

Sarah Sophia Banks: Femininity, Sociability and the Practice of Collecting in

Late Georgian England

Two Volumes

Volume I

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Abstract

Sarah Sophia Banks, sister to the botanist and President of the Royal Society, Sir Joseph Banks, assumed an assertive role as a collector. Her repository, which is now housed in the British Museum and British Library contains a rich assemblage of commercial materials that documents the social urban culture of elite eighteenth and nineteenth-century circles. My dissertation will investigate Sarah Sophia Banks and her paper collections. Sifting through her overabundance of everyday, mass-produced, visual and textual sources, this study examines her elite status and collecting practices. It will also offer a social and art historical analysis of four categories of objects that Sarah Sophia collected: the admission ticket, the trade card, the visitor ticket and ladies' pocket book imagery. This thesis will demonstrate how her collections embody the many characteristics of a modern and polite Eighteenth-century society.

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.

Introduction

Sarah Sophia Banks (1744-1818), sister of the celebrated botanist and President of the Royal Society, Sir Joseph Banks, was—like her brother—an avid collector. However, whereas Sir Joseph typically collected specimens of natural history, Sarah Sophia collected man-made articles. Her collection included coins, metals and tokens. It also included a remarkable number of printed graphic materials, of a type that is typically categorized as ‘ephemera’. Her enormous collection of around 19,000 pieces of ephemera included music, fashion plates, admission tickets, trade cards, visitor cards, book tickets, press-cuttings, shop bills, portrait prints, satirical prints and prints depicting public commemorations among other paper items.¹ After her death, Sir Joseph’s wife, Dorothea, donated parts of Sarah Sophia’s collection to the British Museum and Royal Mint, where they formed part of the foundation collections at both institutions.² At its arrival on 23 November 1818, the British Museum estimated the value of Sarah Sophia’s collection to be around £150.³ The artistic value of this category of graphic material was already recognized in the early nineteenth-century. It was recorded in the British Museum’s Trustee Papers that her collection provided many examples of ‘the first efforts of our Celebrated Engravers’.⁴ Today, much of her print collection has been

¹ Griffiths and Williams, 1987: 82.

² *BM Letter Book*, 1802-1847, vol. 2, letter 9 (London). ‘Portfolios of Prints belonging to Mrs. Banks’s Collections deposited in the British Museum by Sir Henry Ellis’. Royal Mint Museum, M 9 I; Dyer, 1988: 10; Eagleton, 2013:

³ *BM Letter Book*, 1802-1847, vol. 2, letter 9 (London). ‘Portfolios of Prints belonging to Mrs. Banks’s Collections deposited in the British Museum, by Sir Henry Ellis’.

⁴ Central Archive Trustees Papers, Officer’s Reports Vol. 5 1818-1819, No. 1164, ‘Officer Report: John Thomas Smith, Department of Antiquities Print Room’ dated 11 December 1818.

disassembled, re-catalogued, and combined with other collections within the British Museum, and nine oversized albums can be found in the British Library, containing broadsides, playbills and notices among other items.⁵ However, an inventory listing her print collections survives in the British Library, and a number of her albums and mounts at the British Museum, made from oversized folios, remain intact and thus provide a relatively undisturbed form of material evidence regarding Sarah Sophia's collecting practices and eighteenth-century graphic culture more generally.⁶ This thesis offers an art-historical analysis of the rich paper collections amassed in the late-Georgian period by Sarah Sophia Banks. I will provide new interpretations of this material and recuperate Sarah Sophia's rightful legacy as a prominent British collector of the period.

Biographical Context

Sarah Sophia was born on 28 October 1744, one and a half years after her brother Joseph, and she spent her childhood and teenage years on the family's estate at Revesby Abby, Lincolnshire.⁷ The Banks family appears to have been enthusiastic about collecting; they had a keen interest in antiquarian pursuits. Their father, Joseph Banks, jun. Esq. of Revesby Abbey, M.P. was a member of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society, a club formed in 1710 that met and discussed local antiquities, and the Society of

⁵ BL, LR.301.h.3-11; BL, 937.g.96. The collection of playbills is variously attributed to Charles Burney and Miss Sarah Sophia Banks.

⁶ It's uncertain if the albums in the British Museum are kept the same way Sarah Sophia organized them or if they have since been rebound and reorganized by British Library staff members.

⁷ Gascoigne [accessed 17 Sep. 2013]; Carter, 1988: 23.

Antiquarians.⁸ This might explain Sarah Sophia's love for heraldry, topographical and antiquarian literature.⁹ Three projects she undertook during her lifetime further reveal her antiquarian enthusiasms: a journal of the fishing trips on the River Witham,¹⁰ four editions of a manuscript called *Glossaries in Lincolnshire Dialect* dating from 1779-1783,¹¹ and a manuscript of the history of the Order of the Garter.¹² All three projects show the character of her collecting: meticulous attention to detail and accuracy. In the fishing journal, Sarah Sophia mimicked the taxonomic method. She kept a precise record of the number, weight and species of local fish caught on each day of the annual expedition, which ran from 1784 to 1796, accompanied by both the common and the Latin names.¹³ Her antiquarian hobby of philology also demonstrates her rigorous attention to details and exactitude. These projects were closely aligned with her brother's interests. In 1788, Sir Joseph was to become a founding member of the Linnean Society, and he compiled lists of pacific island vocabularies during the *Endeavour* voyage. Sarah Sophia's interest in recording and systematising the world around her is expressed by way of these projects.

