected a monument to Holdsworth, at Gopsall in 1764. Consisting of a Roubiliac statue atop a temple, the pyramid inscribed on the cenotaph is a copy of a drawing of Virgil's tomb and the epitaph and various inscriptions each relate to the two men's shared knowledge and faith.³²

Jennens and Handel

Jennens's name appears on the earliest list of subscribers to Handel's operas,³³ four of which were published by subscription in 1725–7.³⁴ Evidence suggests that the two men were on familiar enough terms by 1732 to allow Handel to borrow music recently acquired by Jennens from Italy.³⁵ Jennens became a faithful subscriber of the published editions of Handel's music but he also commissioned manuscript copies of the composer's works, from the 1730s, and purchased existing copies of older works. Furthermore, from the 1740s he began amassing what must have been intended to be a complete edition of Handel's operas and oratorios.³⁶ Though unfinished as a set, the substantial number of surviving copies illustrate Jennens's concern for authenticity, being for the most part copied primarily from Handel's autograph. Many of them also contain corrections by Jennens, some pertaining to the conducting score, and extra figures to the bass lines. Sets of performing parts also exist for many of the works copied, suggesting that Jennens intended them to have a practical function. However, these were for the most part copied after the scores and many are incomplete.

Jennens's first libretto for Handel was that of *Saul* (1738) and Handel's acceptance of some of Jennens's suggestions for changes during the compositional process of the oratorio is unusual given his treatment of other librettists.³⁷ Jennens was in fact the only librettist to approach acknowledgment by Handel as an equal, but circumstances may have influenced the nature of this relationship. He entered Handel's life at a time of crisis, when the composer's strained relations with the Italian castrato Senesino and many powerful members of the Italian opera party led him to widen his social network for extra support. Jennens, of course, had his own agenda and his letters of 1739 to James Harris show his instrumental role in persuading Handel to move towards oratorio following the success of *Esther* (1732) and *Athalia* (1733).

The extent to which Handel was willing to work with Jennens is further evidenced by the libretto for *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, on which the two men worked together to

30 See letter of 28 October 1743.

31 Smith, 'Achievements', 170.

32 See Smith, 'Achievements', 176–9 for further details. The statue and cenotaph are now situated in the garden of Belgrave Hall, Leicester.

33 Although it could possibly have been his father's name.

34 Roberts, 'Aylesford Collection', 40.

35 John H. Roberts, 'Handel and Charles Jennens's Italian Opera Manuscripts', in Nigel Fortune ed., *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean* (Cambridge, 1987), 161.

36 See Roberts, 'Aylesford Collection', 41–2 for more detail.

37 See Hicks, 'Handel, Jennens and Saul' for more detail.

complete James Harris's draft of the first two parts.³⁸ However, as Jennens's letters reveal, such close working practices could backfire when one of the partnership feels left out of the compositional process. This appears to have been the case with *Messiah*. Existing letters between Handel and Jennens suggest that there was no correspondence between them concerning the work during composition of either the libretto or the music. Furthermore, Jennens reveals in a letter of 4 December 1741 that he was not even informed of Handel's plans to premiere the work in Dublin. Though 'mortified', he remains positive about the work until he suffers what he perceives as another slight from Handel, when the composer chooses to open his London Lent season of 1743 not with *Messiah* but with *Samson*. However, Jennens's pique is not entirely self-centred. On the contrary, his admiration of Handel is such that he wants the composer to do himself and the subject justice in setting the *Messiah* libretto, and hopes that the resulting work will do Handel's career some good. Statements such as 'His Messiah has disappointed me, being set in great hast, tho' he said he would be a year about it'³⁹ stem not from Jennens's opinion of the work (he had not heard it by the date of this comment) but from his view that Handel had not, as Jennens hoped (in his letter of 10 July 1741 to Holdsworth), laid out all his skill and genius upon it but instead had rushed the work's composition. As if to draw further attention to Handel's lack of care, Jennens claims that the libretto printed for Dublin was full of 'bulls' (mistakes),⁴⁰ and that he would have to 'correct' them for the London premiere. The main 'correction' is the addition of scene headings and although these were of obvious benefit to the audience, it is unclear whether Jennens's original libretto contained them or whether they occurred to him after the Dublin premiere. On hearing the work, Jennens conceded (in a letter of 24 March 1742/3) that 'Tis, after all, in the main, a fine Composition, notwithstanding some weak parts, which he was too idle & too obstinate to retouch, tho' I us^d great importunity to persuade him to it.' However, Jennens's grudge was not entirely forgotten and in a letter of 15 September 1743 further reference is made to Handel's favouring of *Samson* over *Messiah*, with Jennens boasting that he had contributed to Handel's contraction of a fever. This sparring did not, however, prevent their working together again on *Belshazzar*, and in a letter of 7 May 1744, Jennens's cynicism thinly disguises his delight at writing once more for the composer. In fact, Jennens's comment 'I must take him as I find him, & make the best use I can of him'⁴¹ show that he had his own agenda in writing libretti for Handel and so was not quite so put upon as he liked to portray himself at times in his letters to Holdsworth.

Handel has promis^d to revise the Oratorio of Messiah, & He & I are very good Friends again. The reason is, he has lately lost his Poet Miller, & wants to set me at work for him again.

Throughout the letters, mentions of Handel by Jennens convey a sense of propriety, indulged by Holdsworth, for example in their use of a 'pet' name for him: 'the Prodigious'. This may have been further encouraged by Jennens's close association with other Handel admirers from his close social acquaintances (for example, Lord Shaftesbury, James Harris and Sir Wyndham Knatchbull) but it is clear from several of the letters that Jennens relies heavily on Handel's music to stave off his recurrent depression. His delight at being asked to provide another libretto for Handel in 1744 reveals the high esteem in which he really holds the composer and this is supported by comments throughout the letters, such as 'Every thing that has been united with Handel'^s Composition becomes sacred by such a union in my eyes.'⁴²

38 Ruth Smith, 'Jennens, Charles (1700/01–1773)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14745 [Accessed 14 August 2011].

39 Letter of 17 January 1742/3.

40 Letter of 21 February 1742/3.

41 Letter to Holdsworth, 7 May 1744.

42 Letter to Holdsworth, 19 February 1746.

Furthermore, the two men's personal relationship continued amicably after their collaboration on *Belshazzar*, as witnessed by a report of Handel playing Jennens's piano in London⁴³ and Jennens's commissioning, in 1756, of Thomas Hudson to paint Handel's portrait for Gopsall.

Literature

An early biographical reference to Jennens appears in an extensive footnote in John Nichols's *Biographical and Literary Anecdotes*.⁴⁴ Nichols depicts him as a weak, vain and foolish man whose propensity to mix with the lower orders and society's outcasts (identified as Nonjurors and nonconformists) led to the abuse of his generosity by many. However, in his later publication *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*,⁴⁵ Nichols admitted his source for this portrait to have been George Steevens, a contemporary rival Shakespeare editor. Steevens's denigration of Jennens's character and abilities conditioned the latter's reception by subsequent writers.⁴⁶

Erich Müller was one of the first to draw attention to Jennens's relationship with Handel in his 1935 edition of the composer's letters⁴⁷ and a few of the extracts from the Jennens–Holdsworth letters that refer to Handel were reprinted in Deutsch.⁴⁸ Winton Dean's 1972 article detailing Jennens's annotations of Mainwaring's biography of Handel shed further light not just on the scholarship of Jennens but also on the depth of his knowledge concerning Handel's life.⁴⁹ However, the understanding of the consequences of the Jennens–Holdsworth correspondence with regard to Jennens's depth of involvement in Handel's late career increased dramatically as the letters became more accessible after the auction of their autographs in 1973. In this sale, they constituted one of three lots, the other two being a testimonial to the excellence of Handel's music by Dr Edward Synge (Bishop of Elphin), and the collection of nine letters from Handel to Jennens. The sale catalogue highlighted Jennens's close relationship with Handel, pointing out that Handel's letters to Jennens are the only existing ones referring to his 'compositions and their reception by the public'.⁵⁰ In addition, the catalogue's description of the Jennens–Holdsworth collection of letters – highlighting the two men's scholarly discourse and the variety of subjects covered – portrayed Jennens in a more flattering light than previously. The sale of the letters prompted an explosion of literature on several aspects of the letters but particularly on the information contained within them concerning Holdsworth's purchase of Italian music. As early as 1974, Michael Talbot drew attention to the existence of MS copies of Italian works from Rome, Florence and Venice amongst the Aylesford Collection.⁵¹ Talbot concluded that Jennens had acquired the works but did not at this time trace their provenance through Holdsworth. Talbot's examination of the Aylesford collection (part of the Flower collection at Manchester Public Library), led to his

43 According to a diary entry by George Harris, dated 19 May 1756. Donald Burrows and Rosemary Dunhill, *Music and Theatre in Handel's World: The Family Papers of James Harris (1732–1780)* (Oxford and New York, 2002), 314.

44 John Nichols, *Biographical and Literary Anecdotes of William Bowyer, Printer, F.S.A. and of many of His Learned Friends* (London, 1782), 442–4n.

45 2nd edn. London, 1812–15, iii, 120–23 n. Cited in Smith, 'Achievements', 162.

46 Smith, 'Achievements', 162.

47 Erich H. Müller, *The Letter and Writings of George Frideric Handel* (London, 1935).

48 Deutsch, *Documentary Biography*, 8.

49 Winton Dean, 'Charles Jennens's Marginalia to Mainwaring's Life of Handel', *Music & Letters*, 53 (1972), 160–4.

50 *Autograph Letters of George Frideric Handel and Charles Jennens, The Property of Earl Howe, C.B.E.* Christie, Manson and Woods illustrated sale catalogue, London, 1973.

51 Michael Talbot, 'Some Overlooked Mss in Manchester', *The Musical Times*, 115/1581 (Nov. 1974), 942–4.

identification of unique versions of four of Vivaldi's 12 sonatas, and their presentation to Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni.⁵² This discovery then led him to explore further the presence of Italian music, and particularly Ottoboni's music collection, in the Aylesford Collection which in turn led him back – through the letters – to Holdsworth's purchase of Ottoboni's collection.⁵³

Ottoboni's collection (within the Aylesford Collection) became the focus of study for other scholars, including Paul Everett, whose PhD dissertation⁵⁴ traced the provenance and subsequent sales and purchases of non-Handel items in the Flower Collection (including the Aylesford Collection), with the help of the letters. Everett's 1983 article isolated further the Ottobonian items procured by Holdsworth and Reinhard Strohm began, in 1985, to consider in detail works by Scarlatti believed to have once belonged to Jennens.⁵⁵ Jennens's comments that Handel had borrowed from his copies of Scarlatti and Vinci⁵⁶ prompted John Roberts to explore Handel's use of Jennens's collection in his 1987 chapter 'Handel and Jennens's Italian Opera MSS', and his article of the same year: 'Handel and Vinci's "Didone abbandonata": Revisions and Borrowings'. Roberts traced the existence of further items in his 1993 chapter on the Aylesford Collection.⁵⁷ By this time, Jennens, and to a lesser extent Holdsworth, had become known figures amongst scholars. However, Ruth Smith's detailed biographical article on Jennens shifted the focus from him as a collector, establishing him as a figure of interest in eighteenth-century England, with important connections not only to Handel, but to established circles of politicians, Handelian and scholars of the time. Smith also highlighted Jennens's personal achievements, elevating him beyond the role of country gentleman.⁵⁸ Holdsworth has yet to come under the same level of scrutiny, but scholars such as Christine Ferdinand have helped to illuminate some aspects of his character and the recent publication of the family papers of James Harris – another admirer of Handel and a Jennens correspondent – has helped to clarify or confirm details in the Jennens–Holdsworth correspondence and increase an understanding both of the social and political context in which Jennens and Holdsworth lived, as well as of the level of support enjoyed by Handel in some circles.⁵⁹

Dates

England did not change to the Gregorian calendar until 1752. However, as much of continental Europe had already adopted the Gregorian calendar, it was common practice in early eighteenth-century Britain to use both the old and the 'new' year for the period between 1 January and 24 March (e.g. 1 January 1740/1). The author has reproduced dates as and where they occur on each letter.

Convention

Eighteenth-century spelling was not as standardized as it is today and the author has reproduced variants as they appear in the letters. Shortening of words, capitalization and

52 Detailed in Talbot's 1976 edition and 1978 article, 'Vivaldi's "Manchester" Sonatas', *PRMA*, 104 (1977–8), 20–9.

53 Michael Talbot, 'Charles Jennens and Antonio Vivaldi', in Leo Olschki and Francesco Degradà, eds, *Vivaldi Veneziano Europeo* (Florence, 1980), 67–75.

54 Published as *The Manchester Concerto Partbooks* (New York, 1989).

55 Reinhard Strohm, 'Scarlattiana at Yale', in Leo Olschki, Nino Pirrotta and Agostino Ziino, eds, *Händel e gli Scarlatti a Roma* (Florence, 1985), 113–52.

56 See letter of 17 Jan. 1742/3.

57 Roberts, 'Aylesford Collection'.

58 Smith, 'Achievements'.

59 Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*.

punctuation have also been reproduced. A short list of those words commonly shortened in the letters is placed here to help readers unfamiliar with eighteenth-century convention regarding this.

d	pence
&c.	etc.
Exec.r	executor
Farther	further
fog ^{li} .	folios
Hast	haste
l	pounds (weight)
Ld.	Lord
Monsr.	Monsieur
Parl ^{nt}	parliament
p ^{ds}	pounds (weight)
P ^r	per
Rec ^{vd}	received
Shew'd	showed
Sh	shillings
S ^f	Sir
Tho'	though
'twou'd	it would
W ^{ch}	which
W th	with
W ^t	what
Y ^e	the
You'l	you will
Y ^{rs}	yours
Y ^t	that

II. Transcriptions and commentaries

24 December 1729, Holdsworth in Lyons

I hear Cuzzoni⁶⁰ & Farinelli⁶¹ are to sing at the Opera this next Carneval at Turin w^{ch} is but 6 days journey from hence, but musick has not charms to draw me over the mountains this winter; However if you will leave Bernacchi⁶² for your favourite Cuzzoni I assure you your company will engage us to pass the snows with you, otherwise we shall content our selves wth such an Opera as we meet with here; w^{ch} indeed is but indifferent; but perhaps You will think it may suit well enough with my ears. If you are settled near S^r James, and ever see him, pray give my humble respects, & let him know his grandson is well.⁶³ ... [2r] ... I am sorry to hear y^t London has been so sickly, but I hope it had not affected you, tho' to

60 Francesca Cuzzoni (1696–1778). Principal soprano for the Royal Academy of Music in London between 1723 and 1728. She sang for the Opera of the Nobility in 1734–6 and briefly returned to London in 1750–1.

61 Carlo Broschi, known as Farinelli (1705–82). Italian castrato who sang for the Opera of the Nobility in London between October 1734 and June 1737, before moving to the Spanish court. Thomas McGeary, 'Farinelli's Progress to Albion: The Recruitment and Reception of Opera's "Blazing Star"', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 28 (2005), 339–60.

62 Antonio Maria Bernacchi (1685–1756). Italian castrato, he enjoyed success as a soloist and, later, teacher in Italy. He sang in the Haymarket Theatre Company in 1716–7 and was the leading man in the Handel-Heidegger operas of 1729–30. Donald Burrows, *Handel* (Oxford, 2012), 580.

63 Sir James Hallet of Edgeware. His grandson, James Herbert, was a pupil of Holdsworth. See letter of 17 April 1732. See nn. 81 and 90.

tell you the truth, self interest almost forces me to be so cruel as to wish you as bad a winter this year as the last, that we may have the pleasure of your company the [2v] next year in Italy. Your fellow traveller pass'd the last summer so agreeably, y^t He wishes to spend the next in the same company ...

Vol. 1, no. 1, ff. 1^r, 2.

24 August 1730, Holdsworth in Rome

... I have given orders to have the Overture, Songs and Symphonies of the last Opera copied, being very much admir'd. 'Tis the Composition of Vinci,⁶⁴ who is since dead, very much lamented, and this performance is the more valued not only as twas y^e last but esteem'd the best He ever did. The account you had of Senesino's death was false,⁶⁵ He is still living, and we expect him on this stage the next winter. I am assur'd y^t He has been offer'd 1200[£] for the winter, if He will return to England, and 'tis believ'd y^t the Undertakers will advance to one hundred p^{ds} more, but He insists upon 1600.⁶⁶ Mr Herbert⁶⁷ has begun to learn on the Harpsicord that He may be better qualified to keep you company when He returns, and make his Harpsicord speak for him ...

Vol. 1, no. 2, f. 2^r; repr. (last two sentences and dated in 1734) *Handbuch*, 243.

20 December 1730, Holdsworth in Naples

Dear S^r.

As I am perswaded y^t you don't value riding a thousand miles to have the pleasure of hearing your dear Cuzzoni, this is to acquaint you that she is engag'd to sing here the ensuing Carneval. She has already entertain'd the town above these six weeks, but I have

64 Leonardo Vinci (c.1696–1730). Succeeded Alessandro Scarlatti as organist of the Royal Chapel in Naples; he was most influential for his well-received operas. According to Burney, Vinci was 'the first opera composer who ... without degrading his art, rendered it the friend, though not the slave, to poetry by simplifying and polishing melody and calling the attention of the audience chiefly to the voice-part, by disentangling it from fugue, complication, and laboured contrivance.' Kurt Sven Markstrom, *The Operas of Leonardo Vinci, Napoletano* (New York, 2007), xvi. The work referred to here is *Artaserse*, premiered in Rome on 4 February 1730. Handel's pasticcio of *Artaserse* – as *Arbace* – was one of several pasticcio versions of Vinci's operas that he produced in London in the 1730s. For details see Roberts, 'Italian Opera Manuscripts', 165–71, and 'Handel and Vinci's "Didone abbandonata": Revisions and Borrowings', *Music & Letters*, 68/2 (1987), 141–50. Jennens's score of *Artaserse* is now in the Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music (Vault M1500.V777A, 3 vols., stock nos. 527, 525 and 502), (Roberts, 'Italian Opera Manuscripts', 162). See n. 74.

65 Francesco Bernardi, known as Senesino (d. 1759). Italian castrato and leading man in every production by the Royal Academy in London from the autumn of 1720 until its dissolution in 1728, he sang again in London in 1730–6, initially for the Handel-Heidegger company at the Haymarket before moving to the Opera of the Nobility from 1733. His career continued to flourish upon his return to Italy in 1736. John Mainwaring, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel* (London, 1760), 100–1, 107–9; John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, 5 vols. (London, 1776), v, 306–7; Burrows, *Handel*, 595–6.

66 For Senesino's recruitment, see Owen Swiny's letter from 18 July 1730: *Posthumous Letters, from Various Celebrated Men; addressed to Francis Colman, and George Colman, the Elder* (London, 1820), 21–5. The first public announcement of his engagement appears in *The Daily Post*, no. 3414, Friday 28 August 1730, [1].

67 James Herbert of Tythrop (c.1713–40), a committed Jacobite and Holdsworth's pupil at this date. Holdsworth's comment supports Sumner's suggestion that Jennens held musical evenings for fellow local amateurs at Gopsall (Sumner, 'Piano and Music Room', 3). See n. 190.

had the misfortune to have heard her once only, tho' I have been here most part of the time; having been laid up wth a pain in my bones occasion'd by a violent cold, y^t I have been scarce able to walk across my chamber above this month. ... [2v] I thank god I am now pretty well recover'd of my indisposition, and hope to be able to go abroad again in [a] few days; and tho' I must not think of venturing so soon to an Opera, yet I hope to take an airing to Virgil's tomb,⁶⁸ w^{ch} I have had the mortification not to visit since I have been here. ...

Vol. 1, no. 3, ff. 1^r, 2^v.

11 May 1731, Holdsworth in Naples

Dear S^r.

I thank God I am now so far recover'd of my indisposition y^t I can ramble about with pleasure, but as my leg is still weak, I think 'twou'd be imprudent to venture as yet upon another journey, and therefore we propose to pass the summer here. ...

I am sorry y^t I did not bring wth me the Musick w^{ch} I had copied for you at Rome,⁶⁹ because I might have had an opportunity of forwarding it by some vessel from hence to England; but as I propos'd to make but a short stay here I unfortunately left it lock'd up at Rome.

