

The translator
To Herr Wolfgang Mozart
Concert-Master to the
High Prince of Salzburg²

[1771]

[5] Do not be amazed, sir, that I have translated a text from the French, written in your honour by a noble pen |: as is surmised³ :| during your journey through Switzerland.

I am not seeking with this to enlarge the fame [10] apportioned to you by crowned heads for some time now. Indeed not! That would be madness on my part, just as much as if I wished to hang a little night light in Vesuvius in full flame in order to make the latter more visible. I was only moved to do it because the noble speaker has observed and found in you not only the natural, but also the moral man. [15] Truly a fine counter-subject, one worthy of consideration, and of which one can see little or nothing at all among great artists.

If one observes thoroughly the great artists, one is as mocking and boastful as a Spanish market crier, [20] another as lazy and unfriendly as a Greenland bear, the third as oily and unashamed as a Nordic Laplander, the fourth even believes that art will have to die with him, and fools of this kind are found generally among all artists.

But you, sir, are represented in this piece of writing as a model example of art and virtue: what comfort, joy and honour to your dear parents, who have so notably understood how to combine in you, and develop, the natural and moral man.

May God protect and keep you for many years to come from all misfortune and all adversity, so that the rational world may for ever be able to admire in you the hand of the Almighty [30] |: from which, and through which, you possess art and virtue :|.

May you live in health and contentment!

¹ BD: An unknown "B.B." sent Mozart his translation of an article from the Genevan periodical "Aristide ou Le Citoyen" of 11th October, 1766. The article appeared anonymously but is now known to have been by Prof. Dr. Samuel André Tissot (cf. note on No. 0112/11).

² "Hochfürstlich-Salzburgischen Concertmeister".

³ BD: The translator suspected that the author was Ludwig Eugen, Prince [Prinz] of Württemberg. The latter had in fact written some lines on Mozart in the same periodical (18th October, 1766).