Both Sarah Sophia and Sir Joseph shared an early passion for collecting. Sir Joseph later told his personal physician, Everard Home FRS, that it was his mother, not his father, who inspired his collecting; the first book

⁸ Moore, 1851: 23.

⁹ BL, 460. d.13. Keeping with antiquarian themes of lineage and the landed elites' belief in its superiority, Sarah Sophia housed an extensive collection of antiquarian books at their family seat in Reevesby Abbey.

¹⁰ Carter, 1988: 227.

¹¹ Matthews, 1935: 398-404.

¹² Smith, 1911: 232.

¹³ Allen et. al., 2007:33-34; Carter, 1988: 349, appendices XX and XXI.

he read as a boy was his mother's copy of Gerard's *Herbal*.¹⁴ As a young boy, Joseph began collecting plants, flowers, shells, stones, insects, animals, fish and fossils.¹⁵ There is no record of whom or what inspired Sarah Sophia's collecting, but two fashion plates from her collection of pocket-book imagery dated 1760 suggest that she may have begun collecting while a teenager.¹⁶ Later in life, Sarah Sophia's collection of coins seems to have complimented her brother's dedication to reforming British coinage.¹⁷ While no proof exists of the direct connections between Sarah Sophia's collections of ephemera and any of Sir Joseph's other projects, upon closer examination, one recognises the overlapping interests and influences throughout her collections.

Sarah Sophia's father died in 1761, which prompted their mother to move the family to Chelsea, near London.¹⁸ This may have strengthened the already close ties that existed between brother and sister, bonds that were to be maintained throughout the rest of their lives. Their relationship was tested, however, by Joseph's international travels in the 1760s and 1770s. The two corresponded regularly while Joseph was away.¹⁹ A miniature painting of Sarah Sophia dating to this period may have been a token of affection between the siblings. The picture was painted by the fashionable artist Nathaniel Hone the elder (fig. 1). It portrays Sarah Sophia in a conventional head and shoulders view. The picture is flattering; Hone renders her facial

¹⁴ Holmes, 2008: 8.

¹⁵ Pincott, 2004: 3.

¹⁶ According to the dates on the pocket-book imagery she collected, she continued collecting this form of print culture until her death.

¹⁷ Gascoigne, 1994: 14, 30, 126, 164-5, 229-32. Egelton, 2013: 29-30.

¹⁸ Carter, 1988: 35.

¹⁹ Smith, 1911: 6; Carter, 1987: 25; New South Wales Library [accessed 27 Apr. 2009].

features with great delicacy and depicts her in a pink dress with dainty lace trim that reveals her perfectly smooth bust, thus emphasizing her femininity. The pearls she wears not only signify her status; they are symbols of wisdom and purity, while the tiny pink roses—symbols of sweetness, joy, or admiration—are pinned in her hair.²⁰ It is not known for whom this picture was painted, or to whom it was presented, and Sarah Sophia does not appear to have had any suitors at any time during her life. As an art object used to evoke memory, the miniature is considered the most intimate of all art works, and it was often commissioned to alleviate the pains of absence, and also to affirm love and friendship.²¹ Its small size makes it suitable for transport. Given that her brother was to leave England to travel with James Cook on his South Pacific voyage in 1768, the same year the miniature was painted, Sarah Sophia may have presented it to him before his departure.

Upon his return from Cook's first voyage, Sir Joseph kept all that he had collected from his journey at his home at 14 New Burlington Street. One of Sarah Sophia's visiting cards carries this address, suggesting that she may have also lived there for some time, assisting her brother with his scientific pursuits and helping him maintain his collections. The New Burlington Street residence boasted three public rooms where Sir Joseph stored and displayed his objects.²² There, both natural and artificial 'curiosities' were contained in tall cabinets, including one 'with plaster relief decoration' (said to have been designed by Robert Adams), metal 'Solander' boxes and several Chippendale

²⁰ For research on women and jewellery see for example: Pointon, 2007: 11-30; Pointon, 2009. For the significance of flowers in art, see: Hall, 1989: 63.

²¹ Lloyd and Sloan, 2008: 39.

²² Carter, 1988: 331. It was also at New Burlington street that the collections from Sir Joseph's New foundland and Labrador voyages were gathered in the spring of 1767 and where Sydney Parkinson first began his research on this material.

'cubes'.²³ During her time at New Burlington House, Sarah Sophia would have seen her brother carefully exploit circles of female sociability in the capital, such as those maintained by Lady Anne Monson, Mary Delany and the Duchess of Portland's circle of friends.²⁴ Her brother was pursuing an intense form of scientific dissemination and self-promotion, celebrating the achievements of Cook's first voyage, publicizing his own status as official botanist on this expedition and promoting their plan to return to Tahiti.

In 1777, Joseph Banks purchased 32 Soho Square, and over the years he transformed the property renovating some of the rooms into an extensive library and herbarium. He employed a principal Curator, Dr. Daniel Solander, and numerous other colleagues to research, catalogue and oversee his wide-ranging collections of botanical specimens and other objects of erudition. One year later he engaged and wed the twenty-year-old heiress Dorothea Hugessen, daughter of William Hugessen of Provender, Kent.²⁵ The couple spent the first year and a half at Sir Joseph's villa in Spring Grove, Heston. Two years after their marriage, in 1780, Sarah Sophia was invited to reside with her brother and his wife at 32 Soho Square, and she remained living with them permanently. The three were inseparable. Sir Joseph addressed the two women as 'my ladies'; they all travelled and spent vacations together and participated in a busy social calendar.²⁶ It is during this time that she mostly gathered the massive collections that survive today. The invitation to live with

²³ Carter, 1988: 331.