There is now performing at Bologna an Opera w^{ch} 'tis believ'd will be the finest y^t ever was heard on an Italian stage;⁷⁰ The Performers are Cuzzoni (for out of respect I must name her first) Faustina,⁷¹ Teza,⁷² Farinelli, Scalzi,⁷³ &c. in short all y^e best voices in Italy. Several English gentlemen are flock'd thither to hear it; I wish y^t curiosity had brought you thither too. ...

Vol. 1, no. 4, f. 3^r.

8 June 1731, John Herbert in Naples to Jennens

Dear S^r

I receiv'd y^{rs} of y^e 19th of April last week ... I hope we shall have the honour to see you at Bologna where we are to go to hear y^e finest Opera y^t ever was [in] Italy there being ~~the most~~

68 Reputed to be in a small tunnel situated in the Parco Virgiliano in the Piedigrotta district of Naples. Jennens and Holdsworth were both avid classicists, and Jennens erected a monument to his friend (18 years after his death in 1746) in which was incorporated a copy of the pyramid at Virgil's tomb, as represented by a contemporary drawing (Smith, 'Achievements', 176).

69 The only specific work mentioned by Holdsworth as being copied in Rome prior to this letter is Vinci's *Artaserse* (see letter of 24 August 1730, n.60).

70 The opera at Bologna was probably *Farnace*, a setting by Giovanni Porta of Antonio Maria Lucchini's libretto, at the Teatro Malvezzi. Luigi Verdi, 'Farinelli in Bologna', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 28 (2005), 411–20. From Holdsworth's comments in his letter of 11 July 1731, the opera did not appear to live up to expectations. Bernacchi also sang at Bologna that year.

71 Faustina Hasse, née Bordoni (1697–1781). Venetian soprano whose career flourished in Italy, Germany and Vienna before she moved to London where she sang between 1726–8. Renowned for her personal and professional rivalry with Cuzzoni, with whom she had also worked in Venice in 1718–9. Faustina married the German composer Johann Adolf Hasse in 1730. Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, 4 vols. (London, 1776–89), iv, 308–9; Burrows, *Handel*, 584.

72 Vittoria Tesi (1700–75). Italian contralto with a consistent singing career on the continent followed by success as a teacher. Nicknamed 'La Fiorentina' and 'La Moretta'. Burney praises her expressivity and stage presence.

73 Carlo Scalzi (*fl.* 1718–38). Italian castrato renowned for his high tessitura. Popular on the continent, he made little impact on London's audiences as second man for the 1733–4 season at the King's Theatre (Burrows, *Handel*, 595).

all the finest voices in Europe to be there viz Cuzzoni, Faustina, Tesi, Fardinelli [*sic*], & Car-estina,⁷⁴ we had the 20 of March about 4 in y^e morning a terrible shock of an Earthquake which did no damage a[t] this side the Apenins but on y^e other it has destroy'd one town belonging to the Emperour namely Foggia & most of y^e towns there suffer'd pretty much.⁷⁵ Mr Holdsworth finds his legg rather worse than it has been this month or two & he designs to go to Ischia an island about 20 miles of this place where he will take the baths ...

Vol. 1, no. 4, f. 1^r.

11 July 1731, Holdsworth in Naples

Dear S^r.

Since I wrote to you last I have been again very much indispo'd, w^{ch} prevented my writing to you for some time. I thank god I am now perfectly recover'd, my unfortunate leg excepted; w^{ch} still continues so weak, y^t I am not able to stand long upon it ...

The opera at Bologna w^{ch} had rais'd people's expectation very high, and brought a vast concourse of Virtuosi thither from all parts, has succeeded very ill. The book was bad, and the Composition very mean, particularly Cuzzoni's part, w^{ch} put ev'ry body very much out of humour; And may convince you, if you want a proof of it, y^t the finest voices in y^e world signify nothing without a H- - l [Handel]. ...

Vol. 1, no. 5, f. 1^r.

24 August 1731, Holdsworth in Naples

... We propose to spend some time in Florence before we leave Italy, and then I will inform my self about Botro's Harpsicords,⁷⁶ and of w^t value one of them may be. And if you insist upon my giving my opinion of the sweetness of his instruments, you shall have it. And if the blind organist, whom I suppose you know, shou'd happen to travel into this country, pray desire him to choose some Pictures for you.⁷⁷

Vol. 1, no. 6, f. 1^v.

17 April 1732, Holdsworth in Rome

Dear S^r.

I have executed y^r com[m]issions here to the best of my judgment, and hope what I have done here will be to y^{rs} and your cousin's satisfaction ...

74 Giovanni Carestini (c.1704–c.1760). Italian castrato (soprano, then alto) whose operatic debut was in Rome in 1721, alongside his teacher Bernacchi. He succeeded Senesino as leading man for Handel's company in 1733–5, returning to London in 1739–40 to sing at the Little Theatre, Haymarket. Burney praises his skills both as an actor and musician (Burrows, *Handel*, 582).

75 According to a report in the *Monthly Chronicle* for April 1731 (vol. 4, p. 77), the earthquake 'lasted full three Minutes', forcing people out of their homes; Foggia, 'a City in Apuglia, about 100 Milles off, was two thirds demolish'd, and near 2000 Persons buried under the Ruins'.

76 Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655–1732), inventor of the piano. Jennens purchased one of his instruments (see nn. 82, 83, 85 and 88), believed to be a piano but referred to variously as an 'harpsicord' or 'pianoforte harpsichord' (See Sumner, 'Piano and Music Room', for a fuller explanation).

77 A joke intended to reference Holdsworth's perceived opinion of himself as a musical philistine.

As to your musick, I have purchas'd Vinci's Artaserse w^{ch} was his last and most admir'd performance; The Saxon's Fabricio,⁷⁸ w^{ch} was acted here the last Carneval wth great applause; Three Operas of Scarlatti;⁷⁹ and some Airs of Porpora & others.⁸⁰ value in all about 8[£]: 15^{sh}. Vinci's Opera and one of Scarlatti's you have entire, both Songs & Recitativo, as I was advis'd to take them, so y^t if you think they deserve it, you may have them perform'd on the [1v, 2v] English Theater. Your books are pack'd with M^r Herbert's, and sent to Leghorn. I hope to deliver them to you myself by Mich[aelmas] but if you are desirous to have them sooner, M^r Herbert will acquaint S^r James Hallet, to whom his things are directed, y^t all ye musick books belong to you ...⁸¹

We shall go from hence to Florence, and if my friend whom I have employ'd there has met wth a Harpsicord w^{ch} He can recommend, and not exceeding the price you fix in y^{rs} to M^r Herbert (w^{ch} He rec^{vd}. yesterday) I shall venture to purchase it for you. ...⁸²

Vol. 1, no. 7, ff. 1^r, 2^v.

9 August 1732, Holdsworth in Florence

Dear S^r

Inclos'd is the bill of loading for your Harpsichord,⁸³ w^{ch} as my Banker M^r Blackwell informs me was put into the Cabbin of the Ship y^t it might be less expos'd to damage, & was by him particularly recommended to the care of the Captain. Upon the receipt of this 'twill be necessary y^t you send the bill to some friend in London, who may be ready to take charge of y^e Harpsichord immediately upon y^e arrival of the ship, and pay the fifty shillings freight and customs. It will be proper y^t you give directions to have it carried to your own

78 *Cajo Fabricio*, Johann Adolf Hasse's only opera for Rome, was premiered on 12 January 1732. Roberts points out that pencilled markings in Handel's hand throughout the Aylesford scores of both *Cajo Fabricio* and Vinci's *Artaserse* reveal them to have been used by the composer for his pasticcio versions of the two works: *Caio Fabbricio* in December 1733 and *Arbace* in January 1734. Passing through the hands of dealers Hunt and Reeves, *Cajo Fabricio* is now owned by the Newberry Library, Chicago (MS VM 1500 H35c, stock no. 534), (Roberts, 'Italian Opera Manuscripts', 162). See n. 60.

79 Roberts has identified the three Alessandro Scarlatti operas from the Sotheby sale catalogue as *Dafni* (Naples, 1700), *Griselda* (Rome, 1721) and *Marco Attilio Regolo* (Rome, 1719). Roberts places the copying dates between 1719 and 1724. *Dafni* (GB-Cfm MS Mus. 227) was the only opera of the three copied in its entirety and Roberts believes Holdsworth to have bought the manuscripts second hand, in their present vellum bindings. *Marco Attilio Regolo* was also acquired by the Fitzwilliam Museum (GB-Cfm MS Mus. 228) while the manuscript containing *Griselda* – and eight arias and three duets by other composers – was sold by Barclay Squire to the Library of Congress (US-Wc M1500.S28G5) (Roberts, 'Italian Opera Manuscripts', 160–3). Handel borrowed from all three and Roberts lists the principal relationships in 'Italian Opera Manuscripts', 193–201.

80 The 'Airs of Porpora' may be a reference to a manuscript now in New Haven, Yale School of Music (US-NH Misc. MS 75). Included in this manuscript are arias by Porpora from *Mitridate* (1730) and *Siface* (1730) in addition to those by Vinci (*Alessandro nell'Indie*, 1729, and *Artaserse*, 1730), G. M. Costanzi (*L'Amor generoso*, 1727) and A. Scarlatti (*Arminio*, 1722). Strohm has examined the manuscript in detail and identifies the scribes and paper as of Roman provenance. All of the arias (and the single overture) in the manuscript are from operas performed at the Teatro Capranica in Rome, 1722–30, with the exception of Vinci's operas *Alessandro nell'Indie* and *Artaserse*, which premiered at the Teatro delle Dame in Rome, at the beginning and end of the 1730 Carnival season respectively. Strohm has also traced the volume back to the Aylesford collection by an inscription written on a related volume (US-NH Misc. MS 78, also at Yale) by the dealer Reeves ('Scarlattiana', 140–1, 148). See nn. 94 and 179.

81 See nn. 63 and 90.

82 See letter of 24 August 1731. Cristofori was by this time dead, and so the instrument was either one that he had already made or was made instead by one of his pupils, an unnamed Del Mela or Giovanni Ferrini (Sumner, 'Piano and Music Room', 3). See nn. 76, 83, 85 and 88.

83 See nn. 76, 82, 85 and 88.

house from the Customhouse by Porters, & not jumbled in a Cart. I wish it may answer your expectation and that you may find a great deal of pleasure from it.

M^r Willoughby Bertie⁸⁴ took one of these instruments with him to England when He went from hence, and as I am inform'd has instructed a man to put it in tune when out of order. You may apply to y^e same person to tune yours, whenever there shall be occasion.

... [2v] I have bought for you a book of Sonatas compos'd here purposely for the Piano-forte, w^{ch} I shall send for England wth M^r Herbert^s books when we leave this place. ...⁸⁵

Vol. 1, no. 8, ff. 1^r, 2^v.

8 November 1732, Holdsworth in Turin

Dear S^r

I suppose this will find you return'd to London, where I hoped to have seen you by this time. Tho' 'tis a very filthy smoaky town, yet I begin to be so tired of Italy that I shou'd have been very glad to have met you there; but M^r Herbert^s fondness for Operas will still keep us on this side [of] the mountains for another winter. Our Scheme was to have heard Cuzzoni^s first Opera here to have gone from hence to Milan for the Peruchiera,⁸⁶ (who has lately appear'd upon the stage, and is thought by many of the Virtuosi to be equal to the Cuzzoni) and to have finish'd the Carneval with Farinelli at Venice; but the death of the old King⁸⁷ having put a stop to all diversions here will break part of our measures & make us hasten to Milan sooner than we intended. This may prove a considerable injury to Cuzzoni, because the Operas in Italy are already fix'd, & the parts all full; but I think she cannot fail of being receiv'd somewhere; I wish it may be at Venice.

... [2v] I hope the Piano-forte Harp[sic]hord is arriv'd safe.⁸⁸ If you have any farther commands for me before I leave Italy I shall be very glad to receive them at Venice. You may direct for me to M^r Brown the English Consul.⁸⁹ I believe we shall stay there till the beginning of

84 Willoughby Bertie (1692–1760) of Wytham Abbey, Berkshire. He attended Corpus Christi College, Oxford and became an MP in 1715. He spent the years 1722–7 in Italy (Florence, Rome and Naples), for health reasons. In 1727 he married Anna Collins. They had three sons and seven daughters. John Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701–1800* (London, 1997), 86.

85 The 'book of Sonatas' was almost certainly that of Lodovico (Maria) Giustini's 12 *Sonate da cimbalo di piano e forte detto volgarmente di martelletti op.1* (Florence, 1732, facs.), the earliest known works for the piano. Jean Grundy Fanelli, 'Giustini, Lodovico', Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online (Oxford), www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/11239 [Accessed 12 September 2013]. Jennens owned a copy of the 1732 edition. Paul Everett, 'A Roman Concerto Repertory: Ottoboni's "What Not"?' *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 110 (1983–4), 64. Holdsworth's letter of 8 November 1733 makes it clear that Jennens purchased his piano in 1732. A letter from Thomas Harris to his brother James, of 17 May 1740, mentions Handel playing Jennens's fortepiano: 'Handel is soon going to Aix la Chapelle, having lately found a weakness in his hand, but he was in good spirits yesterday and played finely on the piano-forte' (Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*, 98). See nn. 76, 82, 83 and 88.

86 Anna Peruzzi (fl.1728–56). Italian soprano who made her début at the carnival of 1728 in Bologna. Nicknamed 'La Parruchierra' ('wig dresser'), she was *prima donna* in several leading houses before joining Farinelli's company in Spain in 1739.

87 Victor Amadeus II of Savoy (1666–1732), who was married to Anne Marie d'Orleans, a niece of Louis XIV.

88 See nn. 76, 82, 83 and 85.

89 Neil Brown (1660–1740) was a Scottish merchant and consul in Venice from 1716–40. Though Scottish by birth, he showed no sympathy to the Jacobite cause when, in May 1737, he created a diplomatic storm during a visit to the city by Charles Stuart, the young Pretender, by requesting that he be expelled from the city (Ingamells, *Travellers in Italy*, 139).

March, or perhaps longer, till the season is good for travelling, and then we propose to make the tour of Germany homewards. ...

[postscript]

If you send to S^r James Hallet he will let you have the musick books, having had notice from M^r Herbert that they belong to you.⁹⁰

Vol. 1, no. 9, ff. 1^r, 2^v.

13 February 1733, Holdsworth in Venice

Dear S^r.

I have the favour of y^{rs} of Nov. the 27th. w^{ch} you will think me very tardy in answering, but I did not receive it till long after date; The Peruzzi (or Peruquiera as she is commonly call'd) having kept us at Milan till lately. You may imagine by this y^t she has an excellent voice to detain us so long from the famous Farinelli. Indeed she sings well, but is not I think to be compar'd to the other; but as she is a woman you must allow her to have the advantage over the Castrato with so young a Gentleman as M^r Herbert, who I thought wou'd have been almost in love. We have now the pleasure of being entertain'd ev'ry night by Farinelli, who charms ev'ry body, even such a savage as I am with respect to musick. All the English Travellers here, who are very numerous, will stay out the whole Carneval for his sake, w^{ch} is contrary to custom; for the most part usually go to Rome about this time in order to finish the Carneval there. They all agree y^t He far surpasses whatever they had heard before. I hope one time or other to have the satisfaction of waiting on you into this country to hear him, there being little likelihood of his ever going into England.⁹¹ All the other performers here are very indifferent, at least they appear so in [Iv] Farinelli's company. One of them is Marigha⁹² who was lately on y^c English stage. The Compositions either here or at Milan are not esteem'd, and therefore I shall not have any more of them copied than some of the best Airs.⁹³ I am sorry that the loose Airs w^{ch} I sent you from Rome were not to your mind;⁹⁴ but this comes of employing a blockhead who knows no more of an air than he does of the language of China. I hope you have by this time found out M^r Bertie^s tuner to put y^r Harpsichord in order. I have wrote to Florence to acquaint the maker wth the ill state you found it in on it's arrival, and to complain of his sending it out of his hands in so bad a condition. I suppose he will deny it; and indeed I was very much surpris'd to hear your account of it, because M^r Meynell⁹⁵ had it tried by a good maker few days before 'twas sent of, and the maker pack'd it up himself.

I had this day some discourse with your friend Vivaldi who told me y^t He had resolv'd not to publish any more Concerto's, because He says it prevents his selling his Compositions in

90 See nn. 63 and 81.

91 Farinelli had been a target for London's opera for some years and was finally contracted by the Opera of the Nobility in May 1734 (McGeary, 'Farinelli's Progress to Albion').

92 Antonia Margherita Merighi (*fl.* 1714–40). Highly successful Italian contralto whose operatic career can be traced from Florence in 1714 to Mantua, Bologna, Naples, Parma, Turin, Modena and London. She was engaged by Handel for two seasons, 1729–31 (*The Daily Courant*, no. 8650, Wednesday 2 July 1729, [2]; Burrows, *Handel*, 590) and returned to London in 1736–38 where she created roles in Handel's *Faramondo* and *Serse*. Her name appears last in two operas at Munich in 1740.

93 Many of the manuscripts in the Flower Collection are on Venetian paper, including five arias in the miscellany GB-Mp MS Q520 Vu51. Paul J. Everett, *The Manchester Concerto Partbooks* (New York, 1989), i, 13. Seven items in the Flower collection can be traced back to Milan but these appear in the 'Manchester Concerto Partbooks' and so probably arrived in Jennens's possession with the rest of the Ottoboni material in 1742 (see n. 142).

94 Probably the 'Airs of Porpora and others' mentioned in Holdsworth's letter of 17 April 1732. See nn. 80 and 179.

95 Godfrey Meynell. According to State Papers, Meynell was a 'travelling Englishman' who gave a grand dinner in Rome on 23 November 1731. (Ingamells, *Travellers in Italy*, 657).

Ms w^{ch} He thinks will turn more to account; as certainly it wou'd if He [2r] finds a good market, for he expects a Guinea for ev'ry piece. Perhaps you might deal with him if you were here to choose what you like, but I am sure I shall not venture to choose for you at that price. I had before been inform'd by others that this was Vivaldi's resolution. I suppose you already know y^t He has publish'd 17 Concertos.⁹⁶ ...

Vol. 1, no. 10, ff. 1–2^r; repr. (except last two sentences) *Letters*, 20.

16 July 1733, Holdsworth in Antwerp

Dear S^r

I receiv'd no orders or directions at Vienna, but I had the favour of y^{rs} of May the 28th at Amsterdam and according to y^r instructions have bought you Tartini's Compositions,⁹⁷ and have ventur'd without orders to buy a work of Loccatelli's [*sic.*] just publish'd,⁹⁸ w^{ch} was recommended to me as one of the best performances of the age. Mons^r la Cène⁹⁹ who has publish'd Vivaldi's & Albinoni's works assur'd me y^t if you have 12 of Vivaldi's Op. and 9 of Albinoni, you have all. Let Vivaldi, he says, reckon as he pleases, He has publish'd no more than 12; and must count several of them double to make up the number 17. w^{ch} piece of vanity suits very well wth his character.¹⁰⁰

I shall direct this to Oxford where I hope 'twill find you in great joy. We propose to be in London in about 2 months. I doubt we shall not have the pleasure of meeting you there at that time, but I hope the rains will drive you out of Leicestershire before winter ...

Vol. 1, no. 11, f. 1^r.

23 February 1733/4, Holdsworth at 'M' Downes^s at Otterbourn near Winchester¹⁰¹

I am in no danger of doing my self mischief here by over-application; we have scarce a book in the house, except the bible, worth looking into, and my study at present consists

96 Talbot explains Holdsworth's rather sarcastic use of the word 'friend' as meaning that Jennens was an admirer (Talbot, 'Jennens and Vivaldi', 71). Other sources reinforce Holdsworth's portrayal of Vivaldi as a vain man with a high sense of his commercial worth, as evidenced by the extortionate price of a guinea per concerto (Talbot, 'Jennens and Vivaldi', 72). Holdsworth's refusal to buy Vivaldi's concerti at that price was vindicated several years later when he acquired 36 of the composer's concerti as part of the Ottoboni collection, at a bargain price (see n. 142, Talbot, 'Jennens and Vivaldi', 75). Holdsworth's comments at the end of the paragraph in this letter are further explained in his letter of 16 July 1733.

