

To Dr Benjamin Franklin

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Soho Square
29 March 1780

Sir

By the hands of M^r Paradise,¹ I have receivd a copy of the instructions for the Protection of Cap^m. Cooke which you circulated among the Armd Vessels of your Friends in N America.² I perusd this paper with the Greatest pleasure for having never doubted myself that the liberal & enlargd sentiments I had always admird in your mind remaind there in full lustre, I could not but rejoice at the triumph which such an indisputable proof afforded me over those who warp'd by politicks or party wish'd to entertain a different opinion of your character

Give me leave then as the Friend of disinterested discovery & of Cap^m. Cooke, to return you my warmest thanks

Permit me also as President of the Royal Society to thank you in the names of many of our most valuable members who Abstracting themselves from all less generous considerations fix their whole attention upon the great Object of Science & would take the most publick method of conveying to you their acknowledgements were they not sensible that such an act might be wilfully misunderstood

Some Medals are preparing to be struck in memory of our late Friend the Royal Society will treat the King of France to accept one at their hands as a testimony of the high Sense they Entertain of his Generous orders in favor of that excellent navigator it would give me pleasure to learn that the Congress issued similar orders if they did I shall rejoice in the opportunity of transmitting to America the like permanent token of our regard & gratitude

Adieu my Dear Sir beleive my Mind incapable of being Led astray by the influence of political opinions I respect you as a Philosopher & sollicit the continuance of your Friendship in full Persuasion that all your actions are conformable to your most Conscientious Ideas of rectitude. Whatever my wishes may be as a native & inhabitant of a country with which you are at war

your Faithfull & affectionate

Hble Servant

Jos: Banks

[APS Franklin Papers – Bache Coll.]

1. John Paradise (1743–95): linguist; FRS 2 May 1771. Paradise knew a number of ancient and modern languages, but his English was reputedly poor. Friendly with many leading intellectuals, he was a founder member of Samuel Johnson's Essex Head Club, 1783. In

1780 Paradise took American citizenship in an attempt to avoid being disinherited from the Virginian plantations of his father-in-law, Colonel Philip Ludwell (1716–67), but he did not become a resident in America. Paradise first met Benjamin Franklin in Paris in 1779.

2. Written during the American Revolution, and at a time when the colonists were being supported by the French and the Spanish, Benjamin Franklin's letter was intended to ensure that Cook's vessels would not be molested by American ships of war. Franklin's letter was dated 10 March 1779, and addressed from Passy. Franklin was then acting as the Minister Plenipotentiary for the American Congress at the French Court, but his letter did not have the force of an official order from Congress, something to which Banks later referred: Banks to Kippis, 15 August 1795, ACL GMSS 64.

See J. C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery 1776–1780* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, reprint 1999), p. 1535: 'A Ship having been fitted out from England, before the Commencement of this War, to make Discoveries of new Countries in unknown Seas, under the Conduct of that most celebrated Navigator and Discoverer Captain Cook; an Undertaking truly laudable in itself, as the Increase of Geographical Knowledge facilitates the Communication between distant Nations, in the Exchange of useful Products and Manufactures, and the Extention of Arts, whereby the common Enjoyments of human life are multiply'd and augmented, and Science of other kinds encreased to the Benefit of Mankind in general. This is therefore most earnestly to recommend to every one of you, that in Case the said Ship, which is now expected to be soon in the European Seas on her Return, should happen to fall into your Hands, you would not consider her as an Enemy, not suffer any Plunder to be made of the Effects contain'd in her, nor obstruct her immediate Return to England, by detaining her or sending her into any other Part of Europe or to America, but that you would treat the said Captain Cook and his People with all Civility and Kindness, affording them as common Friends to Mankind all the Assistance in your Power which they may happen to stand in need of.'