²⁴ Carter, 1987: 65. It was at Lady Monson's dining table in 1768 that Joseph Banks realized the excellent opportunity a voyage to the South Seas offered, "to improve science" and Solander immediately asked if he could join. For research on Sir Joseph and the Duchess of Portland's circle see: Russell, 2004: 49.

²⁵ Carter, 1998: 154.

²⁶ Carter, 1998: 154.

Sir Joseph and Dorothea presented Sarah Sophia with the opportunity she desired to participate in the capital's elite intellectual circles, and to carve her own niche in this circle as a well-known collector of coins and printed materials.

The Collection in Its Time

As this thesis will demonstrate, some of the best clues to Sarah Sophia's collecting practices are revealed when examining the fragile mounts and albums housed in the British Museum, which remain exactly the same way she systematised them.²⁷ Another form of concrete evidence is a book listing numerous printed items belonging to Sarah Sophia. The volume, which is just over 300 pages, measures 31.4 x 19.8 cm. and is written in her own hand. It is now kept in the British Library. It is a precise key to where her printed material was stored in the domestic quarters of 32 Soho square (see appendix C).²⁸ It also lists some of the items that she kept at the family seat in Reevesby Abby, including an extensive collection of comedy, tragedy, comic, opera and farce performances, which were stored in oak, mahogany and deal boxes.²⁹

By looking at the publishing dates of the books he collected, Sarah Sophia appears to have produced the inventory around 1814. The collector

²⁷ The same can be said for the volumes recording her coin collection. It is uncertain if the albums in the British Library have been kept the same or rearranged by library staff.

²⁸ Carter, 1998: 330-337. Carter divides the 'front' and the 'back' of the 32 Soho building, labelling the front as the family dwelling and the back as Sir Joseph's work space.

²⁹ BL,460. d.13. The Banks's owned three houses; Sarah Sophia appears to have kept her collections at these two residences only as there is no listing for items at their home in Spring Grove, the place where Lady Banks kept her collections.

would have been seventy years old at the time, a time in life when she may have been preoccupied with her legacy. She continued to add items to the volume until her death. The inventory itself can be interpreted as a form of 'paper museum'; it maps her collection throughout the house and reveals Sarah Sophia's personal interests, status as a collector and attests to her overwhelming desire to catalogue, organise and display.

According to the inventory, Sarah Sophia owned numerous books, magazines, plays, prints, tracts, ballads, drawings and an impressive collection of 'musick', among other items. This inventory only records her paper collections, not her coins and tokens, thus demonstrating that for her materiality was an important factor when grouping her items and that she intended these collections to be separate.³⁰ First, she listed all her collected items in alphabetical sequence. This appears to democratize the collection of textual material as she doesn't give any particular precedence to any one type of text; 'high' forms of literature, such as poetry, drama, plays and research books on specialised subjects share space with 'low' forms of print, such as tracts, pamphlets, ballads, newspapers, almanacs, magazines and journals. Listing these works side-by-side destabilises distinct categories like 'literary' and 'ephemera'; additionally, the inclusion of ballads and pamphlets conveys the notion of a collection that advocates freedom of press.³¹ Her printed material covers a broad range of subjects, including works pertaining to art, agriculture, religion, ceremonies, social commemorations, politics, Chinese history, knighthood, archery, travel, antiquarianism, cookery, medicine and

³⁰ Her collections of coins, medals and tokens were catalogued in a separate inventory now housed in the British Museum's Prints and Drawings.

³¹ McDowell, 2012: 48-70.

physick [sic]. She also collected fairy tales, fashion magazines, poems and popular novels. The wide range of printed material she collected enabled her to travel the world, pursue new hobbies and walk into the past.

In the domestic quarters of the Banks's metropolitan house, Sarah Sophia employed numerous techniques for closeting, stacking and shelving her collections. Her books and paper collections were stored in six different rooms: the 'Anti-Room' or 'L(ittle) room', 'Mrs. Banks's room Bookcase', 'Front Drawing Room Piano Forte Case', 'Room up 3 pr. [pairs] of stairs', 'Dressing Room Closet' and the 'South room wardrobe' (see appendices C and D).³² She also creates a key naming the exact locations where the items were stored, such as: 'ground', 'book cases', 'drawers', 'wire doors', 'shelves', 'cubes', and 'cases', (see appendices C and D). Select pieces of furniture, such as wardrobes, bookcases, closets and the pianoforte case played supporting roles to her collections; they simultaneously convey education and refinement. These pieces may have been especially built for storing her collections. The inventory reveals that similar subjects were sometimes stored together in one room, but it is often the case that they are not, thus complicating our understanding of her arrangement. It is possible that many of her books and other objects were arranged according to their aesthetic appeal and decorative values as opposed to particular subjects or themes; especially since books can enhance the atmosphere of a home and may even influence a certain type of behaviour.

³² BL,460.d.13. It is often thought that Sarah Sophia referred to herself as Mrs. Banks after her mother died. In the inventory Sarah Sophia crossed through the word Anti and writes L(ittle) above it.