97 By this date, the Amsterdam publisher Le Cène had published all three volumes of Tartini's concertos (Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 14). It is unclear how many of the concerti Jennens ended up with, but Roberts has traced two, in A and F (GB–Cfm MU.MS656B), and Everett identifies a further two, in E and e. Roberts, 'Aylesford Collection', 81; Everett, 'A Roman Concerto Repertory: Ottoboni's "What Not"?', 76–7.

98 The author has been unable to trace the existence of any works by Pietro Antonio Locatelli (1695–1764) in the Aylesford Collection, but the work referred to here is probably his *L'arte del violino: XII concerti ... con XXIV capricci ad libitum*, Op. 3 (for 2 violins, viola, violoncello and bassi), published by Le Cène in 1733.

99 Michel-Charles Le Cène (1684–1743) married the eldest daughter of the Dutch publisher Estienne Roger. He set up his own (non-music) business and eventually bought the Roger business in 1723. The Roger firm published the second editions of Vivaldi's Opp. 1 and 2, and thereafter the first editions of all but two of Vivaldi's works.

100 Vivaldi had only published Opp. 1–12, and so must have counted twice those collections published in two volumes, as Holdsworth suggests in his letter of 16 July 1733 (Talbot, 'Jennens and Vivaldi', 72).

101 The Downes were gentlemen farmers of Otterbourne Farm. Holdsworth spent most his time there between his tours of 1733–9, possibly to oversee the Magdalen building project.

in reading the daily Advert. and London Evening post,¹⁰² w^{ch} we are oblig'd to send 2 or 3 miles for once a week. I shall rejoice to hear of [1v] your good health, & of the good success of the Prodigious¹⁰³ w^{ch} I doubt not will keep you in high spirits. ...

Vol. 1, no. 12, f. 1.

26 March [1734], Holdsworth in Otterbourne

... We are told here that the Parl^{mt}. will rise before Easter; if so, the town will soon be very thin, and I fear your friend will be a Prodigious sufferer. ...¹⁰⁴

Vol. 1, no. 14, f. 1^r.

10 April [1734], Holdsworth at St John's College [Oxford]

Your old Master Hecht¹⁰⁵ died few days ago, and has left 120[£] to our College¹⁰⁶ towards a new Organ, and has made his cousin Tompson¹⁰⁷ Organist of Salisbury his Exec^r. I have been sollicitd very earnestly to use my interest with the President¹⁰⁸ for one who stands to succeed him, and had this complement pass'd upon me with a very grave countenance, That as I have been very often in Italy, and must be a good judge of musick, The President wou'd certainly be entirely influenc'd by my recommendation.

Vol. 1, no. 15, f. 1^r.

15 May [1734], Holdsworth at 'M^r Horton^s Apothecary in Bath'¹⁰⁹

I am sorry Senesino has given you reason to be angry with him. I wish he may not provoke you to turn him out of your parlour. ...¹¹⁰

102 The *Daily Advertiser* was founded in 1730 and was one of several papers that carried theatrical advertisements, until its closure in 1798. The *London Evening Post* was a Tory newspaper, founded in 1727. Notices of Handel's performances at the King's Theatre were published exclusively in the *Daily Journal* during the 1733/34 season.

103 Jennens's and Holdsworth's pet name for Handel.

104 A pun based on the reality that Handel's fortunes relied upon the presence of the gentry in town. A letter from Mrs Pendarves (12 April 1734) that describes Handel as being 'in the best humour in the world' suggests that Handel did not suffer as Holdsworth predicted he might (Burrows, *Handel*, 230).

105 Thomas Hecht (1672?–1734). Magdalen College's organist and mentor of Jennens.

106 Jennens and Holdsworth attended Balliol College, Oxford, Jennens enrolling at the age of 15 in February 1716 (Smith, 'Achievements', 163).

107 Edward Thompson, organist at Salisbury from 1718 (possibly until 1746).

108 William Holmes (5 April 1689–4 April 1748) was president of St John's College, Oxford, from 1728 until his death in 1748. He was Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford between 1732 and 1735, and in 1734 he became one of the King's Chaplains. Loyal to the Hanoverians, he appears to have admired Handel's music. As Vice-Chancellor he reinstated the ceremony of 'the act' and invited Handel to play before and after the ceremony. He also allowed Handel to stage several public concerts in the Sheldonian Theatre. William Hunt, 'Holmes, William (1689–1748)', rev. John D. Haigh, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford, 2011), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13604 [Accessed 10 September 2013].

109 John Horton I (c.1708–79). Became Mayor of Bath for 1771–2. Resident in Bath from c.1729.

110 Holdsworth's concern was justified, for a newspaper report from 2 June 1733, reports that Handel had informed Senesino that he 'had no farther Occasion for his Service' (*The Country Journal: Or, The*

Vol. 1, no. 16, f. 1^v.

1 July [1734], Holdsworth in London

... M^r Herbert was on Saturday night [29 June] at y^e Haymarket to hear Pastor fido. 'twas expected that that wou'd be the last time of acting, but at the request of the Audience 'twill be continued 2 nights more.¹¹¹ M^r Herbert tells me y^t there were 200 at least in y^e Pit and boxes, and the Gallery full.¹¹² But as great a lover as I am of Musick I cou'd not make one, not being able to bear a crowd this weather. ...

Vol. 1, no. 18, f. 1^r; repr. (except last sentence) *Handbuch*, 243.

20 November 1734, Holdsworth in Kingsey near Tame¹¹³

Your friend Wat¹¹⁴ enquir'd much after you when I was at Oxford, and longs to know your opinion of Farinelli.¹¹⁵ I hope he performs at least so well as to give you [1^v] some satisfaction tho' in a bad house, and y^t you can easily believe He wou'd delight you very much was he under the direction of the Prodigious.¹¹⁶

M^r Herbert went for London 2 days before I came hither. If he stays long, perhaps I may make a trip thither for a few days; more I assure you to have the pleasure of seeing you than to hear Farinelli.

Vol. 1, no. 20, f. 1; repr. (first paragraph) *Handbuch*, 246.

Craftsman, no. 361, Saturday 2 June 1733, [2]; repr. (from the *Bee*), Walter Eisen and Margaret Eisen, eds., *Händel-Handbuch (HHB), Band 4: Dokumente zu Leben und Schaffen* (Kassel, 1985), 215. Senesino, however, had been in contact with the Opera of the Nobility since January 1733 and subsequently joined them for the 1734–5 season, along with the rest of Handel's leading Italian singers, with the exception of Strada. Thomas McGeary, 'Handel, Prince Frederick, and the Opera of the Nobility Reconsidered', *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, 7 (1998), 156–78; Burrows, *Handel*, 226.

111 Another factor for this extension must have been the arrival of Anne, Princess of Orange, and Handel's former student and patroness. *The London Evening Post*, no. 1033, Tuesday 2–Thursday 4 July 1734, [2]; Friedrich Chrysander, *G. F. Händel. Band 2* (Leipzig, 1860), 363.

112 As the letter suggests, Handel's revival of *Il pastor fido* (with arias added for Carestini and some choruses transferred from *Parnasso in festa*) was a success. Coupled with the similarly successful *Arianna*, this enabled Handel to complete the season, though with a reputed loss of £3000, at the King's Theatre despite the substantial opposition from the Opera of the Nobility. British Library, Add. Ms. 27733, ff. 114^v–115^r; repr. Carole Mia Taylor, 'Italian Operagoing in London, 1700–1745', Ph.D. dissertation (Syracuse University, 1991), 205; Burrows, *Handel*, 231.

113 The modern day town of Thame in Oxfordshire.

114 Walter Powell. Well-known Oxford counter-tenor and member of Christ Church, Magdalen (where he had been a chorister) and St John's College choirs. Esquire Bedell of Divinity since 1732. H. Diack Johnstone, 'Handel at Oxford in 1733', *Early Music*, 31 (2003), 251. See nn. 147, 150 and 243.

115 After making the customary appearance at court to sing for the royal family, Farinelli made his debut with the Opera of the Nobility on 29 October, as Arbace in Hasse's *Artaserse*. Such was his success that the opera ran to 28 performances. Thomas McGeary, 'Farinelli and the English: "One God" or the Devil?' *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal*, II/3 (2004).

116 A similar view had been aired early that month: 'It is universally allow'd, that if Mr. Handell was to compose and perform, and Signor Farinelli to sing, the whole World could not match them.' *The London Evening Post*, no. 1085, Thursday 31 October – Saturday 2 November 1734, [1].

23 March [1735], Holdsworth in Atherton

... I am sorry to hear of the ill success of the Prodigious; and of the death of poor Celestina.¹¹⁷ Our news papers make most extravagant [1v] Presents to Farinelli. Sure the people in Italy will think our money is soon parted with.¹¹⁸

Vol. 1, no. 22, f. 1.

17 April [1735], Holdsworth in Otterbourn, near Winchester

I wish the Prodigious better success wth his Alcina than He has had with his other operas.
...¹¹⁹

Vol. 1, no. 23, f. 1^v; repr. *Handbuch*, 253.

27 November 1735, Jennens at Queen Square, London¹²⁰

We have been three weeks without any Opera, till last Tuesday, when out came Veracini's Adriano.¹²¹ He is a better man at Songs than at instrumental compositions, & his Opera w[as] so much beyond my expectation, that I decided to go again on Saturday. I like it better th[an] [1v] any Opera we have yet had from an Italian, tho' we have had some from Porpora & Vinci.¹²² There goes a story of Veracini, which may be true for ought I know, but it can be

117 Celeste Gismondi. Italian soprano, successful in Naples 1725–32, before marrying an Englishman by the name of Mr Hempson, with whom she moved to London where she sang for Handel in 1732–3 before defecting to the Opera of the Nobility. She died on 11 March 'after a lingering Illness' (*Read's Weekly Journal, Or, British-Gazetteer*, no. 519, Saturday 15 March 1735, [3]; *HHB*, 251).

118 A letter in the *Old Whig; or, The Consistent Protestant* of 20 March 1735 claims that 'besides the numerous Presents of considerable Sums made him by the Nobility, Foreign Ministers, and Others (which amounted to some Thousand Pounds,) he [Farinelli] had an Audience at his Benefit larger than was ever seen in an *English Theatre*' (*HHB*, 251). Prévost's *Le Pour et Contre* of 1735 further describes the public appreciation of Farinelli: 'this man is idolized, adored: it is a consuming passion' (*HHB*, 255).

119 Premiered on 16 April, *Alcina* was indeed successful, running to 18 performances. Holdsworth's comment refers to the early part of Handel's season. According to a published report, 'Handel [...] has this Winter sometimes performed to an almost empty Pitt. He has lately reviv'd his fine *Oratorio of Esther* [...] But so strong is the Disgust taken against him, that even this has been far from bringing him crowded Audiences; tho' there were no other publick Entertainments on those Evenings. His Loss is computed for these two Seasons at a great Sum'. *The Old Whig; Or, The Consistent Protestant*, no. 2, Thursday 20 March 1734–5, [2].

120 Both Queen Square and Ormond Street (Jennens's later address in London) were in an area inhabited by many Nonjurors, some of them very prominent figures. Jennens even stored the book collection of a leading Nonjuring clergyman, Dr Robert Gordon, in the house at Queen Square (Smith, 'Achievements', 174).

121 Francesco Maria Veracini (1690–1768). *Adriano in Siria* was his first opera and ran for 20 performances, beginning on 22 November 1735 (25 November was in fact the second performance; Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 15). *Adriano in Siria* was performed by the Opera of the Nobility, for which the composer led the orchestra from the violin. John Walter Hill, 'Veracini, Francesco Maria', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29178 [Accessed 27 June 2012]. Jennens acquired a manuscript copy of the opera, which is now part of the Flower collection at Manchester (GB-Mp MS F520 V161).

122 Jennens's collection is known to have included three operas by Porpora (*Ariadne*, *Il Mitridate* and *Polifemo*) and two by Vinci: *Didone abbandonata* and *Artaserse* (mentioned above) (Roberts, 'Italian Opera Manuscripts', 160 and 188).

true of none but such a Madman as He is. They say, that having heard, his excellent hand upon the Violin was attributed in great measure by Carbonelli¹²³ to the Tone of his instrument rather than to his superior skill in the Use of it, he has burnt two very fine fiddles, & bought him a Scrub of 15^s price, to shew the World that he does not stand in need of a Cremona to outshine his Brethren.

Vol. 1, no. 28, f. 1; repr. *Handbuch*, 258.

7 December [1735], Holdsworth in Winton [Winchester]

Your story of Veracini diverted me very much. 'Tis like the man; and as the Italian say, Si non è vero, è ben trovato.¹²⁴

Vol. 1, no. 29, f. 1^v.

9 March 1736, Holdsworth in Winton

... I hope the Prodigious succeeded well with his Alexander^s feast. One of the Chaplains of the College here went to London on purpose to hear the performance at the feast of y^e Sons of the Clergy, but to his great mortification cou'd not be at M^r Handel^s entertainment.¹²⁵ He told me as his opinion that He thought no person in the world capable of setting the Ode except M^r Handel; for tho' 'tis very musical to read, yet the words he says are very difficult to set; And He is esteem'd a very good judge of musick. Perhaps those who encourag'd M^r Handel to undertake such a task, might do it wth the same design as made M^r Dryden put Creech upon translating Horace.¹²⁶ But I hope his superior Genius has surmounted all difficulties. ... [1v] ... We have here [in Hampshire] 2 Organs, several musical Gentlemen, a pleasant country & excellent Air; ...

Vol. 1, no. 31, f. 1; repr. (except last sentence) *Handbuch*, 260–1.

123 Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli (1699/1700–73). Italian violinist-composer, based in London from at least 1720, when he became leader of the orchestra at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. From 1728 he forged a successful career as a freelance violinist and composer before becoming a wine merchant. Michael Talbot, 'From Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli to John Stephen Carbonell: A Violinist turned Vintner in Handel's London', *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, 14 (2012), 265–99.

124 'If it is not true, then it is well-invented.'

125 This refers to a charity set up in 1655 by a group of clergymen and merchants in the City of London. All were sons of clergymen at a time when many clergy families had been left destitute by Cromwell's widespread persecution of the clergy. The charity's first fund-raising event, on 8 November 1655, took the form of a dinner and service at St Paul's Cathedral; music still plays a part in the charity's annual service. Performed at the 1736 feast (19 February) were Handel's *Utrecht Jubilate* (HWV 279) and one of the *Coronation Anthems* as well as a *Te Deum* by Maurice Greene (*HHB*, 260). Handel's *Alexander's Feast* (libretto adapted by Newburgh Hamilton from Dryden's ode) was premiered on the same night at Covent Garden Theatre.

126 This is rather a misleading comment, arising from the publication of an anti-Dryden pamphlet in which the author suggested that Dryden encouraged Creech to translate Horace in the belief that Creech would fail in the task and thus be exposed. In fact, Dryden did encourage Creech but with the honourable intention of encouraging his friend in his talents. L. Alvin Baker, 'A Vindication of Creech's Horace and Dryden's Good Name', *Notes and Queries*, 55/3 (2008), 303.

20 April [1736], Holdsworth in Winton

I don't remember y^t I ever heard of Sig^r. Giacinto,¹²⁷ but you'l not have the worse opinion of him on y^t score. I am glad the Prodigious is going to undertake Operas again.¹²⁸ I hope y^t will raise your spirits another winter, as I fear his silence contributed to sink them this. ...

Vol. 1, no. 32, f. 1^v; repr. *Handbuch*, 263.

27 April 1736, Jennens in London

Every body strives to excell in Finery at the Prince^s Wedding,¹²⁹ which will be to night. I need not except my self, for you know I am no Courtier.¹³⁰ M^r. Handel has made a new Opera for the occasion, but I don't hear when he will produce it; for he does not begin before Wednesday May 5th & then with one of the last year^s Operas.¹³¹ I don't [1v] wonder you have not heard of Sign^r. Conti, for they tell me he is but 19 years of Age, & perhaps had not appear'd upon the Stage when you was in Italy.¹³² Those who have heard him say He is the finest Soprano they ever heard: & what is something surprizing, he goes five notes higher than Farinelli with a true natural voice, & is sweet to the very top.¹³³ You must have heard Domenico [Annibali],¹³⁴ whom M^r. Handel expects next year, & very great things are said of his singing, too.

Vol. 1, no. 33, f. 1; repr. (first three sentences) *Letters*, 21; *Handbuch*, 264.

24 July 1736, Jennens in Packington

... at my return to Gopsal, I hope to find all your notes, & I'll sit down to read Virgil with more pleasure than ever I did in my life. This, I hope, will keep off the Hyp

127 Giacchino Conti ('Gizziello', 1714–61). Italian soprano castrato. He made his debut in Rome in 1730, and went on to sing at Naples, Vienna, Genoa and Venice. Handel engaged him for the 1736–7 and 1737–8 seasons and took advantage of his exceptionally large range, extending to c^{'''}. His London debut was on 5 May in a revival of *Ariodante*, in which *The London Daily Post* (6 May 1736) described him as being 'one of the best performers in this Kingdom' (*HHB*, 264). His career continued successfully on the continent.

128 Handel undertook a short opera season in May–June 1736, starting on 5 May with *Ariodante* followed by the premiere of *Atalanta* on 12 May. His next full season (beginning in November 1736) contained three other new operas: *Arminio* (12 January), *Giustino* (16 February) and *Berenice* (18 May). Though the number of performances of each was modest, they were interspersed with revivals of other operas and oratorios, the overall success of which allowed Handel to capitalise on the decline in popularity of the Opera of the Nobility (Burrows, *Handel*, 250–3).

129 The Prince of Wales married the Princess of Saxe-Gotha in the Chapel Royal on 27 April 1736.

130 A reference to Jennens's Nonjuring status.

131 The new opera was *Atalanta* (*op. cit.*) but Handel failed to complete it in time and so *Ariodante* was revived instead. Jennens is listed among the subscribers to Walsh's edition of the score (*HHB*, 266).

132 Conti was 22, not 19, in 1736. See nn. 171, 196 and 205.

133 In a letter to fellow Handelian James Harris, the 4th Earl of Shaftesbury confirmed this view: 'The new singer Conti ... is all things consider'd the best singer I ever Heard & they say in the world[;] he will improve still very much for he is but nineteen years old is very handsome[,] a good actor & very genteel [...] ... He has sung nothing of Handel's yet but the last duet in *Ariodante* ...' (8 May, 1736, Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*, 17).

134 Domenico Annibali (c.1705–c.1779). Italian castrato employed by the Saxon court at Dresden for most of his life but given frequent periods of leave that enabled him to sing for operas in Rome (1730, 1732 and 1739), Vienna (1731) and London (1736–7). Burney does not credit him with much ability but he appears to have impressed Handel, for whom he sang at Covent Garden Theatre. Mrs Pendarves believed him to have 'the best part of Senesino's voice and Carestini's, with a prodigious fine taste and good action!' (Letter to Ann Granville, 27 November 1736: *HHB*, 271).

[ochondria]¹³⁵ till the end of October, when I suppose I shall go to London, & there M^r. Handel will do it for me. ...

Vol. 1, no. 34, f. 1^v.

19 October [1736], Holdsworth in Winton

... I heartily wish you a good journey, and a great deal of pleasure wth the Prodigious and his new damsels. I hope one of them is the Peruchiera, M^r Herbert^s favourite. I believe her voice will please you. ...

Vol. 1, no. 39, f. 1^v.

4 November [1736], Holdsworth in Winton

... I am glad to hear that the Prodigious is like to entertain you so well this winter. He will very much contribute, I don't doubt, to keep up your spirits; but pray don't let him engross all your time. Let your house have a share in you, and I don't doubt but between them, they will prevent any return of your last year's disorder.¹³⁶ I beg you not to bestow any of your time, unless 'tis very bad weather, on ye Georgicks. The country about London, as bad as 'tis, will I am persuaded be of more service to you, to prevent the Hyp than Virgil's Italy ...

Vol. 1, no. 41, f. 1^r; repr. (except last sentence) *Handbuch*, 269.

