

# THE TEXT OF HORACE WALPOLE'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH HANNAH MORE

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Between 1784 and 1796 Horace Walpole and Hannah More exchanged seventy or more letters, of which fifty-nine of the sixty-four that have been found were in print by 1834 in texts prepared by Hannah More herself, Mary Berry, and William Roberts. These texts were reprinted by later editors. The Toynbees recovered a few of the manuscripts and made a start towards collation and correction; more manuscripts have now been found. The fitting together for the first time of the two sides of the correspondence shows the misdating and rearrangement to which it has been subjected; the manuscripts show that nearly every letter underwent the refining touches of the original editors.

Having had quite different histories, the two sides of the correspondence can best be considered separately. After Walpole's death in 1797 Hannah More's letters were returned to her, in accordance with the terms of Walpole's will. One of the letters, a *jeu d'esprit* dated 'June 20, 1840,' she permitted Mary Berry to print in 1798 with Walpole's letters to her, but the rest remained unpublished until her death in 1833, when her executrix, Margaret Roberts, gave them to her brother William for inclusion in his *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More*, published in 1834. None of the manuscripts of the letters to Walpole printed by Roberts have yet come to light or been found in sale catalogues, but one original<sup>2</sup> and copies of three others<sup>3</sup> which he omitted have been recovered. The others

1. Reprinted, with permission, from *The Review of English Studies*, 1952, n.s. iii. 341-5. A few changes have been made in the text to bring the account up to date.

2. In the possession of W. S. Lewis.

3. In the possession of Dr Gwladys Jones, Girton College, Cambridge.