Unlike the detailed volumes she kept pertaining to her coins and medals that provide physical descriptions of each object and its provenance, this inventory pertaining to the paper collections is not so specific. Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the inventory is that most of her paper collections—admission tickets, shop bills, balloon prints, Sayers Prints, Bunbury prints, prints on dresses, French caricatures, and some portfolios—are all logged under the main heading ‘Visiting Tickets’. This might be because the visiting tickets are the largest category of object she collected—totalling some 6,000 items (see appendixes C and D). For items, such as ‘visiting tickets’, ‘admission tickets’ and ‘shop bills’ she only writes block entries with a few clues as to what these volumes contain by writing a common theme like ‘Royal Family’ or ‘not seen before’ next to the volume number. Another inventory listing these items in detail seems to have existed; however, it is now lost. Elsewhere in the book, she accurately logs the contents of her aforementioned portfolios of prints. She meticulously includes the titles of each print, the publisher’s name, the day she acquired the print and the prices she paid for them. As such, the inventory provides a much clearer picture of her collections and their actual arrangement than that of surviving auction catalogues, often the only point of reference for scholars studying eighteenth-century women’s collections.³³

The inventory reveals that Sarah Sophia often made organizational choices based on logistics. The location of items within the house was

³³ As so few collections amassed by women in the eighteenth-century survive intact, auction catalogues often offer the best glimpse of what women collected. See for example the Duchess of Portland’s auction catalogue, Skinner & Co., 1786. Lady Banks, Christies Catalogue, Wednesday, 17 May 1893. The Christies catalogue advertises the porcelain collection as belonging to Sir Joseph Banks, most likely using his fame as a means to attract buyers.

sometimes arbitrary. Similar categories of ephemera were often stored together, but occasionally categories spanned more than one location, likely due to spatial constraints. For example, her visiting tickets were stored in three different rooms of the house. At one point, the inventory notes that a selection of books on the history of London were transferred from the South Room to the Ante Room for 'want of room'. Sometimes, printed materials that circulated more publically, such as shop bills, were stored in Sarah Sophia's bedroom, not in other more public areas of the house, as one might expect. Similarly, she stored her portfolios of political prints in both her bedroom and the more public rooms, such as the Great Room. Her extensive collection of music was not kept near the piano forte case, as one might assume; instead, it was kept downstairs in the ante room. Sir Joseph altered the back of the house to accommodate his collections when he moved in, but Sarah Sophia was forced to store and organise her collections within existing architectural constraints.

At 32 Soho Square, Sir Joseph kept a library, printing press, and an extensive collection of botanical items that had been collected from all over the world. Sarah Sophia's perfectly corresponding collections of books, ephemera, coins, and medals—similarly international in origin—were also held there. The relationship between the two collections, which is rarely subjected to critical scrutiny, is rich, complex and revealing. Kim Sloan describes Sarah Sophia's numismatic and print collections as 'creating a kind of ethnography of Britain with direct parallels to her brother's collections'.³⁴ Neil Chambers also notes the similarities between Sarah Sophia's collection

³⁴ Sloane, 2003: 12.

and that of her brother, writing that she ‘shared her brother’s interests in coins and medals, and obtained various forms of ephemera and memorabilia on a scale comparable to her brother’s pursuits in natural history’.³⁵ Although Sarah Sophia bought many of the items she collected, evidence in the form of letters reveal that often her brother’s scientific contacts contributed items to Sarah Sophia’s collection.³⁶ This kind of gift giving associated her collection with her brother’s exchange of botanical plants and other objects of erudition.

In its methodology, organization, and materiality, Sarah Sophia’s collection of ephemera complemented her brother’s collections. They were compatible with the publications contained in Sir Joseph’s library and issued by his printing press: they were paper-based, textually oriented and image enriched. Sarah Sophia’s collection of *artificiallia* complimented Sir Joseph’s *naturalia*. The collections were similarly displayed and stored, with specimens pinned, pressed or pasted into folders and albums (Fig. 2 and 3). Some of Sarah Sophia’s items of ephemera were even kept in Solander boxes, a botanical storage method devised by Sir Joseph’s curator and director of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, the Swedish botanist, Dr. Daniel Solander. This method of storage further establishes the link between her collection and its scientific counterpart. Like her brother she too stored some of her ephemera in ‘cubes’.³⁷ When organising her paper collections, Sarah Sophia devised her own classificatory systems usually based on geography, type of event or social hierarchies, while Sir Joseph employed Linnaean

³⁵ Chambers, 2007: 117-118.

³⁶ See for examples: Dawson, 1958: 115, 121, 139, 141, 304, 389; Carter, 1987: 229.

³⁷ BL,460.d.13. Carter, 1988: 333,336. Most likely, this is the same kind of chest that Sir Joseph had Chippendale design for his botanical specimens at 14 New Burlington Street.

systems of classification for his plants and insects. By employing her own distinctive form of taxonomic ordering, Sarah Sophia's collection of paper objects complimented those of Sir Joseph, but it also enabled her to obtain a cultural identity that distinguished her from her brother.

The complementary relationship between the two collections, both of which were situated at the bustling scientific hub of Soho square, reflects the kinds of methodology that was employed for larger public institutional collections. The Royal Society and the British Museum, with which Sir Joseph was affiliated, recommended that collections feature both *artificialia* and *naturalia* to present a microcosmos of the world. Such collections, which were universal in scope and organized in a scholarly manner, reflected an eighteenth-century curiosity toward the world and a desire to use knowledge for the improvement of mankind.³⁸ They provide a key context for the interpretation of Sarah Sophia's artefacts and collecting practices.