13 November [1736], Holdsworth in Winton

Dear S^r

'Twas with very great concern y^t I read your account of the bad reception you met with in Town after your escape from mire & dirt &c. I hope your cold was no more than the Tribute y^t is usually paid to London at first coming, and that you will now be free as long as you stay. I wish your Sister^s disorder may go off as well. It wou'd be a sad thing to have so much affliction within doors, when you have no prospect of having any great pleasure without. But I am sure you will be contented to let M^r Handel^s Antagonists expose themselves for one year longer y^t He may shine to greater advantage the next. And methinks with y^t view you may go now & then to pass away an hour & laugh at them.

Vol. 1, no. 40, f. 1^r.

8 January [1737], Holdsworth in Horton

I had the honour to dine one day this week at L^d Shaftsbury^s 2 miles from hence.¹³⁷ His Lordship enquir'd very affectionately after you, & rejoic'd to hear of your health, and I am perswaded shew'd me greater civilities than I cou'd otherwise have expected upon y^r account; So much credit it does me to have so good a friend. I had the pleasure to meet

135 Probably a reference to depression, a condition from which Jennens is known to have suffered. The viscera situated in this area (liver, gall bladder, spleen etc.) 'were formerly supposed to be the seat of melancholy and vapours' ('hyp, n.'. OED Online [Accessed 9 June 2011].

136 See n. 135.

137 Anthony Ashley Cooper, 4th Earl of Shaftesbury (1711–71) was an ardent Handelian. The family seat is St Giles House, near Wimbourne St Giles in Dorset. Shaftesbury and Jennens were part of a circle of acquaintance that included other Handelians (and relatives of Shaftesbury), James Harris and Wyndham Knatchbull (with whom Jennens had attended Balliol).

there your friend M^r Harris & his Bro^r.¹³⁸ They all desire their humble service to you, and as they are zealous Handelists were extremely pleas'd to hear from you that He has so fair a prospect of having a successful winter.¹³⁹ His Lordship proposes to be in town [1v] the latter end of next week, & hopes soon to meet you at the Opera. ...

Vol. 1, no. 43, f. 1.

27 January [1737], Holdsworth in Winton

... as I look upon his L^dship [Lord Shaftesbury] to be a man without guile I must give credit to him, & think him sincere in his professions. Perhaps he may not quite reach to the same standard in Politicks, but he seems to me to be a very virtuous good man, and values you as such. And I have reason to believe, from the little conversation I had wth him, that He wou'd be very glad to cultivate a more intimate friendship wth you.

I am very sorry to hear that M^r Handel has had no better success;¹⁴⁰ but our tast[e] is vitiated in ev'ry thing, & musick must bear it's share; nor can it be expected y^t Handel [1v] and Hurlothrumbo¹⁴¹ shou'd both be admir'd in the same age. If your spleen does not rise high enough to attack them, I wish M^r. Pope wou'd. He might find Heroes enough amongst the Directors,¹⁴² and I doubt not but you cou'd furnish him with sufficient materials.¹⁴³

Vol. 1, no. 44, f. 1; repr. (second paragraph) *Handbuch*, 275.

138 James Harris (1709–80). A nephew of the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, Harris was, like Jennens and Holdsworth, a keen classicist. He organised and directed concerts and festivals at Salisbury for nearly 50 years, many of them involving music by Handel (Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*, v). He had two brothers, William (1714–77) and Thomas (1712–85). It is unclear which of them is referred to here.

139 The 'zealous Handelists' may have been referring not only to the success of Handel's 1736–7 season but also to the gradual collapse in the same season of the rival company, the Opera of the Nobility. Handel's 1736–7 season was exceptionally ambitious and included three new operas: *Arminio* (12 January), *Giustino* (16 February) and *Berenice* (18 May). In addition, his benefit in late March was as successful and profitable as that of Farinelli in 1735.

140 Holdsworth's comment contradicts the views of the 'zealous Handelists' (see letter of 8 January 1737). Indeed, Jennens is quoted in the letter of 8 January as having predicted 'a successful winter' for Handel. Holdsworth's comments in the letter of 27 January 1737 may therefore reflect a new – and unfounded – negativity on the part of Jennens, for although Handel had not achieved outstanding success by this point in the 1736–7 season, he was still faring better than he had in the previous season.

141 *Hurlothrumbo* is the title of a nonsense play written by Samuel Johnson (1691–1773), a dancing master from Cheshire. It was published and ran for 30 nights at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket in April 1729.

142 A reference to the directors of the rival opera company, the Opera of the Nobility. John West, 7th Baron De La Warr (1693–1766) was principally responsible for the organization and management of the new company. A letter from West to the Duke of Richmond, dated 16 June 1733, outlines the plans for the company: "There is A Spirit got up against the Dominion of Mr Handel, A Subscription carry'd on, and Directors chosen, who have contracted with Senisino, and have sent for Cuzzoni, and Farrinelli, it is hoped he will come as soon as the Carneval of Venice is over, if not sooner ... Porpora is also sent for ..." (McGeary, 'Opera of the Nobility Reconsidered', 157). The Directors were: John Manners, 3rd Duke of Rutland (1696–1779); William, 2nd Earl Cowper (1709–64); Charles, 2nd Baron of Cadogan (1685–1776); Thomas Coke, Baron Lovel (1697–1759), later Viscount and Earl of Leicester; Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond and Lennox (1701–50); John Russell, 4th Duke of Bedford (1710–71); John Dalrymple, 2nd Earl of Stair (1672–1747); James Hamilton, 1st Viscount Limerick (1694–1758); Allen, 1st Baron Bathurst (1684–1775), later Earl; Sir John Buckworth, 2nd Baronet (1704–59). Thomas McGeary, *The Politics of Opera in Handel's Britain* (Cambridge, 2013), 268–9.

143 An oblique reference to Alexander Pope's satirical poem *Dunciad* (1728), an attack on the literary establishment of the times. Pope would eventually defend Handel against his enemies in the fourth book of the poem, published in 1744. Like Jennens, Pope was a Jacobite sympathizer.

15 March 1736/7, Holdsworth in Winton

... I am sorry M^r Handel is like to be a sufferer notwithstanding all the pains he has taken to please; and y^t he must be convinc'd by such dear-bought experience what a perverse, stupid, & incorrigible race of mortals we are.¹⁴⁴ He wou'd do very well I think to ly quiet for a year or two, and then I am perswaded y^t his enemies will sink of course, and many of them will court him as much as now they oppose him. What has min'd¹⁴⁵ our Dissenters, but letting them alone, & leaving them to their own Stupidity? Disputing [1v] with them kept up their perverse spirits, and was the chief support of their faction. But I am chiefly concern'd for you, for I fear whilst Handel retires you'l have the Hyp. And that is of more consequence than all the musick in the world to

Dear S^r.

Your most affectionate humble Serv^t.

E Holdsworth.

Vol. 1, no. 45, f. 1; repr. *Handbuch*, 277.

26 June 1737, Holdsworth in Winton

... I forgot when I was in town to buy some good Ballads for a little Miss, a daughter of M^r Shut, who has a pretty voice, & delights much in singing. But in truth I have not musick enough in me to judge of a Ballad and I wou'd not put such an affront upon you to desire you to choose some for me, tho' I know most of the Ballad-singers in town frequent your Door. ...

Vol. 1, no. 48, f. 1^v.

18 January [1738], Holdsworth at Magdalen College, Oxford

M^r Pitt is disappointed of the Subscription he expected, the gentleman whom he depended upon being willing I find to have the book but not to pay for it. I fancy honest Hurlothrumbo wou'd have had better success amongst our ingenious Oxonians than M^r Handel's Alexander.¹⁴⁶

Vol. 1, no. 51, f. 1^r; repr. *Handbuch*, 289.

16 March [1738], Holdsworth at Magdalen College, Oxford

Wat Powel¹⁴⁷ had told me before I rec^{vd}. y^{rs} y^t M^r Handel had had very good success wth one Opera. I shou'd be glad to know when He brings y^{rs} on the Stage, y^t I may be more

144 Handel experienced some difficulties in early 1737 that eventually led to a collapse in his health in Spring of that year. Ilias Chrissochoidis, 'Handel Recovering: Fresh Light on His Affairs in 1737', *Eighteenth-Century Music*, 5 (2008), 237–44.

145 Holdsworth is suggesting that if left to their own devices, the stupidity of Handel's detractors ('Dissenters') would naturally undermine their fortunes.

146 *Alexander's Feast* was published in the second week of March 1738 by Handel, with John Walsh acting as an agent (HNB, 291). George Pitt (1721–1803) was a pupil of Holdsworth's and acquainted with Jennens. He appears to have encouraged his friends and acquaintances in Oxford to subscribe to *Alexander's Feast*.

147 See nn. 114, 150 and 243.

interested in wishing him success.¹⁴⁸ There is at present so much madness & confusion in this nation in ev'ry respect, that I am not surpris'd that 'tis not all Harmony even in Musick. ...¹⁴⁹

Vol. 1, no. 53, f. 1^v; repr. (first sentence) *Handbuch*, 292.

25 April [1738], Holdsworth at Magdalen College, Oxford

I have just rec.^{vd} from Wat Powell the Ode¹⁵⁰ with the Print, for which Mr Pitt has given his Guinea, and I have rec.^{vd} two from Mr Church. ... Mr Herbert and his Sister spent most part of the last week in Oxford ... You mention nothing of his having subscribed for the Ode. If he has not yet taken it, I will engage when I see him in town to persuade him to perform his promise.

Vol. 1, no. 54, f. 1^v.

1 May [1738], Holdsworth in Bath

Dear Sir

I have drank the waters for about a week, & tho' I cannot say y^t if I have as yet found any advantage from 'em, yet they don't disagree with me, w^{ch} the learned tell me is a sufficient indication that they will in time do wonders. I have the honour to live so near the Princess,¹⁵¹ that I cou'd almost kiss her hand out at window; and I am lodg'd in the same house with a famous Presbyterian preacher,¹⁵² and our chambers join so close, that when the spirit moves, I can hear him belch & f—t as I am in bed.¹⁵³ ... [1^v] I fear it fares very ill with the Prodigious during this Parliamenteering, but I suppose his Antagonists are equally sufferers.

...

Vol. 1, no. 55, f. 1; repr. (last sentence) *Handbuch*, 295.

148 Handel's opera was *Faramondo*, which premiered on 3 January and ran for eight nights. The reference to Jennens's work is almost certainly the oratorio *Saul*, which Handel had received in July 1735 and would set in summer 1738 (*HHB*, 292).

149 Though uncertain, Holdsworth may have been referring to various events that defined the 1730s as a fairly tumultuous decade in political terms. The escalation of popular disturbances was such that it prompted the King to remark in his speech closing the session of 1737: 'defiance of all authority, contempt of magistracy, and even resistance of the laws, are become too general'. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783* (Oxford, 1989), 44. Several of these events concerned the London Theatres, from the wrecking of Drury Lane Theatre (by footmen) to the Licensing Act of 1737, which gave the Lord Chamberlain power to approve all plays. Added to this was a constant insecurity about possible Jacobite activity, which inspired Walpole to maintain agents and spies whose information led to many false alarms. Furthermore, the deterioration of Britain's relationship with Spain (which led to the War of Jenkin's Ear in 1739) was already apparent by March of 1738. See n. 189.

150 A reference to Handel's *Alexander's Feast*. See nn. 114, 147 and 243.

151 The Prince and the Princess of Wales visited Bath in October 1738 but were unlikely to have visited in May as the future George III was born in London on 24 May. S.D Major, *Notabilia of Bath: A Handbook to the City & District* (rev. edn. Bath, 1879), 6. Royal patronage of Bath can be traced back to Princess Amelia, second daughter of George II, who first drew attention to the city in 1728 and 'by frequenting the Bath ... has given it an immortal Character ... and Persons of Quality as well as others have follow'd so noble a Pattern'. John Quinton, *A Treatise of Warm Bath Water ... Volume II* (Oxford, 1734), 85.

152 The author has been unable to discover the identity of the Preacher.

153 Fart.

14 December 1738, Jennens at Queen Square, London

... My Uncle stays but a week in Town, & when he will bring his Family up I can't tell; for my Aunt finds her self so much better in the Country, that I believe she will be in no hast to leave it;¹⁵⁴ & the young Ladies are very indifferent to the Town, since there are no Operas & I suppose it will not be long before the young gentlemen will visit Oxford again ...¹⁵⁵

Vol. 1, no. 58, f. 1^v.

[1739 summer?], Jennens

When you come into the Land of Musick, if you meet with any new Opera's that are particularly celebrated, you will oblige me by ordering the Score to be transcrib^d for me.¹⁵⁶

Vol. 1, no. 59, f. 1^v.

29 August 1739, Holdsworth in Dijon

Dear S^r

After having spent about 12 days at Paris, we came hither to the Capital of Burgundy, ...

Since I have been here I have had the pleasure of talking of you and drinking y^r health in a glass of good Burgundy wth M^r Knatchbull S^r Wyndham^s bro^r.¹⁵⁷ who seems to me to be a very worthy Gentleman. He staid here about a week in company wth a young gentleman wth whom He is gone to make the tour of France, & then returns to England. As He is very musical I believe He wou'd have been well pleas'd to have gone to Italy, but Non cuivis homini contingit — ...¹⁵⁸

Vol. 1, no. 60, f. 1^r.

29 November 1739, Jennens in London

Handel open^d the Theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields on S^t. Cecilia's day with Dryden's two Odes for the day; the House was very full upon that day, but he perform^d it last Tuesday a 2^d

154 Jennens's aunt, Jane Burdett, was married to Sir John Cotton, of Connington, Huntingdonshire (Smith, 'Achievements', 162–3).

155 The public mourning period for Queen Caroline (who died on 20 November 1737) delayed the start of Handel's season at Covent Garden until January 1738 (the King's Theatre Haymarket produced three performances during October–November). Beginning with *Faramondo*, on 3 January 1738, Handel's cast consisted of: Gaetano Majorano Caffarelli (1710–83), castrato; Maria Antonio Marchesini (La Lucchesina, fl.1736–9), mezzo soprano; Margherita Chimenti (La Droghierina, fl.1733–46), mezzo soprano; Merighi, contralto (see letter of 13 February 1733); Elisabeth Duparc (La Francescina, d.1773), soprano; Antonio Montagnana (fl.1730–50), bass; Antonio Lottini (fl.1717–65), bass.

156 Though undated, this letter probably dates from the commencement of Holdsworth's final Grand Tour of 1739–45 (Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 16). Holdsworth was faithful to Jennens's orders as always and subsequent letters detail his purchase of operas by Latilla and Jommelli (see nn. 178, 188 and 211), none of which Jennens enjoyed (see letter of 4 February 1741/2).

157 Edward Knatchbull, brother of Sir Wyndham Knatchbull Wyndham, became 7th Baronet Knatchbull on his nephew's death in 1763. See n. 287.

158 Part of the saying 'It is not the lot of every man to go [to Corinth].'

time to half a House.¹⁵⁹ On [Satur]day L^d. Middlesex¹⁶⁰ opens the little French Thea[tre] in the Haymarket with a Serenata of Diana & Endymion.¹⁶¹ His Singers are his dear Moscovita,¹⁶² Carestino,¹⁶³ & Clemente¹⁶⁴ newly arriv^d, who I hear outsings your old Friend Carestino. ...

[postscript:]

Your quondam¹⁶⁵ Pupil M^r. Herbert came very lamely into the Boxes on Tuesday at Handel's Odes, but look^d well in the Face. I had forgot [2v] to add to my last Musical Commission my desire, that when you are in Italy you would collect me as many as you can of the Baron d' Astorga's Cantata's,¹⁶⁶ which are much esteem^d here, but I don't know how to get 'em. ...

159 *Alexander's Feast* (Dryden, arranged by Newburgh Hamilton; HWV 75) and *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* (Dryden; HWV 76). First performed on Thursday 22 November. Also performed were two of the *Twelve Grand Concertos* (Op. 6, HWV 319–330). The second performance was on 27 November.

160 Charles (Sackville), Earl of Middlesex and subsequently 2nd Duke of Dorset (1711–69). He had returned to London on 5 January after an extensive residence in Italy. *The London Daily Post, and General Advertiser*, Friday 5 January 1739, [1], where he had acquired a reputation as producer of musical entertainments. His adoption of a payment system whereby 'each person, without distinction, was charged a half-guinea, and the gallery was closed' backfired: 'even though the gallery was reopened at its old price of five shillings, almost no one is booking subscriptions'. Lowell Lindgren, 'Musicians and Librettists in the Correspondence of Gio. Giacomo Zamboni (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Rawlinson Letters 116–138)', *RMA Research Chronicle*, 24 (1991), 175. His career as opera manager was controversial (see Carole Taylor, 'From Losses to Lawsuit: Patronage of the Italian Opera in London by Lord Middlesex, 1739–45', *Music & Letters*, 68 (1987), 1–25).

161 Libretto by Metastasio (original title: *L'Endimione*). Music by Giovanni Battista Pescetti (c.1704–66), a pupil of Antonio Lotti (Burney, *General History*, iv, 430). In the spring of 1739, Pescetti had served as composer in the short-lived effort to mount Italian opera in competition to Handel's oratorio season. The fourth performance of his serenata *Angelica e Medoro* on 4 April clashed with the second performance of *Israel in Egypt*. Ilias Chrissochoidis, "'True Merit always Envy rais'd": The *Advice to Mr. Handel* (1739) and *Israel in Egypt's* early Reception', *The Musical Times*, 150/1906 (Spring 2009), 71. In early November, newspapers reported that Middlesex 'hir'd the Theatre in the Hay Market, for Concerts during the Winter' (*The Country Journal: Or, The Craftsman*, no. 695, Saturday 3 November 1739, [2]). The fact that both competitors limited their season to concerts created wide disappointment among opera lovers, as Richard West's statement 'No opera, no nothing' attests. W. S. Lewis, George L. Lam, and Charles H. Bennett, eds., *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with Thomas Gray, Richard West and Thomas Ashton* (New Haven and London, 1948), 197.

162 Real name Lucia Panichi, known as 'La Muscovita'. Mistress of Lord Middlesex, whom she had followed to London in January 1739, she performed the lead role in Pescetti's *Angelica e Medoro*, whose failure was attributed to the 'singers, who are insufferable' (Lindgren, 'Zamboni', 172). According to Giambattista Gastaldi, she was 'called the Muscovite because her father or mother has been in Muscovy. [...] But the great name which she bears is not worth much, for, like all devils, she sings out of tune' (Lindgren, 'Zamboni', 173). Horace Walpole concurred, describing her thus: 'Muscovita is not a pretty woman, and she does sing ill' (*HHB*, 337).

163 Giovanni Carestini (1704–c.1760) replaced Senesino as Handel's leading man from 1733–5. However, his later performances upon returning to London in 1739–40 (to sing at the Little Theatre, Haymarket for Lord Middlesex's company), were judged to be inferior (Burrows, *Handel*, 444).

164 Burney mentions Clementi's arrival in London on 23 November 1739 to sing at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket. Philip K. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnam and Edward A. Langhans, eds, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Dancers, Managers & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660–1800* (Carbondale, 1973), iii, 321.

165 Former.

166 Emanuele (Giacchino Cesare Rincón) d'Astorga (1680–?1757). Italian composer of Spanish descent, much of whose life still remains obscure. Hawkins calls him 'a celebrated composer [who] excelled altogether in vocal composition; his cantatas in particular are by the Italians esteemed above all others' (Hawkins, *General History*, v, 212). See nn. 172, 187, 212, 214 and 236.

Vol. 2, no. 61, f. 2; repr. (first sentence) *Letters*, 21; (first sentence) *Handbuch*, 314.

10 January 1740, Holdsworth in Angers

... If any one was to read your Italian Commissions to me, they wou'd think you in jest, to employ me to buy Musick for you, and to desire me to sit for my picture;¹⁶⁷ But as meny as they seem to be, you shall be obey'd ...

Vol. 2, no. 62, f. 1^v.

11 September 1740, Jennens in Wistow

I set out from London in May last, & with L^d. Guernsey, whom I call^d upon at Albury, went to M^r. Harris at Salisbury,¹⁶⁸ where the 2^d day in the midst of our Musical Entertainments the melancholy News came that Lady Aylesford was fallen ill of the small pox at Bath:¹⁶⁹ ...

Vol. 2, no. 66, f. 1^v.