The Banks' Soho residence became the nucleus of international social and scientific activity.³⁹ The grand building accommodated the expanding collections of books, botany and other natural and man-made artefacts, and it was to become part of a global circuit of scientific debate and discourse. This was due in part to Sir Joseph's Presidential role at the Royal Society, position of Trustee at the British Museum and his close affiliations with Kew Gardens.⁴⁰ The Banks's hosted numerous balls and other entertainments

³⁸ Sloan, 2003: 12-25.

³⁹ See for example: Chambers, 1999: 27-57; Chambers, 2007; Chambers and Joppien, 2009, 222-243; Dawson, 1958.

⁴⁰ Chambers and Joppien, 2009: 225. Banks also maintained a fundamental role in many of the scientific, agricultural and intellectual societies and clubs in Britain. He was a member of the Society of Antiquaries and Society of Dilettanti, founding member of the Horticultural Society and co-founder of the Royal Institution, founding

there.⁴¹ The orientalist and vice president to the Royal Society, William Marsden wrote that ‘at Soho square, one met a variety of persons, and acquired information of what was going forward in a world of literature and science’.⁴² Similarly, Mr. Gifford of the *Quarterly* remarked that ‘Banks’s mansion was to science what Holland House was to literature’.⁴³ The Dutch anatomist Pieter Camper, who visited London in 1785, worked between the Banks’s home and The British Museum. On returning to Holland, he wrote enthusiastically about the time he spent with the Banks’s, ‘No where is there to be found a house, a library and company as that of Sir Joseph!’⁴⁴ At 32 Soho square, science was bolstered by sociability.

According to Harold B. Carter’s plan of 32 Soho square, Sarah Sophia’s bedroom and dressing room were situated just above her brother’s study, overlooking the engraver’s room and library (fig. 4). They were located on the first floor, directly across from the Drawing room and the South room (the largest room in the house), which measured twenty-eight feet by twenty-eight feet. Her room occupied the area of the house that was used for hosting many social events, such as regular Sunday soirees attended by men and women in the South room.⁴⁵ Thursday breakfast parties attended only by

member of the African Association and an original member of the Board of Agriculture.

⁴¹ Hector, 1952: 125; Carter, 1988:

⁴² Arber, 1821: 97-120; Pincott, 2004:7-8. Pincott characterizes Soho Square as, ‘a virtual scientific research institute. It became a powerhouse of enterprise, a vast museum of books and natural history specimens, to which foreigners and strangers were welcome, albeit with suitable introductions exacted’.

⁴³ Quoted in Pincott, 2004: 8.

⁴⁴ BL, Camper to Banks, 23 January 1786, Add.MS 8096, ff.257-8.

⁴⁵ Carter, 1988: 332-333; Gage, 1938, p. 27. Hector, 1952, 125. After Sir Joseph’s death, the Linnaean Society leased the front main portion of the house fronting onto Soho Square at a rent of £140 per annum, and it has been suggested that the Society’s meetings took place in the South room.

men took place in the library.⁴⁶ These events became central to the house's public identity. As in the case of other fashionable and elite British women, Sarah Sophia may have taken an active role in planning social events at which she could promote her own collection as well as that of her brother; indeed, Edward B. Smith notes that 'the house was a vast museum' and while Dr. Solander acted as Curator and Librarian, 'Banks's sister, who was devoted to him, had been mistress of the house'.⁴⁷ While some visitors came to examine Sir Joseph's scientific collections and extensive research library, others with an interest in the development and advancement of the commercial arts were offered the opportunity to examine Sarah Sophia's collections, which showcased a wide range of designs and innovations in coinage and displayed images and texts from modern graphic culture.

At the Banks's residence, Sarah Sophia and other collectors could exchange information pertaining to acquisitions, such as a new pocket-book image, a shop's trade card, a political print produced by Matthew Darley or a visitor card belonging to a well-known aristocrat. The location of her own room meant that Sarah Sophia could easily invite select friends inside, where they had the chance to see how she organized and kept her material. In semi-public rooms like the great room, items from her collection could be removed from private spaces, such as wardrobes and bookcases and then passed around, enabling visitors to participate in a ritual of decorous sociability

⁴⁶ Carter, 1988; 154, 156, 158, 224, 333.

⁴⁷ Smith, 1911: 63. For the way in which women used domestic spaces as sites for sociability see for example: Eger and Peltz, 2008; Laird and Weisburly-Roberts, 2009; Sloboda, 2010: 129-148; Sloboda (b), 2010: 455-472; Claxton, 2010: 187-196; Heard, 2013: 53-60; Martin, 2008; 357-384; Heller, 1998: 59-82. For some of the more licentious entertainments hosted by women in their homes, see Russell, 2007.

animated by intelligent enquiry, amusing personal anecdote, and the latest gossipy news.