15 March 1741, Holdsworth in Rome

... M^r Pitt is so well pleas'd with the place y^t He seems determin'd to stay here near twelve months longer, w^{ch} will give me leisure to execute y^r Commissions for Musick &c. and for any other commands you can have for me. Our Operas this year were not very extraordinary.¹⁷⁰ The principal performer was Conti,¹⁷¹ who must not be named wth Farinelli or Senesino, tho' I am told by those who have heard him in England that He is much improv'd ...

Vol. 2, no. 69, f. 2^r.

167 Holdsworth's portrait was painted by the son of a Jacobite friend of Holdsworth, James Russel (c.1720–63), an artist and antiquarian based in Rome. Jennens helped Russel's father financially and Russel acted as an agent for Jennens's Italian art-collecting interests (Smith, 'Achievements', 169).

168 The visit was announced by Thomas Harris to his brother James in Salisbury on 17 May: '[Jennens and Lord Guernsey] have resolved on paying you a visitt [*sic*] this next week [...] Their design is to dine with you on Thursday next' (Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*, 98). Heneage Finch, 3rd Earl of Aylesford (1715–77). Styled Lord Guernsey between 1719 and 1757. MP for Leicestershire 1739–41 and Maidstone 1741–7 and 1754–7. Son of Jennens's cousin Mary (and grandson of Sir Clement Fisher). Jennens was godfather to Guernsey's son and left the 3rd Earl his personal collection of MS and printed music. (Smith, 'Achievements', 163–4). Albury was the seat of the Earl of Aylesford. For Mr Harris see n. 138.

169 Lady Aylesford was Jennens's cousin, Mary. According to Burrows and Dunhill, 'Guernsey left Salisbury soon afterwards, and reached his mother the day before she died' (Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*, 99).

170 A reference to the operas performed during Carnival: Jommelli's *Astianatte* and Giuseppe Scarlatti's *Dario* at the Teatro di Torre Argentina, and Andrea Bernasconi's *Demofonte* and Giovanni Battista Lampugnani's *Semiramide riconosciuta* at the Teatro delle Dame. The last two were on librettos by Pietro Metastasio and featured Conti as Timante and Mirteo, respectively. Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: catalogo analitico con 16 indici* (Cuneo, 1993).

171 See nn. 132, 196 and 205.

17 June 1741, Holdsworth in Rome

I have met wth 2 little volumes in w^{ch} are about 60 Cantatas of Baron D’Astorga, w^{ch} I have purchas’d for you; and some other compositions by the same author.¹⁷² An English Gentleman & friend of mine, who resides much at Florence, informs me y^t He cou’d get some of the Baron^s Cantatas copied there, & has many of them himself; but I wou’d willingly have y^r approbation of these before I venture on more. This gentleman is a great admirer of Henda [sic], and tho’ He lives in Italy has as great a contempt for their present tast as y^r self. And therefore I think I cannot apply to a more proper person to be your Taster.¹⁷³ The Compositions He prefers are those of S^{re}. Marcello, Mancini, & Bencini. D’Astorga is likewise one of his favourites. I will get you some pieces of each, and if you like them, I can at any time write to him to procure you a larger supply.¹⁷⁴ Pray send me an answer to my last what Operas you wou’d have copied. ...

I had spent so much time at Naples wth my good friend M^r Herbert, that I expected little to be seen there, but the great eruption of M^t Vesuvio in 37, and the discovery of [2r] a town underground,¹⁷⁵ afforded me matter of great curiosity, the acc[oun]^t. of w^{ch} I shall reserve for a dish of Chocolate, or a bottle of Chateau Morg[aux].¹⁷⁶

Vol. 2, no. 71, ff. 1^v–2^r.

172 Barclay Squire acquired two volumes – formerly belonging to Jennens – of works by d’Astorga. Both are now in the British Library. One volume contains 42 cantatas (GB-Lbl Add. MS 39765), and the other contains 20 duets and cantatas (GB-Lbl Add. MS 39766, Roberts, ‘Aylesford Collection’, 66). The ‘other compositions’ referred to here are probably a cantata and the Stabat Mater, both in sheets, which Holdsworth refers to in his letter of 1 November 1741. The cantata was probably bound at a later date with other loose sheets, in a volume with cantatas by A. Scarlatti and A. Stradella (lot 280, sold in 1918, Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 18). The whereabouts of this volume, and that containing the Stabat Mater, is hitherto unknown. See nn. 166, 187, 212, 214 and 236.

173 This might have been Horatio Mann (1796–86), who ‘kept open house for all British visitors’ to Florence, where he had been posted as British Resident in April 1740 and would serve in this position until his death. Opera gossip features in his correspondence with Horace Walpole around this time (8 October, 2 and 5 November, 24 December 1741): W. S. Lewis, Warren Hunting Smith, and George L. Lam, eds., *Horace Walpole’s Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann* (New Haven and London, 1954), i, 165–6, 183–6, 190–1, 249–56.

174 Benedetto Giacomo Marcello (1686–1739). See nn. 188, 213, 251 and 272 for Holdsworth’s acquisition of works by Marcello. Jennens owned works by two composers called Bencini: Pietro Paolo Bencini (c.1670–1755) and Giuseppe Bencini (fl.1723–7). The latter was employed in Florence by the Grand Duke of Tuscany and Jennens owned four of his *Suonate per cimbalo* (GB-Mp MS 710.5 Bk51; Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 12). The works by P. P. Bencini in the Aylesford collection are set to texts by Antonio Ottoboni, and so were probably acquired from within the ‘Ottoboni’ collection discussed below (see letter of 4 May 1742). From Jennens’s comments in his letter of 14 May 1742, it appears that he had never before heard of either Francesco Mancini (1672–1737) or (?Pietro Paolo) Bencini and so the works by Mancini must also have been part of the Ottoboni collection. Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 23; Michael Talbot, “Loving without Falling in Love”: Pietro Paolo Bencini’s serenata *Li due volubili*’, ed. Nicolò Maccavino, *La serenata tra Seicento e Settecento: musica, poesia, scenotecnica. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi. Reggio Calabria, 16–17 maggio 2003* (Reggio Calabria, 2007), i, 373–95; Colin Timms and Michael Talbot, ‘Music and the Poetry of Antonio Ottoboni (1646–1720)’, in Nino Pirrotta and Agostino Ziino, eds, *Händel e gli Scarlatti a Roma. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Roma, 12–14 giugno 1985)*, (Florence, 1987), 367–438.

175 The eruption of Vesuvius started on 8 May 1737. *The London Evening Post*, no. 1495, Tuesday 14–Thursday 16 June 1737, [2]. Excavation of Herculaneum began in 1738.

176 A type of Claret from Bordeaux.

10 July 1741, Jennens in Gopsall

I thank you for your care of my Musical commissions. I should be glad if you would procure me all you can of the Baron d' Astorga's compositions,¹⁷⁷ without deferring any to another time. If therefore your Friend can procure any at Florence different from those you have purchas'd, let him do his best: but he must be sure they are not duplicates. I am glad to hear that part of the Baron's Compositions are Church Musick, which is a point extraordinary gain'd, for I have been glutted with the Italian Theatre, but have not yet had so much as a Tast of the Church. By all means let me have Latilla's Siroes & Themistocles, & Jemmelli's Astyanax;¹⁷⁸ but insist on the whole Scores being copy'd, that if they deserve it we may have them perform'd on the English Stage. I must therefore have the Overtures, Songs, Symphonies & Recitatives entire in all their parts. I mention this so particularly, because some Songs of Por[por]a which you brought over with you the last time you was abroad¹⁷⁹ were of no use to me the Symphonys being omitted, & nothing copy'd but the Voice-part & the Base. Handel says he will do nothing next Winter,¹⁸⁰ but I hope I shall perswade him to set another Scripture Collection I have made for him,¹⁸¹ & perform it for his own Benefit in Passion Week. I hope he will lay out his whole Genius & Skill upon it, that the Composition may excell all his former Compositions, as the Subject excells every other Subject. The Subject is Messiah.¹⁸² [2v] Six extravagant young Gentlemen have subscrib'd 1000[£] apiece for the Support of an Opera next Winter.¹⁸³ The

177 See n. 100, 106, 120, 141, 143 and 160.

178 Gaetano Latilla (1711–88) and Niccolò Jommelli (1714–74). The librettos of both *Il Siroe* (Rome, 1740) and *Il Temistocle* (Rome, 1737) were by Metastasio, while that of *Astianatte* (Rome, 1741) was by Salvi. Both *Il Siroe* and *Astianatte* were produced in Rome during the carnival season of 1740–1 (in the Teatro Delle Dame and the Teatro Argentina respectively) and Holdsworth's mention of *Temistocle* in connection with the other two operas suggests that it too was produced during the carnival that year (Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 17–18). Holdsworth sent *Il Siroe* and *Astianatte* to Jennens at the end of October 1741 (see letter of 1 November 1741) and in a letter of 4 February 1742 Jennens voices his criticism of them. *Il Temistocle* was sent later (see letter of 4 May 1742) but Jennens's opinion of it is not recorded. Roberts's work on the Aylesford collection reveals that Jennens's copies of all three operas were sold to Hunt at the Sotheby's sale in 1918 and Hunt sold them in turn to Reeves and it was probably from him that the Newberry library acquired *Astianatte* (US-Cn MS VM1500 J75A). *Il Siroe* and *Temistocle* were not resold until 1957 when they were acquired by Frank de Bellis of San Francisco, where they are now part of the Frank V. de Bellis Collection at San Francisco State University (US-SFsc). See nn. 156, 188 and 211.

179 Jennens's description of the 'Songs of Porpora' fits that of the Porpora arias in the Yale MS 75, which consist only of the outer parts. However, the letters of 13 February 1733 and 17 April 1732 make it clear that Holdsworth did not bring them back to England with him, but instead sent them to Jennens from Rome. If Jennens's words are taken literally, then doubt is cast on the identification of MS 75 with the 'Airs' of the 1732 and 1733 letters. However, no trace has been discovered of any other Porpora arias in the possession of Jennens, and so it appears more likely that Jennens was unintentionally misleading in his choice of words in this letter of 10 July 1741 and that all three letters therefore refer to the same Porpora arias, now in Yale MS 75 (Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 17–18). See nn. 80 and 90.

180 On 8 April, the Earl of Egmont wrote in his diary that Handel was 'intending to go to Spa in Germany'. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont. Diary of the First Earl of Egmont (Viscount Percival)*. Vol. III. 1739–1747 (London, 1923), 210. See nn. 181, 182, 190, 209, 222, 223, 227, 229, 232, 234, 239 and 253.

181 A reference to Jennens's libretto for *Messiah*. The 'other' scripture collection was *Israel in Egypt*. See nn. 180, 182, 190, 209, 222, 223, 227, 229, 232, 234, 239 and 253.

182 It is unclear whether Jennens had actually sent it to Handel by this date. Handel began work on the score on 22 August. See nn. 180, 181, 190, 209, 222, 223, 227, 229, 232, 234, 239 and 253.

183 In a letter from 5 November, Horace Walpole identified eight directors: 'Lord Middlesex, Lord Holderness, Mr Frederick, Lord Conway, Mr Conway, Mr Damer, Lord Brook and Mr Brand. The five last are directed by the three first; they by the first, and he by the Abbé Vanneschi, who will

chief Castrato is to be Monticelli, the chief Woman Visconti;¹⁸⁴ both of them, I suppose, your Acquaintance.

Vol. 2, no. 72, f. 2; repr. (last three sentences on 2^r), *Letters*, 21; (last five sentences) *Handbuch*, 334.

1 November 1741, Holdsworth in Rome

... When I was packing up I design'd to have found place for y^r books with M^r Pitt's; but our journey being now defer'd for so long a time, and imagining that you wou'd be willing to have y^e Operas before the winter is over, I have therefore already sent off y^r books in a box by themselves, directed to Vaillant Bookseller &c.¹⁸⁵ that you may not have the plague of going to the Customhouse your self. He is better acquainted wth those affairs than you are, and is often oblig'd to go thither on his own acc^t. The Box is mark'd C. J. and the books contain'd, are *Vindiciae Script. Canon.* 3. Vol. fol. bound.¹⁸⁶ 2 books of Baron D'Astorga's Cantatas bound. A Cantata, & a Piece of Church musick by ditto. in sheets.¹⁸⁷ Latilla's Siroè. & Jumelli's Astianatte, [...], in the[...] Several pieces by Sig^{re}. Marcello. fog^{li}. 56 1/2. in sheets.¹⁸⁸ As soon as I have the bills of Lading return'd from Leghorn I will forward them to you. I hope y^r Musick will escape the Spaniards.¹⁸⁹ Latilla's Themistocles is not yet copied, but now I have time, I will get that too, & send it wth M^r Pitt's collection, w^{ch} will not be small. As He is very musical, He may perhaps shew you some things worth copying. He began to learn on the Violoncello on his first arrival in Italy and I'm told that he plays a very bold one. W^{ch} I hope will introduce him the better to y^r acquaintance.¹⁹⁰

Vol. 2, no. 73, f. 2^r.

2 December 1741, Jennens in London

I heard with great pleasure at my arrival in Town, that Handel had set the Oratorio of Messiah; but it was some mortification to me to hear that instead of performing it here he

make a pretty sum' (Lewis, Smith and Lam, eds., *Walpole's Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann I*, 191).

184 Angelo Maria Monticelli (c.1712–?58). Italian castrato soprano. Horace Walpole reported that he was 'infinitely admired; next to Farinelli'. Caterina Visconti (fl.1729–54). According to Walpole, she and Monticelli were each paid the 'not so extravagant' sum of 1,000 guineas for the 1741–2 season. (Lewis, Smith and Lam, eds., *Walpole's Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann I*, 191).

185 Paul Vaillant had a shop in the Strand, opposite Southampton Street. His grandfather, Paul Vaillant, had fled France and set up a bookseller's shop on the same premises in 1686. Charles Henry Timperley, *A Dictionary of Printers and Printing: With the Progress of Literature, Ancient and Modern* (London, 1839), 811.

186 Cardinal Thomasius, *Vindicoe Canoniarum Scripturarum, Valgatoe Latinoe silitionis* (Blanchini), fol., vellum (Rome, 1740). (Erhardt, *Text, Musik, Theologie*, 351). Discussion of this and another of the Cardinal's works takes place over several letters. See letter of 4 May 1742 and nn. 202, 203 and 238.

187 A reference to his *Stabat mater*. See nn. 166, 172, 212, 214 and 236.

188 Holdsworth's specification of the number of folios allows for the precise identification of these pieces as the collection of cantatas (in 3 volumes) now in the Flower collection (GB-Mp MS 483 Mf61) (Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 20; Talbot, 'Jennens and Vivaldi', 70–1). See nn. 174, 213, 251 and 272.

189 A reference to the 'war of Jenkin's ear'. See n. 149.

190 A further reference to Jennens's penchant for music making with other amateurs. See nn. 180, 181, 182, 209, 222, 223, 227, 229, 232, 234, 239 and 253.

was gone into Ireland with it. However, I hope we shall hear it when he comes back.¹⁹¹ We have an expensive Opera,¹⁹² with only one good Voice, Monticelli, a good Singer without a Voice, Amorevoli;¹⁹³ & the worst Musick I ever heard.

... Mr Vaillant would have a Motto in the Title page.¹⁹⁴ Can you furnish him with one? The only one that occurs to me is Ex fumo dare Lucem Cogitat.¹⁹⁵

Vol. 2, no. 74, f. 2^r; repr. (excerpt) *Letters*, 22; (excerpt) *Handbuch*, 339.

12 January 1742, Holdsworth in Rome

... I am much pleas'd that our journey is defer'd till the weather in all probability will be more favourable. And as you are so good to express so much tenderness & concern for my health, I flatter my self that this news will not be unwellcome to you. And 'twill be an additional pleasure to you to know that in this new scheme Musick was my friend. After M^r Pitt had heard 2 or 3 recitals of the Opera, He began to be inclin'd to stay; and tho' He was sure of finding another at Venice, & perhaps a better, yet he cou'd not bear the thoughts of setting out on a journey in the middle of an Opera, & fasting 8 or 10 days from Musick. I don't doubt but you will much applaud his tast. The best voice we have here is Conti, who is much applauded; and is I think reckon'd the best Superano now in Italy. Tho', if I mistake not, He was not esteem'd very much in England.¹⁹⁶ But He may be improv'd; or else you are more nice, & not so easily pleas'd as the Italians. I am sorry to hear y^t the chief thing to be remark'd of y^r Opera is the expence of it, especially at this time.¹⁹⁷ I wish for your sake that it had prov'd

191 Handel arrived in Dublin on 18 November (*Pue's Occurrences*, vol. 38, no. 93, Tuesday 17–Saturday 21 November 1741, [4]), possibly on an invitation from the Lord Lieutenant (William Cavendish, 3rd Duke of Devonshire) (Burrows, *Handel*, 340). Handel's comment (reported by Jennens in his letter of 10 July 1741) that he intended to 'do nothing next Winter' implies that Handel may have planned his Dublin visit in early Summer 1741 and the light scoring of *Messiah* reinforces the likelihood of this (Burrows, *Handel*, 340). However, the extensive scoring of *Samson*, the draft of which was finished 29 October, suggests that Handel's plans were still uncertain by this date. Donald Burrows, *Messiah* (Cambridge, 1991), 12. Upon his arrival in London, Jennens presumably wrote to Handel requesting the inclusion of a motto in *Messiah's* wordbook. Handel's famous and unusually detailed reply of 29 December may well have been an attempt to appease his librettist (*HHB*, 341). In the following years, the setting of *Messiah* will become a point of friction between the two men (see n. 138, 153, 154 and 164).

192 The pasticcio *Alessandro in Persia*. Jennens's view appears to reflect that of the majority, as reported by Robert Price in a letter to the Earl of Haddington: 'a great many people have not liked it'. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *The Manuscripts of the Duke of Beaufort, K.G., the Earl of Donoughmore, and others* (London, 1891), 205.

193 An Italian tenor, Angelo (Maria) Amorevoli (1716–98). Jennens is perhaps referring to the singer's ill health of a month earlier, when he was reported as having a fever and therefore was unable to sing (*HHB*, 337).

194 A reference to Holdsworth's book, *Pharsalia and Philippi: Letters to C. J. Esq.*, London, 1742, a collection of letters between Holdsworth and Jennens concerning the location of the Roman civil war battles Pharsalia and Philippi. Jennens oversaw its publication and sale by bookseller Paul Vaillant.

195 *Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat* (Horace, *Ars Poetica*, V. 143). Translates as: 'He does not lavish at a blaze his fire, sudden to glare, and in a smoke to expire; But rises from a cloud of smoke to light, and pours his specious miracles to sight' (Philip Francis, 1708–73).

196 See nn. 132, 171 and 205.

197 Horace Walpole wrote on 3 March that 'there was to have been a vast elephant, but the just directors designing to give the audience the full weight of one for their money, made it so heavy that at the *prova* it broke through the stage. It was to have carried twenty soldiers with Monticelli on a throne in the middle' (Lewis, Smith and Lam, eds., *Walpole's Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann I*, 358).

a better entertainment, that you might have had something to amuse you, during Handel's absence. ...

... Notwithstanding I have submitted evr'y thing to you that relates to Philippi, yet I beg you will allow me to put a negative on the motto. I am oblig'd to you for the complement you intend me thereby, but I think 'twou'd be very imodest in me to suffer such to be publish'd. I Therefore pray put a stop to it as soon as you receive this. As for my part, I can think of none a propos. Nor do I see and necessity indeed of having any. Mons.^r Vaillant I know is so much a Frenchman that he thinks a gentleman cannot appear in publick without a feather in his Cap, but I am such a plain fellow, that I had much rather be without one; at least I wou'd by no means wear such a gaudy one, as I think wou'd give me too much the air of a Coxcomb ...

Since I rec.^{vd} your letter I have search'd the Shops for y^e 'Concordantiae Hebraicae' but can find no more than the 2 first vol. of it. I have desir'd the best bookseller in Rome to enquire for it, but he despairs of getting it, tho' t'was printed here but in the year 1621 ...

If I should happen to meet with it ['Concordantiae Hebraicae']¹⁹⁸ & the grammer before I leave this place, I will send them with Mr Pitt's books, as I shall y^r Themistocles¹⁹⁹ w^{ch} I have in my custom ...