Sarah Sophia Banks's Career as a Collector

Very little documentation exists pertaining to Sarah Sophia's collecting practices. John Gascoigne claims that it was thanks to Sir Joseph's 'good offices' that Sarah Sophia was able to amass such a large and varied collection.⁴⁸ While Sarah Sophia certainly obtained objects by way of her brother's networks of contacts, there is evidence that items collected by Sarah Sophia were obtained through her own connections and female circles. There is evidence that Sarah Sophia exchanged numerous coins with women.⁴⁹ Lady Banks's contributions should not be overlooked either as numerous visitor cards and invitations have her name written across them. Paper cut outs were also presented to Sarah Sophia by Princess Elizabeth.⁵⁰ In a letter to Sir Joseph from Matthew Boulton he thanked Sarah Sophia for presenting, 'some of his dollars to the Princesses'.⁵¹ Therefore she certainly exchanged different types of ephemera items with the Princesses. That Sarah Sophia must have been a well-known collector and that her reputation as a collector extended beyond the elite circles of London's *beau monde* and into the realm of provincial middle class women is evident in one letter accompanying a group of admission tickets in the collection that were distributed to attendants at the Norwich Ball (fig. 5). The letter, addressed to a Mrs. J. Wheler from a

⁴⁸ Gascoigne, 1994: 66-67.

⁴⁹ Many thanks to Catherine Eagleton for sharing this information with me.

⁵⁰ R. C., RCIN1047678.

⁵¹ Dawson, 1958: 141.

Mrs. Peele reads, 'I wanted to send the pretty tickets to Miss Banks but was laughed out of it. How could I think a London Lady would care about or be at the trouble of reading an account of a Norwich Ball'.⁵² Sarah Sophia's attention to detail must have been no secret either, as the sender also remarks of the accompanying news clipping that, 'I had cut out the description [sic] of Mr. Ives Ball from the newspaper (because Miss Taylor who was at it said it was very exact)'.⁵³ If Mrs. Wheler was ever informed that the tickets she collected for Sarah Sophia found a place in her collection she would no doubt have been delighted by the news.

Sir Joseph's correspondence also confirms that samples for her collection were gifted to her by way of her brother's international networks. On 21 October, 1797, the physician and naturalist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach sent Sir Joseph some 'numismatic papers for Miss Banks' and a set of pamphlets.⁵⁴ Similarly, Sir William Hamilton, diplomatist and art collector sent her a medal of The Pretender that he acquired while in Naples.⁵⁵ However, while her collections do contain examples of coins and print culture from all over the world, she never travelled abroad. Her brother's acquaintances in England also contributed to her collection. A variety of letters sent to Sir Joseph by Matthew Boulton mention articles especially for her, including coins, notes, a catalogue of ducats, pamphlets, and medal tokens.⁵⁶ The aforementioned Sir Henry Ellis, who was also secretary to the Society of Antiquaries, included 'a pamphlet containing the confession of Richard

⁵² B. M., J.9, 171-189.

⁵³ B. M., J.9, 171-189.

⁵⁴ Dawson, 1958: 115.

⁵⁵ Dawson, 1958: 389.

⁵⁶ Dawson, 1958: 127, 139, 141.

Barandon the Hangman as to the death of Charles I published in 1694'.⁵⁷ Some of the trade cards she collected represent people with whom Sir Joseph actually worked with, such as the artist John Claude Nattes (fig. 6) who was known for his depictions of landscapes. Sarah Sophia noted that Nattes's card was acquired in 1788 and in 1789 her brother commissioned Nattes to produce drawings and watercolours of Lincolnshire buildings that are now housed in the central library in Lincoln.⁵⁸ She also owned trade cards belonging to the engraver William Tringham. Tringham was employed by Sir Joseph to produce copperplate engravings for Sir Joseph's project, *Banks Florilegum*.

As a woman who enjoyed the financial means with which to pursue her interests, Sarah Sophia also purchased her own items.⁵⁹ Accompanied by her 'servant' she must have spent great swathes of time rummaging through the many prints shops in London. She will also have paid visits to the book dealers, print sellers and engravers situated on the Strand and St. James's and purchased items from the various book dealers in areas such as Pall Mall. One might even picture her passing into a coffee house to have a quick look through a pile of newspapers or going into shops with the sole purpose of slipping one delicious little trade card, whose designs she found particularly intriguing, into her pockets. John Thomas Smith, Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum from 1816, in his *Book for a Rainy Day*, wrote about these ambulatory forms of exploration:

⁵⁷ Dawson, 1958: 304.

⁵⁸ Carter, 1998: 576.

⁵⁹ Lincolnshire Archive, *Deed of Assignment and Demise*, 15 July 1779. Sarah Sophia earned approximately £631 per year in her own right.

After making repeated inquiries of the wall-vendors of halfpenny ballads for a particular one which she wanted, [Sarah Sophia] was informed by the claret-faced woman, who strung up her stock by Middlesex Hospital gates that if she went to a printer in Long Lane, Smithfield, probably he might supply her Ladyship with what her Ladyship wanted. Away trudged Miss Banks through Smithfield 'all on a market-day'; but before she entered Mr. Thompson's shop she desired her man to wait for her at the corner, by the plumb-pudding stall. 'Yes we have it,' was the printer's answer to the interrogative. He then gave Miss Banks what is called a book, consisting of many songs. Upon her expressing surprise when the man returned her eightpence from her shilling, and the great quantity of songs he had given her, when she only wanted one, -'What then!' observed the man, 'are you not one of our chanters? [ie street singers] I beg your pardon.'⁶⁰

This quote proves, however, that Sarah Sophia was very independent-minded and self-confident in her clearly expressed preference for particular types of printed materials, and she was a passionate collector who deployed numerous methods for garnering the material culture she sought.