Vol. 2, no. 75, f. 1^r.

4 February 1741/2, Jennens in London

Dear Sir,

Your last letter cam just time enough to prevent the motto being printed: for I had deliver'd your letters to Mr Vaillant with the motto in the Title-page, that he & Mr Benger the printer might make a calculation of the expenses, & they were return'd to me only for a day or two when your letter arrived very seasonably, upon the receipt of which I struck out the motto, & the next day parted with them finally in order to their being printed.²⁰⁰ After all, I see no harm in the motto. There is no more imply'd in it than you have expressly understated in the letters themselves, & more than once intimated that you have perform'd what you understood; which had been but modestly limited to the word cogitat.

And as for Motto's in general, I find that many of our best Authors make use of them. For my own part, I own my self so much a Friend to them, that whenever I scribble to the publick, I cannot resist the Temptation of adorning my Title page with any significant motto that comes into my head & seems a propos: nay, I gave Handel a couple before an Oratorio, one Greek & the other Latin; not to show my acquaintance with the two Languages, but to point out more strongly my own Sentiments express'd in some parts of the Oratorio, & to justify them by two considerable Authoritys from the Heathen Moralists.²⁰¹ If any Critick thought me a Coxcomb [1v] for this, 'tis more than I know, or care. If I am to decline my own Sense of things for fear of Censure, I must never attempt to speak or write rationally; for those who do neither will, be sure to find fault. But enough of the Motto. 'Tis struck out, & let it go.

I have receiv'd the Box, in which I find two volumes of Cardinal Thomasius publish'd by Blanchini,²⁰² which I take to be no part of his Vindiciae.²⁰³ I who buy all Books have no

198 Probably *Concordantiae Bibliorum Hebraicae* by Johann Buxtorf (1564–1629). See nn. 216 and 218.

199 See n. 112.

200 Holdsworth, *Pharsalia and Philippi: Letters to C. J. Esq.* (London, 1742).

201 The oratorio referred to is *Saul*.

202 Cardinal Thomasii, *Opera omnia* (Blanchini Veronensis), fol., vellum, 2 vols. (Rome, 1741). See nn. 186, 203 and 238.

203 See letter of 1 November 1741. See nn. 186, 202 and 238.

exception to those: but M^r Sandford of Baliol²⁰⁴ on a view of the first Tome of the *Vindiciae*, lik^d it so well, that he resolv^d to buy it; & I have given him hopes that you will procure it him, but the other two volumes he does not intend to meddle with. I suppose you may send it among M^r. Pitt^s Goods, if this finds you still at Rome.

... Handel^s Friends were very well pleas^d with Conti,²⁰⁵ but the Favourers of the opposite Opera lik^d neither him nor any other who sung for Handel; & for that very reason, because they sung for Handel. We consider^d him as a rising Genius, too young at that time for Perfection, but promising an equality with the first Singers in Europe. And by the account you, as well as others give of him, I find we were not mistaken. [2r]

[2v] ... You have furnish^d me with a motto from Horace I think a very pretty one,²⁰⁶ & if you had not declar^d against all mottos, I might perhaps have prefer^d it to your Book. But you are so fearful of the Criticks! If I had not been in Fear of a more formidable enemy, I would have given you a specimen of my Courage in facing them, & led up the Van with you most amicably. As it is, I have done what I could: I make no secret of the person the letters were writ to: indeed how should I? For I own I take a pride in the publication of it, & am determin^d that all the world should observe, (I mean all who know anything of me) how punctually I practice my own [...] I have therefore made my Printer and Bookbinder so acquainted with it, without any injunction of secrecy ...

[3r] Perhaps some will say the Argument is forc^d & unnatural, & censure me as injudicious (or something grosser) for approving it & desiring it might be publish^d: this is nothing; I expect it of course; I have stood this kind of Fire already, & came off unhurt. A little piece I wrote at M^r. Handel^s request to be subjoyn^d to Milton^s *Allegro & Penseroso*,²⁰⁷ to which He gave the Name of *Il Moderato*, & which united those two independent Poems in one Moral Design, met with smart censures from I don^t know who. I overheard one in the Theatre saying it was *Moderato* indeed, & the Wits at Tom^s Coffee-house²⁰⁸ honour^d it with the Name of *Moderatissimo*. But the Opinion of many others, who signify^d their approbation of it in Print as well as in Conversation, together with the account M^r. Handel sends me of it^s Reception in Ireland,²⁰⁹ have made me ample amends for those random expressions of Contempt, if I wanted any amends; but indeed they make no impression; I satisfy my self with condemning them in my turn, I look upon the whole herd of vulgar Criticks as *Servum Pecus*, & he who stands in Awe of them is *Servus* [3v] *Servorum* (not *Dei*, but) *Deae*, of a certain Goddess you are not acquainted with, but may find her with a crowd of *Votaries* in the *Dunciad*.²¹⁰

... By what I have seen of the Italian Opera's you sent me,²¹¹ they seem to be of the usual stamp, very defective both in Judgement & Invention, contriv^d without Art, & executed

204 Joseph Sanford (1691–1774). An antiquarian and bibliophile, Sanford entered Exeter college in 1709, graduating in 1712 before entering Balliol College as a commoner. Elected a fellow in 1715, he became a priest in 1719 and was in residence for nearly 60 years.

205 The 4th Earl of Shaftesbury wrote on 8 May 1736: 'The new singer Conti I have heard twice & will affirm he is all things consider^d the best singer I ever heard & they say in the world' (Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*, 17). See nn. 132, 171 and 196.

206 No trace exists of the motto.

207 *L'Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato*. First performed 27 February 1740. Jennens arranged Milton's odes and composed the libretto for the third part.

208 Opened around 1720, Tom King's Coffee House was situated in Birchin Lane, Covent Garden. The coffee house was notorious as the meeting place of whores and their clients (many of whom were gentlemen and aristocrats), and frequently came under attack from moral campaigners.

209 See nn. 180, 181, 182, 190, 222, 223, 227, 229, 232, 234, 239 and 253.

210 The phrase 'imitatores, servum pecus' ('Ye imitators; a servile herd') is from Horace's 'First Epistle'. Jennens here describes critics as servants of the votaries of goddess Dulness, whom Alexander Pope immortalized in his influential poem *The Dunciad* (1728).

211 A reference to Latilla's and Jommelli's operas *Il Siroe* and *Astianatte*. See nn. 156, 178 and 188.

without Spirit; the Harmony thin; the Airs dry & inexpressive, yet capricious; passages frequently repeated, tho' tiresome at the first hearing; & all this stuff intermix^d with such long tedious Recitative, that I think I could not bear to sit out one of the Italian Operas, or if I did, it must be for Penance, not for Entertainment. I have made so many Trials of their most celebrated pieces, & with such ill success, that I believe I shall never give you any more trouble on that score. The Baron d' Astorga is so much superior to the Opera-makers, & indeed so good a composer, that I wish I had more of him. I think you said he dealt chiefly in Church-Musick, of which you sent me only the Stabat Mater:²¹² the Subject is a melancholy one, but does he never set Thanksgivings? I would fain see his Style in a more chearfull piece of Devotion, & rather in the Vulgate Psalms than in such rhyming Verses as these; to say no more.

[4v] ...

[postscript:]

I doubt my Letter has tir^d you as much as an Italian Opera would me. By many interruptions it is now Feb. 8.

Vol. 2, no. 77, ff. 1, 3, 4^v; repr. ('I gave Handel ... or care.' 'A little piece ... Moderatissimo.') *Letters*, 22; (first paragraph except last three sentences, third paragraph, 'A little piece ... Moderatissimo.') *Handbuch*, 344.

4 May 1742, Holdsworth in Venice

... Your letter came time enough for me to pack up the first Vol. of the *Vindiciae* among M^r Pitt^s books for y^r friend M^r Sandford. The box is sent by Sea. So He must run the risque of falling into the hands of the Privateers. My sending you the 2 Volumes of Card^l. Thomasius wth Blanchini^s *Vindiciae*, was an imposition of the Bookseller, who assur'd me when I bought the first Vol. that the rest was coming out. Upon w^{ch} I order'd him to send it bound like the other, as soon as publish'd. And did not discover the mistake, till after I had paid for them, & was packing them up, when 'twas too late to return them. However I am glad you have no exception to them. The other part of the *Vindiciae* is not yet publish'd, but the Bookseller assur'd me when I was last there that 'tis in the Press. But I don't give much credit to a man who has once trick'd me.

I am sorry to hear the Italian Operas I sent you gave you so little pleasure. and I am the more concern'd, because besides Latilla^s Themistocles, w^{ch} you order'd, I had of my own head made a large purchase of Operas, Oratorios, Cantatas, & what not, for you, before I receiv'd y^r letter. In short I have bought for you above 150^l weight of musick, enough to fill a large box, w^{ch} I have order'd to be sent wth M^r Pitt^s things. I mention the w^g^{ht}, because as you know I am perfectly ignorant of Musick, I thought it the best way to buy it as some people do Libraries by the pound, and take my chance whether it prov'd good or bad. All that I can say of it is that 'tis part of Cardinal Ottoboni^s Collection; and most of it by celebrated hands, such as Scarlatti, Pollaroli, Mancini, Bencini, and Marcello.²¹³ And

212 See nn. 166, 172, 187, 214 and 236.

213 Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (1667–1740). A prolific patron of the arts, his collections were sold upon his death, probably to settle his large debts. Horace Walpole (1717–97) mentions the sale of Ottoboni's collection in a letter of 7 May 1740, and so Holdsworth probably acquired the music second hand (Talbot, 'Jennens and Vivaldi', 73–4). Thanks to the extensive work of Michael Talbot, John Roberts and Paul Everett, much of the content of Ottoboni's collection, as purchased by Holdsworth, is now known. Everett points out the difficulties in differentiating Scarlatti's Ottobonian works from his works for other Roman patrons but has traced Jennens's ownership of several Scarlatti works (other than the three operas already mentioned). The Scarlatti works referred to here may therefore have

the purchase not very great; the whole amounting not to above 40 Shillings, besides the expences of sending it home, so that in case it shou'd prove as bad as the rest you have from hence 'twill be almost worth the money for y^e Housekepper to put under pyes. And one comfort is, that shou'd it [1v] fall into the hands of the Spaniards, the loss wou'd not be very deplorable. Since Baron D'Astorga is one of your favourites I am sorry his name was not amongst the others. But his compositions are scarce at Rome, and notwithstanding I enquir'd often for him, I never cou'd meet with any more of his pieces than those I sent you.²¹⁴ I am told that Conti often talks with pleasure of returning again to England; w^{ch} I believe wou'd not be disagreeable to you & some of your friends. ...

Vol. 2, no. 78, f. 1.

14 May 1742, Jennens in Gopsall

Your Ottobonian Collection will be welcome. The Cardinal was once a Patron of Handel's, & I have one or two Pieces compos'd by Handel for his Eminence.²¹⁵ This is some argument to me of Tast[e]. Besides, two of those you mention, Scarlatti & Marcello, are good Composers to my Knowledge: the rest I know not, but hope the best of 'em.

... Since I wrote last Mr Gordon has got the Hebrew Concordance from Paris,²¹⁶ but wou'd still be obliged to you for the Grammer.

included four oratorios (*Cain overo Il primo omicidio*, *Il martirio di S Cecilia* and *La Giuditta*, first and second versions), the Marian antiphon *Salve Regina*, and several cantatas (*Sciolta da freddi amplessi*, *Tutto acceso d'amore*, *Vola*, *Cupido*, *Pene amorose per Lontananza* and *Ardo, ardo d'amore*). *Salve Regina* and *Sciolta da freddi amplessi* are held by GB-Cfm MU.MS.225B. *Tutto acceso d'amore* is held by GB-Cfm MU.MS.230 and *Vola Cupido* by GB-Cfm MU.MS.655 (Roberts, 'Aylesford Collection', 67, 81). The remaining two cantatas are now in Manchester (items 4 and 11, GB-Mp MS Q544 Bk51) (Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 33–4). Everett is able to identify with more certainty the works of the other composers listed above and Roberts has done much to trace those not currently held in Manchester (Roberts, 'Aylesford Collection', 80). Everett identifies Pollarolo's works as: operas *Alfonso primo*, *Ottone* (both US-SFsc) and *Giulio Cesare* (US-Wc M1500.P74G4), oratorios *Sansone* (GB-Mp MS F530 Ps41) and *Saule indemoniato indemoniatio* (GB-Mp MS F530 Ps44), and *Pastorale a tre voci* (GB-Mp MS 580 Ps41). Mancini's *Cantata a voce solo* 'Son così, così geloso' is also in the Flower collection (item 10, GB-Mp MS Q544 Bk51) as are Bencini's oratorios, *Il sacrificio d'Abramo* (GB-Mp MS 580 Bk51 [i]), *La Jezabel* (GB-Mp MS 580 Bk51 [ii]), and the cantatas *Li due volubili* (parts: GB-Mp MS 480 Bk51; score in the private collection of M. Talbot) and 'Oh Fileno crudel' (item 7, GB-Mp MS Q544 Bk51), (Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 30–1). Everett has also traced connections to Ottoboni from several composers of the remaining Italian music known to have belonged to Jennens: T. Albinoni, G. Boni, G. Bononcini, C. Cesarini, S. de Luca, T. B. Gaffi, F. C. Lanciani, B. Pasquini and A. Stradella. For further details see Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 35–6. In addition to the vocal works, Talbot and Everett have argued successfully that a portion of the collection constituted a large amount of instrumental music, contained in 14 partbooks (13 of which are part of the Flower collection in Manchester, GB-Mp MS 580 Ct51, and one of which is part of the Royal Music Library, London, GB-Lbl RM.22.c.28). These are in addition to the volume of 12 Vivaldi sonatas discovered by Talbot in 1973 (Talbot, 'Vivaldi's "Manchester" Sonatas', 22–7). Everett has traced the provenance of the 95 items in the Manchester volumes to six areas (with the exception of four items). Forty-three items are of Roman provenance, 15 date from the 1720s and include works by Corelli and Giuseppe Valentini, two other groups are Vivaldi concerti (remarkable for their unique texts), 11 are of Bolognese extraction and the remaining seven probably date from 1724–6, Milan (Everett, 'Roman Concerto Repertory', 67–8). See nn. 174, 188, 215, 251 and 272.

214 See nn. 166, 172, 187, 212, 236.

215 Burrows suggests that during Handel's time in Italy, from January to mid-October, 1707, the *Sonata a 5* (for violin and orchestra, HWV 288) and *Ero e Leandro* (HWV 150) may have been composed under Ottoboni's patronage, but there is no trace of either work in Jennens's collection. See n. 213.

216 See nn. 198 and 218.

Vol. 2, no. 79, f. 1^r; repr. (except last sentence) *Handbuch*, 350.

24 June 1742, Holdsworth in London

... We have no news yet of M^r Pitt^s things w^{ch} was sent from Legorn. amongst w^{ch} is y^e box of Musick of Card^l. Ottoboni^s Collection w^{ch} I mention'd to you before. In the same box is Latilla^s Themistocles, & the Vatican Virgil.²¹⁷ Besides w^{ch} there is amongst M^r Pitt^s books, M^r Sandford^s Vindiciae. ...

... There is likewise coming from Venice Concord. Heb.²¹⁸

... [postscript] I have bought a Drawing of a person for whom you have a great respect w^{ch} I have left with y^r Uncle C. for you.²¹⁹

Vol. 2, no. 80, f. 2^r.

17 July 1742, Holdsworth in London

... [postscript] M^r Pitt has advice y^t his things are put on board the Jannet. Capⁿ. Rob^t. Macklish from Leghorn.²²⁰

Vol. 2, no. 82, f. 2^v.

10 September [‘7^{ber}.’] 1742, Holdsworth in London (at ‘M^{rs} Drake’s²²¹ in Downing Street Westminster’)

... I suppose you have heard of M^r Handel^s return to London,²²² w^{ch} wou’d have been great joy to you, if you did not at y^e same time hear that He is to return again to Ireland for y^e winter. ...

217 Vergilius Vaticanus. Fragments of Virgil’s *Aeneid* and *Georgics* dating from c. 400. Jennens owned a print. Giovanni Gaetano Botteri, ed., *Antiquissimi Virgiliani codicis fragmenta et picturae ex bibliotheca Vaticana ad priscas imaginum formas a P. Sancte Bartholi incisae* (Rome, 1741), fol. British Library, Cup.652.dd.5 (Erhardt, *Text, Musik, Theologie*, 372).

218 Holdsworth must have purchased Concordantiae Hebraicae before receiving Jennens’s note of 14 May 1742. However, a note scribbled by Holdsworth onto the back of a letter from Jennens, dated 28 June, 1742 shows him to have found someone to have relieved Jennens of the extra copy: ‘Dr Ferrara willing to take the Concord. Heb. Off his hands, either paying [...] or if you please giving you y^t value in other books, w^{ch} you may pick out of his Library.’ See nn. 198 and 216.

219 Most likely to have been a portrait of the Young Pretender. ‘Uncle C.’ is Jennens’s uncle Cotton. See n. 22

220 Leghorn is now more commonly known by its Italian name, Livorno. The ‘Happy Jannet’ made regular trips from Livorno, carrying cargoes mainly of silk and cotton. Captain Macklish was buried in Dunbar on 24 July 1763.

221 The mother of a prospective pupil. In a letter of 24 June 1742, Holdsworth mentions a pupil of this name to whom Jennens’s uncle Cotton has recommended him. The pupil was William Drake (1723–96), of the Tyrwhitt Drake family whose ancestral home is Shardeloes, on the outskirts of Amersham, Buckinghamshire.

222 Handel left Dublin on 13 August. Horatio Townsend, *An Account of the Visit of Handel to Dublin* (Dublin, 1852); [Vaillant], *Catalogus Librorum apud Paulum Vaillant, Bibliopolam, Londini venales protestantium: Or, A Catalogue of Books in most Languages and Faculties, sold by Paul Vaillant, Bookseller, in the Strand*. (London, 1745), 101. See nn. 180, 181, 182, 190, 209, 223, 227, 229, 232, 234, 239 and 253.

Vol. 2, no. 83, f. 2^r.

29 October 1742, Jennens in Gopsall

... You was misinform^d about M^r. Handel, who does not return to Ireland till next Winter;²²³ so that I hope to have some very agreeable Entertainments from him this Season. His Messiah by all accounts is his Masterpiece.

Vol. 2, no. 84, f. 1^v; repr. *Letters*, 22; *Handbuch*, 354.

4 December 1742, Holdsworth in Angers

... I am glad to hear y^t I was misinform^d about M^r Handel; since He is to stay in London I need not fear y^r spending y^r winter to y^r satisfaction. The agreeable entertainments He will give you, will I hope divert you from giving y^r self the trouble of a 2^d edition of Philippi, especially before the first is half sold.²²⁴ ... I hope your Musick books & all the others will be found right according to the Catalogue. I am satisfied y^t you have not any expectation of the Musick proving good, and therefore cannot be much disappointed; but I hope you will find some of it at least worth 3^d p^r pound, w^{ch} is not much more than the price of wast paper. Many of the authors, as I have been inform^d, were celebrated amongst the Italians, therefore pray be merciful, and don't put such an affront upon Italy as to condemn them all to the flames.

Vol. 2, no. 85, f. 1^r.

17 January 1742/3, Jennens in London

Dear Sir,

I came not to Town till the last day of the old year, &, had it not been for your Business, should have come up even then with reluctance, having in my own mind fix^d the beginning of February for my Journey, about a fortnight before the time of Handel^s Oratorios.²²⁵ ... [1v]
[2r]

I told you before that one of the Composers in my Box was good, I mean Scarlatti: & I shall not condemn the rest without a fair Trial. Handel has borrow^d a dozen of the Pieces, & I dare say I shall catch him stealing from them; as I have formerly, both from Scarlatti & Vinci.²²⁶ He has compos^d an exceeding fine Oratorio, being an alteration of Milton^s Samson Agonistes, with which he is to begin Lent. His Messiah has disappointed me, being set in great hast,

223 See Handel's letter of 9 September 1742 (*HHB*, 253). See nn. 180, 181, 182, 190, 209, 222, 227, 229, 232, 234, 239 and 253.