Scholarship

Until very recently, little detailed scholarly work has been undertaken on Sarah Sophia's paper and coin collections. However, in 'Collecting African Money in Georgian London: Sarah Sophia Banks and her Collection of Coins' Catherine Eagleton has analysed the collection of coins and their systematization. She engages with Sarah Sophia's African coins and considers four cowry shells from the King of Bambara that are housed in the collection. Eagleton concludes that the shell's significance for Sarah Sophia was their links to authority, rather than their use in circulation.⁶¹ R. J. Eaglen also writes about her coins and draws on the collection as a means to study

⁶⁰ Smith, 1845: 226.

⁶¹ Eagleton, 2013: 23-38.

English hammered coins; like Eagleton he analyses her method of classification.⁶² Sarah Sophia's collection of graphic ephemera has yet to receive the kind of analysis represented by Eagleton and Eaglen's work, however. The most useful introduction to Sarah Sophia's print collection is Anthony Pincott's essay 'The Book Tickets of Miss Sarah Sophia Banks', which provides a detailed account of Sarah Sophia's biography and a good summary of her collecting interests.⁶³ He focuses in particular on some interesting examples from her collection of German, French and British *exlibris*, paying close attention to their designs and provenance. Arthur Credland has also published an article on Sarah Sophia's love for archery and describes some of the archery material she collected, including a short summary of her target cards.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, scholars such as Neil Chambers, Edward Smith, Harry Carter, Richard Holms and John Gascoigne have all briefly engaged with her in their extensive research on Sir Joseph Banks.⁶⁵ In this scholarship, Sarah Sophia is rightfully acknowledged as a devoted younger sister and collector, but usually discussed as someone operating in the shadow of her older brother.

The subject of eighteenth-century British women collectors and patronesses remains similarly understudied. However, an increasing number

⁶² Eaglen, 2008: 200-15.

⁶³ Pincott, 2004: 3-30. For her collection of pocket book imagery see: Leis, 2013: 252-271.

⁶⁴ Creland; 1991: 42-50.

⁶⁵ Chambers, 2007: 116-118; Carter, 1988: 34-5, 115-18, 153-56, 348, 417, 520, 495, 498, 520; Holmes, 2008: 9, 12, 41, 54-6, 59, 134, 137, 384, 395, 450; Smith, 2002: 63, 70, 71, 99, 258, 293, 307, 317, 322-5. For MA dissertations see: Edwards, 2011 and Sleet, 2012.

of scholars are undertaking research on this subject.⁶⁶ In this thesis I hope to reposition Sarah Sophia alongside other notable eighteenth-century British female patrons and collectors whose endeavours are now acknowledged and celebrated, such as Queen Caroline of Anspach, Anne of Hanover and Orange, Elizabeth Montagu, Elizabeth Seymour Percy (later 1st Duchess of Northumberland), Margaret Cavendish Holles Harley (The 2nd Duchess of Portland), Mary Delany, Queen Charlotte and the Princesses.

However, as this thesis demonstrates, it is also important to remember that eighteenth-century collectors and patrons often shared the same kind of practices, regardless of gender or nationality. Sarah Sophia was a woman collector, but she was also a part of broader antiquarian and scientific networks. My thesis will demonstrate how Sarah Sophia's collection simultaneously confirms many of the conclusions drawn in existing scholarship on women collectors and complicates the appropriateness of gender as a tool for the consideration of collecting.⁶⁷ As many of the

⁶⁶ For research on Queen Caroline of Anspach see: Marschner, 2002: 130-142; for Anne of Hanover and Orange: King, 2002: 162-192; Elizabeth Montague see: Eger and Peltz, 2008; Edger, 2009: 109-138; Sloboda, 2010: 129-148. For the Duchess of Northumberland, see for example: Aymonino, 2012: 101-120. For the Duchess of Portland see: Tobin, 2009: 247-263; Sloboda, 2010: 455-472; Gere and Vaizy, 2001: 77-87; Russell, 2004: 48-70; Stott, 2006; Skinner & Co., 1786, Walpole, 1936, Wildgoose, 2010. For Mary Delany see: Laird and Weisberg-Roberts, 2009; Hayden, 1988; Hayden 1992; Moore, 1990: 49-70; Barrow, 1989: 106-113. For Queen Charlotte see: Strobel, 2011; Heard, 2013: 53-60; Gere and Vaizy, 2001: 58-63; Pascoe, 54-84; Orr, 2002: 236-266. For women collectors and material culture see also: Hyde and Milam, 2003; Lawrence, 1997 and Martin, 2008; 357-384; Batchelor and Kaplan, 2007; Daly and Goggin, 2009; Daly and Goggin, 2009; Tscherny, 1997: 237; Di Bello, 2007, 35-39.

⁶⁷For research on collections and collecting see: Schwartz and Serrano, 2010; Arnold, 2006; Pascoe, 2006; Thomas, 1991, Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Crane, 2000; Robinson, 2008: 91-96; Sloan, 2003; Pearce, 1995, Pearce, 1994; Elsner and Cardinal, 1994; MacGregor, 1989; MacGregor, 2007; Hanson, 2009; Baker, Elam, Warwick, 2003; Campbell, Dulau, McCormack, 2007; Greenblatt, 1991; Chambers, 2007; Anderson, Caygill, MacGregor, Syson, 2003; Belk, 1994: 240-253. For Antiquarians see: Sweet, 2004; Peltz and Myrone, 1999; Pearce, 2007; Piggott,

collections built by women in the eighteenth century have either been dispersed, sold off to auction or lost completely, women collectors and patronesses have been marginalized. There is a significant gap in our understanding of women's contributions to the wider culture of collecting in this period. It is, therefore, vital to try and identify their active roles in shaping the artistic and scientific developments of the period. However, such discourse needs to be broadened to include both male and female collectors and to encompass other factors that influenced the way one collected, such as wealth, the market, social and political standings, profession, and broader trends in collecting during the time.