224 Jennens had been active in persuading Holdsworth to publish his letters on the subject of the location of the Philippi. *Pharsalia and Philippi: Letters to C. J. Esq.* (London, 1742); Smith, 'Achievements', 165.

225 Handel's season began on 18 February with *Samson*. *The Daily Advertiser*, no. 3771, Friday 18 February 1743, [1].

226 Roberts has documented in great detail Handel's borrowings from both Vinci and Scarlatti (see Roberts, 'Didone abbandonata', and 'Italian Opera Manuscripts'). Handel borrowed material from Scarlatti's operas *Dafni*, *Griselda* and *Attilio Regolo*, and produced pasticcio versions of Vinci's operas *Didone abbandonata* and *Artaserse* (under the titles *Didone* and *Arbace*), using Jennens's scores of each these works (Roberts, 'Italian Opera Manuscripts', 161; Markstrom, *Leonardo Vinci*, 147).

tho' he said he would be a year about it, & make it the best of all his Compositions. I shall put no more Sacred Words into his hands, to be thus abus'd.²²⁷

... I am resolv'd to have no more Operas or Cantatas from Italy, but if you can meet with any more of Astorga's church Musick, or Marcello's, or any that is much esteem'd, I shall be oblig'd to you for them. ...

Vol. 2, no. 86, ff. 1^r, 2^r; second paragraph repr. *Letters*, 23; *Handbuch*, 356.

16 February 1743, Holdsworth in Angers

I have wrote to M^r Pitt by this post, and thank'd him for the 2 Drawings He gave you; and for sending your Books and box of Musick, tho' the latter perhaps may not be worth thanks. However 'tis some credit to y^r box that Handel borrows some of the pieces, and if He borrows from them, that will be still doing them more honour.

... I am sorry to hear y^r friend Handel is such a Jew.²²⁸ His negligence, to say no worse, has been a great disappointment to others as well as y^r self, for I hear there was great expectation of his composition. I hope the words, tho' murther'd, are still to be seen, and y^t I shall have that pleasure when I return. And as I don't understand the musick I shall be better off than the rest of y^e world.

Vol. 2, no. 87, f. 1^v; second paragraph repr. *Letters*, 23; *Handbuch*, 356–7.

21 February 1742/3, Jennens in London

... I am sorry I mention'd my Italian Musick to Handel, for I don't like to have him borrow from them who has so much a better fund of his own. As to the Messiah, 'tis still in his power by retouching the weak parts to make it fit for a publick performance; & I have said a great deal to him on the Subject; but he is so lazy & so obstinate, that I much doubt the Effect. I have a copy, as it was printed in Ireland, full of Bulls; & if he does not print a correct one here, I shall do it my Self, & perhaps tell him a piece of my mind by way of Preface.²²⁹ I am a little out of humour, as you may perceive, & want to vent my Spleen for ease. What adds to my chagrin is, that if he makes his Oratorio ever so perfect, there is a clamour about Town,²³⁰ said to arise from the

227 Jennens cannot have heard *Messiah* by this time, for it was not performed in London until 23 March 1743. He may have obtained a score and played through it, but his comments suggest that his disappointment stemmed mainly from Handel's apparently 'light' treatment of the libretto (see letter of 21 February 1743). He may also have been annoyed by Handel's decision to open the Lent season of 1743 with *Samson* (libretto by Newburgh Hamilton). See nn. 180, 181, 182, 190, 209, 222, 223, 229, 232, 234, 239 and 253.

228 Holdsworth uses this traditional slanderous perception of Jews (as untrustworthy money-lenders and general profiteers) to illustrate Handel's laziness and negligence of Jennens's libretto for *Messiah*.
229 There are, in fact, few errors in the Dublin wordbook. However, a new wordbook was produced for the London performance of 1743, the most striking difference being that it is divided into 'scenes' according to the topic of the text. See nn. 180, 181, 182, 190, 209, 222, 223, 227, 232, 234, 239 and 253.

230 *Messiah* appears to have been received without criticism in Dublin (especially because it was designated for a charitable performance), but it attracted some controversy ahead of its first performance in London, resulting in its being advertised under the title 'A New Sacred Oratorio' (*The Daily Advertiser* and *The London Daily Post*). On 19 March a letter was published in *The Universal Spectator*, questioning at some length the propriety of performing an 'Act of Religion' in the 'Playhouse' (HHB, 359–60). These reactions were insufficient to hurt Handel's financial success, however, as his second subscription had already been closed. On 3 March, Horace Walpole reported that 'The oratorios thrive abundantly' (*Walpole's Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann II*, 186), and by 20 March, it was rumoured that 'Mr Handle will get at least £2,000 by these subscriptions' (Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*, 156).

B[isho]^{ps},²³¹ against performing it. This may occasion some enlargement of the Preface. ...
[2r] ...

[postscript:]

Last Friday Handel perform^d his *Samson*, a most exquisite Entertainment, which tho' I heard with infinite Pleasure, yet it increas^d my resentment for his neglect of the Messiah.²³² You do him too much Honour to call him a Jew! a Jew would have paid more respect to the Prophets. The Name of Heathen will suit him better. yet a sensible Heathen would not have prefer^d the Nonsense, foisted by one Hamilton into Milton^s *Samson Agonistes*, to the sublime Sentiments & expressions of Isaiah & David, of the Apostles & Evangelists; & of Jesus Christ.

Vol. 2, no. 88, ff. 1^v–2^r; repr. *Letters*, 23; *Handbuch*, 357.

16 March 1743, Holdsworth in Angers

As soon as I get to Italy, where I hope to be by Midsummer, I shall remember your instructions, about Astorga^s or Marcello^s Church Musick. But for fear of mistakes I shou^d be glad to know w^t you have of that sort already, that I may not blunder & send you Duplicates, as for Operas & Cantatas I am very safe, I shall meddle with none. If I mistake not M^f Sandford has only one Vol. of Blanchini. and you 3. or rather one of Blanchini and 2 by another author,²³³ w^{ch} I was impos^d upon, and took as his; for more security I shall be glad to know particularly the titles of what you have, that I may not send you the same again; for you find by experience that I can blunder.

I am not at all surpris^d at the clamour rais^d against Messiah, since I remember a R[igh]^t. R.[everend] took offence at Exodus.²³⁴ I hope this will not engage you in a Quarrel with the bench.²³⁵ They are a terrible body. ...

231 Handel's problems with ecclesiastical authority date back to 1732, when Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, objected to the participation of the Chapel Royal boys in the production of the revised *Esther* at the King's Theatre. Donald Burrows, *Handel and the English Chapel Royal* (Oxford, 2005), 294–6.

232 *Samson* was performed every night for an advertised six-performance subscription beginning on 18 February 1743 and was so successful that Handel devoted three performances of his second six-performance subscription to the work. Two performances of this subscription were devoted to *Messiah* and the other was a single performance of a revised *L'Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato* (Burrows, *Handel*, 354). See nn. 180, 181, 182, 190, 209, 222, 223, 227, 229, 234, 239 and 253.

233 See letters of 4 February 1741/2, 4 May 1742 and 24 March 1742/3.

234 Smith suggests that the clergy may have objected to the use of Scripture in the theatre. Roberts believes there to have been a general public anathema to the introduction of sacred themes in a place of such profanity as the theatre, pointing out that the recitative 'He that dwelleth' and ensuing aria 'Thou shalt break them' would commonly have been interpreted as a warning to those who would 'oppose Christ's Gospel'. John H. Roberts, 'Christ of the Playhouse: Indirect Narrative in Handel's *Messiah*', *Händel-Jahrbuch*, 55 (2009), 113 and 116. In fact, biblical drama had ceased to be performed on the London stage in the early seventeenth century, with the (Puritan-influenced) belief that 'greater humanization of biblical figures detracted from their sanctity'. Murray Roston, *Biblical Drama in England; From the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London, 1968), 181. However, allegory was a powerful and recognized tool of most art forms and discussions around another 'scripture collection', *Israel in Egypt*, had centred not only on issues of biblical drama but also on its potential political allegory, namely the possibility of a Jacobite interpretation of the text. Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge, 1995), 288–91, *HHB*, 308). See nn. 180, 181, 182, 190, 209, 222, 223, 227, 229, 232, 239 and 253.

235 A bench of Bishops, i.e., the bishops of the Church of England as members of the House of Lords (where they sit on a particular 'bench' to distinguish them from supporters of the Government).

Vol. 2, no. 89, f. 1^v; last paragraph excerpted in Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 422, n.16.

24 March 1742/3, Jennens in London

I have no Italian Church Musick but Astorga^s Stabat Mater.²³⁶ M^r. Sanford²³⁷ & I have each the first volume (tome it is call^d) of Blanchini^s Vindiciae Scripturarum Canoniarum, which was all that was publish^d when you was last at Rome. We both desire as many volumes of the same work as have been publish^d since. M^r. Sanford sets a great value upon it, & says it will be of great service to the Christian Religion. I have the first part in two Tomes of the Works of Cardinal Thomasius publish^d by the same Blanchini: these M^r. Sanford would have; & if more volumes have been publish^d, you may buy them for both of us.²³⁸

Messiah was perform^d last night, & will be again to morrow, notwithstanding the clamour rais^d against it, which has only occasion^d it's being advertis^d without it^s Name;²³⁹ a Farce, which gives me as much offence as any thing relating to the performance can give the B^s. & other squeamish People.²⁴⁰ 'Tis, after all, in the main, a fine Composition, notwithstanding some weak parts, which he was too idle & too obstinate [2v] to retouch, tho' I us^d great importunity to perswade him to it. He & his Toad-eater Smith²⁴¹ did all they could to murder the Words in print; but I hope I have restor^d them to Life, not without much difficulty. I am,

Dear S^r.,

Your most Affectionate
Friend & Serv^t.

C. Jennens.

Vol. 2, no. 90, f. 2; second paragraph repr. *Letters*, 24; *Handbuch*, 360–1.

29 April 1743, Jennens in Gopsall

M^r. Crynes,²⁴² having heard, I suppose, by M^r. Sandford of Blanchini^s Books, & by I know not who of my Vatican Virgil, sent me a message by Wat Powel²⁴³ when he came up to the Oratorio, & made him repeat it afterwards [1v] in a Letter, by which he begs the favour of you

236 See nn. 166, 172, 187, 212 and 214.

237 Jennens's tutor at Balliol, Joseph Sanford, was only a few years older than Jennens. Ruth Smith, *Charles Jennens: The Man Behind Handel's Messiah* (London, 2012), 7.

238 See nn. 186, 202 and 203.

239 See nn. 180, 181, 182, 190, 209, 222, 223, 227, 229, 232, 234 and 253.

240 The letter of 19 March in the *Universal Spectator* was answered on 31 March with a stanza appended to the advertisement of Handel's oratorio in the *The Daily Advertiser*: 'Cease, Zealots, cease to blame these Heav'nly Lays, / For Seraphs fit to sing Messiah's Praise! [...]' (no. 3806, Thursday 31 March 1743, [2]). This, in turn, prompted a response by the original letter's author in *The Universal Spectator, and Weekly Journal* (no. 758, Saturday 16 April 1743, [1]).

241 Handel's copyist, John Christopher Smith (senior). See letter of 21 February 1742/3. In early summer, he would be involved in efforts to reconcile Handel with Middlesex and compose operas for the latter's company the following season; see Smith's long letter of 28 July in Betty Matthews, 'Unpublished Letters Concerning Handel', *Music & Letters*, 40 (1959), 263–4.

242 Nathaniel Crynes (1686–1745). A book collector, Fellow of St John's College, Oxford, and Superior Bedel of Arts (1716). He bequeathed his collection of MSS (legal, biblical, philosophical, theological and literary) to the Bodleian in 1745.

243 See nn. 114, 147, 150 and 243.

to buy him the *Vindiciae*, Card. Thomasius, & the Virgil; at the same time desiring his humble Service to you. ...

I hear Handel has a return of his Paralytick Disorder, which affects his Head & Speech.²⁴⁴ He talks of spending a year abroad, so that we are to expect no Musick next year; & since [2r] the Town has lost it^s only Charm, I'll stay in the Country as long as ever I can. I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most Affectionate
Friend & Serv^t.

C. Jennens.

Vol. 2, no. 91, ff. 1^r–2^r; second paragraph repr. *Letters*, 24; *Handbuch*, 362–3.

15 September 1743, Jennens in Gopsall

... since you have a mind to pay me, you may only let me choose my coin: you shall pay me in notes upon Virgil ... he is not without some faults, of which obscurity is one. But whatever becomes of Virgil, the Bible is not affected by the same objections ... our maker had a right to speak to us in what language he pleased, & to humble our pride with things above our understanding, but I think our Fellow Creatures right to speak to us so as that we may understand them and that with ease ...²⁴⁵

I hear Handel is perfectly recover^d, & has compos^d a new *Te Deum* & a new Anthem against the return of his Master from Germany.²⁴⁶ I don^t yet despair of making him retouch the *Messiah*, at least he shall suffer for his negligence; nay I am inform^d that he has suffer^d, for he told L^d. Guernsey, that a letter I wrote him about it contributed to the bringing of his last illness upon him;²⁴⁷ & it is reported that being a little delirious with a Fever, he said he should be damn^d for preferring Dagon (a Gentleman he was very complaisant to in the Oratorio of *Samson*) before the *Messiah*.²⁴⁸ This shews that I gall^d him: but I have not done with him yet.

244 The *Daily Advertiser* reported on 11 April 1743, that 'Mr Handel, who has been dangerously ill, is now recover^d.' On 4 May, Horace Walpole wrote that 'Handel has had a palsy and can't compose' (Lewis, Smith and Lam, eds., *Walpole's Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann II*, 225), and when Thomas Harris met the composer in the park in mid-June he found his 'head' to be not 'so clear as I could wish it to be' (Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*, 163). See n. 249. There is no evidence that he went abroad and he must have recovered by mid-summer 1743, for between June and September he composed *Semele*, *Joseph and his Brethren* and the *Dettingen Te Deum* and *Dettingen Anthem* 'The King Shall Rejoice' (HWV 283, 265) (Burrows, *Handel*, 359).

245 Jennens's complaint about the obscurity of Virgil is extended also to Pope and his comments on the whole reveal his championing of the Bible as a text which was not above the understanding of the average person (and perhaps which should therefore be read more often).

246 The *Dettingen Te Deum* and *Dettingen Anthem* were composed in 1743 and first performed in a service in the Chapel Royal at St James's Palace, on the morning of 27 November. The date on the first folio of the *Te Deum* autograph (R.M.20.h.6) shows that Handel began composing the work on 17 July 1743, the same day as a prayer of thanksgiving for the victory of the king's forces and safe deliverance of the king at the battle of Dettingen was read at churches throughout Britain.

247 It should also be noted that at this period Handel was under heavy pressure to compose operas for Middlesex's company (Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*, 167–8; Betty Matthews, 'Unpublished Letters concerning Handel', *Music & Letters*, 40 (1959), 263–4).

248 Dagon was the god of the Philistines whose temple was destroyed by Samson: 'the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon' (*Judges* 16: 23–31). Presumably this is what Jennens is referring to when he says (in a tone of sarcastic understatement) that Handel was 'complaisant' towards Dagon. However, Handel was probably referring to his intention to place *Samson* (rather than *Messiah*) as the showpiece of his 1743 season, and Jennens obviously interprets this (as it appears to have been intended) as a slight from the composer.

Vol. 2, no. 92, f. 3^v; repr. *Letters*, 24; *Handbuch*, 365.

28 October 1743, Holdsworth in Florence

... But if you cannot relish Bath 'twou'd be better I shou'd think to take a lodging somewhere near London, so that you may go backward & forward, & change the scene as you think proper, rather than be buried in Leicestershire for y^e whole winter. You don't delight in any country diversions, and in the depth of winter, if I am not much mistaken, you cannot visit your neighbours, without running the risque of being buried in mud. Pardon my speaking so freely of Leicestershire; but in truth I am angry with it. You have staid too long there already; It has had an ill effect upon you, and made you quarrel with your best friends, Virgil & Handel. You have contributed, by y^r. own confession, to give poor Handel a fever,²⁴⁹ and now He is pretty well recover'd, you seem resolv'd to attack him [1v] again; for you say you have not yet done with him. This is really ungenerous, & not like M^r Jennens. Pray be merciful; and don't you turn Samson, & use him like a Philistine.²⁵⁰ ... [2r] ...

Since you are in earnest about N. Crynes^s books I will take care to buy what you have orderd. I have purchas'd for you Si^{re}. Marcello^s Psalms,²⁵¹ y^t is, all that are printed, w^{ch} are y^e first 35 Psalms, making 6 volumes in fol. 'Tis, I find, a work much esteem'd, and I believe I met with them cheap, having paid not above a Guinea & half. The friend who inform'd me y^t there were some of Astorga^s compositions to be met with here is dead, and I can hear of none but Cantatas, w^{ch} you forbid me to buy.

Vol. 2, no. 93, ff. 1^r–2^r; repr. (except first two sentences and last paragraph) *Letters*, 25; *Handbuch*, 366.

5 December 1743, Jennens in Gopsall

... Winter is come, & does not affect me, nor is likely to do it, till I come into the Air of London, where I expect to be shook with coughs & chock^d with catarrhs, as usual. However, as I shall certainly stay in the Country till the Month of January is over, I am not without some hopes that the severity of the Winter may be in some measure abated, & I may bear the Town Air better than formerly. If not, I shall make hast back to my native Dirt, & Handel himself shall not drag me up again. ... It is not L^{ie}.shire that has made me quarrel with Handel, but his own Folly, (to say no worse,) if that can be call^d a quarrel, where I only tell him the Truth; & he knows it to be Truth, yet is so obstinate, he will not submit to it.²⁵²

Vol. 2, no. 94, f. 1^v.

249 See n. 244.

250 An admonition to Jennens (as Samson) not to abuse Handel as Samson abused the Philistines by pulling down their temple on top of them.

251 Probably a reference to *Estro poetico-armonico: parafrasi sopra li prima [e secondi] venticinque salmi (vernacular texts by G. A. Giustini)*, 8 vols. (Venice, 1724–6). As Everett points out, all eight volumes (psalms 1–50) had been printed by 1726 and so Holdsworth appears slightly misinformed (Everett, *Manchester Concerto Partbooks*, 25). The six volumes did not feature in the 1918 Sotheby's sale and no trace of them has hitherto been found. See nn. 174, 188, 213 and 272.

252 A further reference to Jennens's quarrel with Handel over *Messiah*.

8 February 1744, Holdsworth in Rome

... I assure you I had not quarrel to y^r County, except on y^r account, as I fear'd it might detain you there too long to y^e prejudice of y^r health, and deprive y^r friends in other places of their share of the pleasure of y^r company. Since I find it agrees with you, and y^t you can be in as good spirits there as at an Opera, I am perfectly reconcil'd to it, and if you please will allow it to be as good a County as any in England; but I hope still y^t you will not insist upon my saying 'tis the cleanest. ...

Vol. 2, no. 95, f. 1^r.

7 May 1744, Jennens in London

Handel has promis'^d to revise the Oratorio of Messiah,²⁵³ & He & I are very good Friends again. The reason is, he has lately lost his Poet Miller,²⁵⁴ & wants to set me at work for him again. Religion & Morality, Gratitude, Good Nature & Good Sense had been better Principles of Action than this single point of Interest; but I must take him as I find him, & make the best use I can of him. ...

Vol. 2, no. 96, f. 1^v; repr. (first two sentences) *Handbuch*, 376.

26 September 1744, Jennens in Gopsall

Dear Sir,

I have been prevail'^d with once more to expose my self to the Criticks, to oblige the Man [Handel] who made me but a scurvy return for former obligations: the truth is, I had a farther view in it; but if he does not mend his manners, I am resolv'^d to have no more to do with him. But the reason of my mentioning this was to excuse my delay of answering your Letter dated almost 4 months ago. For my Muse is such a Jade,²⁵⁵ & Handel hurry'^d her so, that I could not find time for writing Letters. Our Operas are at an end, & He has taken the Opera House to perform Oratorios in this next Season.²⁵⁶ In your Letter of May 16 you suppose him in Ireland, where indeed he met with Encouragement, but has had so much better since in England, that I believe he has had no inclination yet to go into Ireland again.

... [1v]

We have lately lost the famous Pope;²⁵⁷ who has left all his M^{ss}. to L^d. Bolingbroke,²⁵⁸ to publish or suppress as he shall think proper. Not long after follow'^d his Corrector Theobald; whom Pope depos'^d last year from his Duncical Kingdom, & exalted Cibber the Laureate in his Room.²⁵⁹ The World will find out some consideration to alleviate their Sorrow for these two

253 Surviving letters from 9 June (1744) onwards indicate a frequent discussion and exchange of ideas between the two men regarding not only the new collaboration (*Belshazzar*, 1744) but also *Messiah*, presumably in preparation for the 1745 revival of the latter work. See nn. 180, 181, 182, 190, 209, 222, 223, 227, 229, 232, 234 and 239.

254 James Miller (1704–44). Playwright and satirist. Author of the libretto of *Joseph and his Brethren* (1744).

255 A reference to *Belshazzar*. Jennens sent Handel each of the three parts one at a time, between July and October 1744 (Burrows, *Handel*, 369).

256 Covent Garden Theatre. The oratorios performed were *Deborah*, *Semele*, *Hercules*, *Samson*, *Saul*, *Joseph and his Brethren*, *Belshazzar* and *Messiah*.

257 Alexander Pope died on 30 May 1744.

258 Henry St John (1678–1751), styled 1st Viscount Bolingbroke. Politician, diplomatist and author.

259 Lewis Theobald (bap. 1688, d. 1744) was a critic of Pope's edition of Shakespeare (1725) and consequently became the mock hero of Pope's *Dunciad* (1728). Colley Cibber (1671–1757), poet laureate

losses: for now they will neither be so much abus^d, nor so much cheated as formerly. We have lost, in my opinion, a much more valuable man than either of them; I mean Mr Harbin ...²⁶⁰

Vol. 2, no. 97, f. 1; repr. (except last full sentence) *Letters*, 26; *Handbuch*, 379.

21 February 1745, Jennens at Queen Square²⁶¹

Handel has had worse success than ever he had before, being forc'd to desist after performing but 6 of the 24 Entertainments he had contracted for, & to advertise that the Subscribers might have 3 4ths of their money return'd. Most of them refus'd to take back their Money, upon which he resolv'd to begin again in Lent. His ill success is laid [1v] chiefly to the charge of the Ladies²⁶² [...] than a certain Anglo-Venetian Lady²⁶³ [...] you may have been acquainted [in your] former Expeditions. But I believe it is in some measure owing to his own imprudence in changing the profitable method he was in before for a new & hazardous Experiment. For the two last years he had perform'd Oratorios in Covent-Garden Playhouse on Wednesdays & Fridays in Lent only, when there was no publick Entertainment of any consequence to interfere with him: & his gains were considerable, 2100 £ one year, & 1600 £ the other, for only 12 performances. Flush'd with this success, the Italian Opera being drop'd, he takes the Opera-house in the Hay-market, for this Season at the rent of 400 £, buys him a new organ, & instead of an Oratorio produces an English Opera call'd Hercules,²⁶⁴ which he performs on Saturdays during the run of Plays, Concerts, Assemblys, Drums, Routs, Hurricanes, & all the madness of Town Diversions.²⁶⁵ His Opera, for want of the top Italian voices, Action, Dresses, Scenes & Dances, which us'd to draw company, & prevent the Undertakers losing above 3 or 4 thousand pounds, had scarce half a house the first night, much less than half the second; & he has been quiet ever since. I mention Hercules, because it was his first new Piece,²⁶⁶ tho' he had perform'd the Oratorio of Deborah [2r] [...] which it may very easily be by its own merit, being a very hasty abortive Birth, extorted out of due time by Handel's importunate Dunning Letters;²⁶⁷ & certainly would have been, if I had staid in the Country, on account of the additional Nonsense he had loaded it with under

from 1730, was the author of a critical pamphlet on Pope in 'A letter from Mr Cibber to Mr Pope' (July 1742). Cibber consequently took Theobald's place as the mock hero in Pope's *New Dunciad* (1742).

260 George Harbin (c.1665–1744), a prominent Nonjuror.

261 Jennens stayed in no. 8 Queen's Square during this period. The house belonged to his brother-in-law, William Hanmer.

262 Not singers, but socially influential ladies.

263 A reference to Margaret Cecil, Lady Brown (1692–1782). Cecil has been charged with leading attacks against, and boycotts of, Handel's operas but David Hunter suggests that although she was certainly no supporter of Handel, the case against her may have been subject to hyperbole since Burney's naming of her in 1789 as a 'persevering enemy to Handel'. David Hunter, 'Margaret Cecil, Lady Brown: "Persevering Enemy to Handel" but "Otherwise Unknown to History"', *Women and Music*, 3 (1997), 43.

264 Libretto by Reverend Thomas Broughton, based on Sophocles's *Women of Trachis* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (book IX).

265 Handel abandoned his 'experiment' after 11 February when a planned performance of *Hercules* was cancelled, and he returned to the Lenten plan of the previous two years. These were not as well attended as previous years, however, and only 16 of the promised 24 subscription performances were fulfilled (Burrows, *Handel*, 373–4).

266 The other was *Belshazzar*, first performed on 27 March.

267 An informal term for debt-collectors' letters. A section of this letter has disintegrated but Jennens is almost certainly referring to his libretto for *Belshazzar*, for the completion of which he felt pressurized by Handel (see letter of 13 September 1744).

pretence of shortening it. I mean, if Nonsense can damn a musical performance, which I think I have good reason to [qu]estion.

Vol. 2, no. 98, ff. 1^r–2^r; repr. (incorrectly dated ‘1744’) *Letters*, 25; (correctly dated) *Handbuch*, 386.

30 August 1745, Jennens in Gopsall

In your last letter but one you talk^d something of reading a foolish hasty performance of mine,²⁶⁸ but ’tis not fit for your perusal, therefore think no more of it: but I shall show you a collection I gave Handel, call^d Messiah, which I value highly, & he has made a fine Entertainment of it, tho’ not near so good as he might & ought to have done. I have with great difficulty made him correct some of the grossest faults in the composition, but he retain^d his Overture obstinately, in which there are some passages far unworthy of [2r] Handel, but much more unworthy of the Messiah.

...

[postscript]

I had almost forgot the Commissions you have been so kind to execute for me. When you have receiv^d the Musick or any thing else you may have purchas^d for me abroad, let them be committed to the care of M^r. Hetherington, who will send them down to me. M^r. Sanford’s Books should be sent to him at Oxford. I heard the other day that M^r. Crynes was dying, & I believe is dead by this time:²⁶⁹ if so, I shall take his books upon my self. You may deliver your bill of the whole to M^r. Hetherington, & he will pay it. ...

Vol. 2, no. 99, ff. 1^v–2^r; first paragraph repr. (without identification of recipient) Horatio Townsend, *An Account of the Visit of Handel to Dublin* (Dublin, 1852), 118–19; (except first sentence); *Letters*, 26 (except first sentence); *Handbuch*, 394 (except first sentence).

16 October 1745, Jennens in Gopsall

I am sorry to hear of M^r. Handel’s illness, & heartily wish his recovery: but he has acted so mad a part of late, I fear voluntarily, that I don^t at all wonder if it brings a real unavoidable madness upon him, of which I am inform^d he discover^d some very strong Symptoms in his travels about the Country this last Summer.²⁷⁰

Vol. 2, no. 101, f. 1v; repr. *Letters*, 27; *Handbuch*, 395.

4 November 1745, Jennens in Gopsall

Dear Sir,

I have but just time to tell you that I have this day sent by the Carrier in a box directed to Mr Hetherington, the Key of the Book Cases in my Musick Room, which I am sorry I could

268 Possibly a reference to *Belshazzar*. Several letters from Holdsworth appear to have been lost, for his last surviving letter prior to this is dated 8 February 1744.

269 See letters of 29 April 1743 and 28 October 1743.

270 Handel visited the Earl of Gainsborough (at Exton in Rutland) in June 1745 for what the Earl’s brother James Noel described as ‘Quiet and Retirement’ (letter to the Earl of Shaftesbury, 23 June 1745) (Burrows, *Handel*, 379). The Earl of Shaftesbury in turn commented on Handel’s ill health in a letter to James Harris (24 October 1745) (Burrows, *Handel*, 381; *HHB*, 395) and his description of Handel as ‘a good deal disordered in his head’ suggests a return of Handel’s ‘paralytick’ disorder of 1743. He did not compose another major work until January 1746 (*Occasional Oratorio*).

not furnish you with at your first coming there. I assure you this disturb'd me before ever you mention'd them to me; & I was in doubt whether I should send orders to Mr Hetherington to have the cases open'd by a Smith, thinking then that I had left the key lock'd up in my Scritoire in Queen's Square ...²⁷¹

Vol. 2. No. 102. f. 1r.

16 November 1745, Jennens in Gopsall

Dear Sir,

You are mistaken in supposing it was any trouble to me to send up the key: on the contrary it eas'd me of the trouble my mind suffer'd before that you, who are so great a love of Books & understand them so well should be tantaliz'd with the sight of them through glass doors, without being able to look to them.

[postscript:]

If Marcello's Psalms²⁷² arrive before you leave the Town, I shall be glad to have them; & whatever Musick or other books or papers M^r. Hetherington has for me may come down with them. ...

Vol. 2, no. 103, f. 1^v.

3 December 1745, Jennens in Gopsall

... I see in his [i.e. the bookseller Vaillant's] Catalogue Histoire de la Musique, which, if well executed, must be an entertaining & (if I thought you would not laugh at me, I would add a) useful work; & Des representations en Musique.²⁷³ Be so good as to look into them both, (Ex pede Herculem,)²⁷⁴ & as you like or dislike what you find upon a slight view, order them to be sent me, or not. ...

Vol. 2, no. 105, f. 1^r.

271 No letters survive from Holdsworth in answer to these letters by Jennens but it would appear that Holdsworth was staying at Gopsall while Jennens remained in town. Jennens's concern about his friend's access to the bookcases is an example of the care they took of each other. Much of the content of the letters around this time concern Jennens's gentle and sensitive insistence on settling his and Holdsworth's debts.

272 See nn. 174, 188, 213 and 251.

273 In mid-October Vaillant had advertised the publication of his 446-page catalogue. *The London Evening Post*, no. 2801, Thursday 17–Saturday 19 October 1745, [3]. The first title is almost certainly Pierre Bourdelot and Pierre Bonnet, *Histoire de la Musique et de ses effets depuis son origine jusqu'à present* (Paris, 1715). The second one is *Des Representations en Musique Anciennes & Modernes* (Paris, 1684). *Catalogus Librorum apud Paulum Vaillant, Bibliopolam, Londini venales prostantium: Or, A Catalogue of Books in most Languages and Faculties, sold by Paul Vaillant, Bookseller, in the Strand* (London, 1745), 256. As the catalogue's titles under 'Music' include only music scores, Jennens had to browse the entire volume. The title page of Holdsworth's *Pharsalia and Philippi etc.* states 'Printed for Paul Vaillant, in the Strand', and note of agreement from Vaillant dated 28 January 1741/2 verifies him as the bookseller for Holdsworth's collection of letters.

274 'From his foot, Hercules'. A reference to the maxim of proportionality 'from his foot, we can measure Hercules'. Jennens is asking Holdsworth to look at and compare the two books without going to too much trouble ('a slight view').

20 January 1745/6, Jennens in Gopsall

Dear Sir,

'Tis impossible for such a Wretch as I am, surrounded with so many circumstances of inconvenience, which stare me in the face which way soever I take my prospect, to determine with any certainty upon any Action of my Life.²⁷⁵ I can only say that my intention is at present, as it has been some time, not to come to Town till towards the end of March or the beginning of April. As well as I love M^f. Handel^s Musick, I think Health ought to be prefer^d to Pleasure;²⁷⁶ besides that pleasure is often the occasion of Pain, this in particular has occasion^d me so much uneasiness, that I am the less eager in pursuit of it: & if I could take Horace^s advice, nil admirari,²⁷⁷ I am satisfy^d I should be much happier for it.²⁷⁸ Yet I will not be positive that I shall not come up a Month sooner. My Sister talks of being in Town about [1v] the middle or end of February: possibly by that time I may have enough of this melancholy way of living, & be glad to change my situation at any rate, haras'd my Health one way to avoid the destruction of it another: for the only choice left me is of lesser Evils.²⁷⁹ ...

Vol. 2, no. 109, f. 1.

3 February 1745/6, Jennens in Gopsall

The Oratorio,²⁸⁰ as you call it, contrary to custom, raises no inclination in me to hear it. I am weary of nonsense & impertinence; & by the Account L^d. Guernsey gives me of this Piece I am to expect nothing else. 'Tis a triumph for a Victory not yet gain^d, & if the Duke does not make hast, it may not be gain^d at the time of performance.²⁸¹ 'Tis an inconceivable jumble of Milton & Spencer, a Chaos extracted from Order by the most absurd of all Block-heads,²⁸² who like the Devil takes delight in defacing the Beauties of Creation. The difference is, that one [the devil] does it from Malice, the other [Hamilton] from pure Stupidity. I would have given you a Specimen of this [1v] Author's incomprehensible way of writing, but that I am told the Letter-Carrier must set out earlier than [*sic*] usual, being oblig'd to go to Atherstone²⁸³ on foot on account of the badness of the Road, spoil^d from bad to worse by the Snow & Frost.

...

275 Jennens may be referring here to his personal circumstances, living under the jurisdiction of his father. Earlier letters (24 July 1736, 16 April 1741, 5 December 1743) suggest that he found the arrangement unsatisfactory (Smith, 'Achievements', 166). His father died in 1744.

276 Jennens states clearly in earlier letters that his health is much better in Leicestershire than in London.

277 To be surprised by nothing.

278 Jennens's unease may have been prompted by the *Occasional Oratorio*'s pro-Hanoverian stance (see letter of 3 February 1745/6), which undoubtedly clashed with his own Jacobite sympathies. However, his comments in his letter of 3 February 1745/6 suggest that he also objected to the work on artistic grounds.

279 Possibly his sister Elizabeth, in whose husband's house he stayed when in London. He bequeathed his Gopsall estate to her daughter, Esther.

280 *Occasional Oratorio*.

281 William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland and the King's younger son, was put in command of the King's forces in response to the Jacobite uprising of 1745. By February 1746, the Jacobites had been driven back to Scotland but were not yet defeated. The Duke was in London in early 1746 (Burrows, *Handel*, 384). Jennens's view is echoed in George Harris's letter of 8 February 1746 (Burrows and Dunhill, *Family Papers of James Harris*, 223).

282 Newburgh Hamilton.

283 Atherstone, Warwickshire, was probably the closest town to Gopsall.

N.B. Semele was call^d an Oratorio by many: but says the great Critick Thomas Rouneius,²⁸⁴ lege meo periculo Bawdatorio.²⁸⁵

Vol. 2, no. 110, f. 1; repr. (except last sentence of first paragraph) *Letters*, 27; *Handbuch*, 400.

19 February 1746, Jennens in Gopsall

I can^t be so void of Curiosity as you are with regard to the thing call^d an Oratorio. Every thing that has been united with Handel^s Composition becomes sacred [1v] by such a union in my eyes; unless it be profane in it's own nature, like Semele. As for a little Nonsense, if that be all, I generally endeavour to alter it to common Sense; & for Poetry, how little soever there may be in the words, I always find it amply supply^d by his Musick. So that I am oblig^d to you for sending me the Words of this new performance²⁸⁶ sooner than I should otherwise have seen 'em: for I had taken care not to be without 'em, by desiring my Friend S^r. Wyndham Knatchbull Wyndham²⁸⁷ (I suppose that is his name by this time) to reserve two copies for me. If you wonder at all this, give me leave to tell you, that if I understood Virgil as well as you do, or you Handel as well as I, we should both have a much larger field for admiration than we have at present. But considering consequences, perhaps 'tis much better as it is.

Vol. 2, no. 112, f. 1; repr. (first sentence only) *Handbuch*, 401.

3 March 1746, Jennens in Gopsall

You are mistaken as to the Occasional Oratorio, which is most of it transcrib^d from Milton & Spencer, but chiefly from Milton, who in his Version of some of the Psalms wrote so like Sternhold & Hopkins²⁸⁸ that there is not a pin to choose betwixt 'em. But there are people in the world who fancy every thing excellent which has Milton's name to it. I believe Hamilton has done little more than tack the passages together,²⁸⁹ which he has done with his usual judgement & cook^d up an Oratorio of Shreds & patches. [2v] There is perhaps but one piece of Nonsense in all Spenser's Works, & that Hamilton has pick^d out for his Oratorio:

O who shall pour into my Swollen Eyes
A Sea of Tears—a brazen Voice—

284 This may be a facetious reference to Thomas Rowney, MP for Oxford 1722–59, who is mentioned by Holdsworth in a letter of 1 May 1738.

285 'To read at my peril "Bawdatorio"'. Jennens was expressing disapproval at the labeling of such a bawdy tale as *Semele* as an oratorio.

286 Handel performed the *Occasional Oratorio* on Friday 14, Wednesday 19 and Wednesday 26 February 'in Order to make good the Number of Performances subscrib'd to last Season' (*The General Advertiser*, no. 3527, 3531 and 3537, all on p. [2]). According to a contemporary report, 'on Wednesday last [19 February] there was at the Oratorio a great deal of excellent Music, and no Company'. [Henry Fielding], *The True Patriot: and The History of Our Own Times* (repr. New York, 1975), Tuesday 18–Tuesday 25 February 1746, [3]).

287 See n. 157.

288 Thomas Sternhold's and John Hopkins's Psalter was formerly a widely used collection of Psalms, mostly in the ballad metre. By the eighteenth century, however, opinion of them had turned and so Jennens is probably not being complimentary.

289 Ironically, Hamilton re-used large portions of the music, and its accompanying text, of *Israel in Egypt* (Burrows, *Handel*, 420).

And iron Sides? or An iron Frame as Hamilton has it. I thought he had left out Something necessary to the connection, having observ^d some instances of the same kind in his Samson; but to my great surprize I found it as I give it [to] you in Spenser's Tears of the Muses.²⁹⁰ How far this may be defended by a Figure I can^t say, but at present I have no name for it but Non-sense. I think M^r. Addison²⁹¹ somewhere makes Figurative ways of speaking to be originally nothing more than slips (alias blunders) of great Authors defended afterwards by Criticks & establish^d under specious names. I do not remember a precedent for this of Spencer^s, nor can I assign it it's proper class. Perhaps you can help me out: but [missing folio]

Vol. 2, no. 113, f. 2; repr. (except last four sentences) *Letters*, 27; *Handbuch*, 401.

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Appendix 1. Index of names

At some point in their history, the correspondence between Jennens and Holdsworth was divided into two volumes and each letter numbered. Both volume and individual letter number appear at the end of each letter and are used to reference names quoted within letters. In this way, 1/2 refers to volume 1, letter 2. Where a name or place occurs in a footnote, it is noted as n.1. Similarly, where it appears in a numbered section of the introduction, it is noted as In.1. The first, un-numbered section of the introduction is referred to as In.

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290 Edmund Spenser (1552?–99). Poet and administrator in Ireland. *Tears of the Muses* was published in 1590.

291 Joseph Addison (1672–1719), writer and politician.

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 Otterbourn: 1/12; 1/14; 1/23; n.101
 Oxford: In.1; In.2; 1/11; 1/15; 1/20; 1/51; 1/58; 2/99; n.84; n.106; n.108; n.114; n.146; n.242; n.284
 Packington: 1/34
 Paris: 1/60; 2/79
 Rome: In.2; In.4; 1/2; n.64; 1/4; n.69; 1/7; n.74; 1/10; n.74; n.79; 2/69; 2/71; 2/73; 2/75; 2/77; 2/78; 2/90;
 2/95; n.127; n.134; n.167; n.178; n.179; n.186; n.202; n.217
 Salisbury: 1/15; 2/66; n.107; n.138; n.168; n.169
 Turin: 1/1; 1/9; n.92
 Venice: In.4; 1/9; 1/10; 2/75; 2/78; 2/80; n.71; n.89; n.127; n.142; n.251
 Vienna: 1/11; n.71; n.127; n.134
 Winton: 1/29; 1/31; 1/39; 1/41; 1/44; 1/45; 1/48
 Wistow: 2/66