Given the diverse character of Sarah Sophia's collecting practices and the social reception of the collection in its time, we can draw upon scholarship from a variety of disciplines in order to understand the cultural significance of her collection: literary and cultural history.⁶⁸ In light of the art historical focus of my thesis, I also draw specifically on art historical scholarship pertaining to eighteenth-century English print culture.⁶⁹ Although trade cards have

1989; Piggott, 1976. For material culture: Kingery, 1996; Dant, 2005; Harvey, 2009; Appadurai, 1986.

⁶⁸ For sociability and theatre see for example: Russell, 2007; Russell, 2004; Russell, 1995; Russell, 2001; 21-42; Mulhallen, 2010; Perry, 2001; Perry 2007; Perry 2011; Moody, 2000. For gender, clubs and sociability see: Barker-Benfield, 1992; Clarke, 2000; Lloyd, 2013; Lloyd, 2002; Kelly, 2009, Clark, 2000. For eighteenth-century economics, particularly those relating to the luxury trades see: Berg, 2006; Berg, 2007; Berg and Eger, 2007; Berg and Clifford, 2007. For discourse on literature, gender studies and the duality of commerce, see: Guest, 2000; Batchelor, 2005; Knott and Taylor; 2007; Davidoff, 1973; Davidoff, 1987 For historical research and gender I draw on: Colley, 2009; Vickery, 2009; Vickery; 1997. For discussions on consumption see: Brewer and Porter, 1993; Bermingham and Brewer, 1995. For science and 'Enlightenment' culture more specifically see: Yeo, 2001; Gascoigne, 1998; Gascoigne, 1994; Farber, 2000. Fashion studies in eighteenth-century England and the *Beau Monde* see: Greig, 2009. See also: Ribeira, 2002; Ribeira, 1995; Styles, 2007; McNeil and Riello. For the eighteenth-century art world see: Solkin, 2001.

⁶⁹ For the art and techniques of engraving see: Griffiths, 1996; Lambert, 2001.

received some scholarly attention, no art historical work has been carried out on pocket-book imagery, admission tickets, or visitor cards, so I must refer to a broader range of research to position the collection within a visual arts context.⁷⁰ Mark Hallett's research on satire as 'artistic hybrid' is particularly relevant to Sarah Sophia's admission tickets and trade cards, which also show a pictorial layering of different motifs and a borrowing of elements from other visual sources.⁷¹ Cindy McCreery's research demonstrates how the high visibility of late eighteenth-century graphic satire helped contribute to ongoing debates about women's roles in society.⁷² Sheila O'Connell, curator of prints and drawings at the British Museum, bases her research mainly on the British Museum's extensive print collections. In *The Popular Print in England*, O'Connell brings together a rich source of images that shed light on popular attitudes toward political, social, religious and moral issues.⁷³ The exhibition catalogue *London 1753*, edited by O'Connell, draws on a vast range of print culture as a way of providing a vision of London 'as seen through the eyes of printmakers'.⁷⁴ She recognizes that, similar to other artists print makers were often under financial, artistic and political constraints when portraying their subjects. In his book entitled *Prints and People*, A. Hyatt Mayor recognises the printed image as not only a part of art history but as a much broader part of human history.⁷⁵ In his monumental *The English Print 1688-1802*, Timothy Clayton brings to light the importance of print as a vehicle for the

⁷⁰ See for example: Snodin, 1986; Scott, 2004, Hubbard; 2009.

⁷¹ Hallett, 1999.

⁷² McCreery, 2004.

⁷³ O'Connell, 1999.

⁷⁴ O'Connell, 2003.

⁷⁵ Mayor, 1972.

dissemination of taste, knowledge and national pride.⁷⁶ Writing about caricature, Dorothy George engages predominately with the political print and ideals of patriotism and public spirit.⁷⁷ She draws on numerous samples in Sarah Sophia's collection and sometimes refers to her annotations as a source for information. Most recently, however, Joseph Monteyne and Rosie Dias have focused on forms of display and exhibition.⁷⁸ These works provide examples of exhibition that resonate with the systematization of Sarah Sophia's collection. Research carried out on the practice of extra-illustration has also been extremely useful when considering the way prints were collected, exchanged, organized and experienced within a social context.⁷⁹ The way in which her collection was gathered and shared with viewers resonates with the amateur collecting practices Lucy Peltz describes in her many works on extra-illustration. All of this research on eighteenth-century print culture helps us to understand the engraved image as a product of its time. My examination of Sarah Sophia's paper collections adds to this body of knowledge by offering in-depth analysis of everyday engraved images that have rarely been studied before.

During the eighteenth-century, ephemera became almost ubiquitous in Britain and this is evident in Sarah Sophia's collection.⁸⁰ However, very few collections of ephemera survive intact today. The term 'ephemera', which stems from the Greek *ephemeros*, means 'lasting only a day', and it was usually used to describe the mayfly ephemeridae. The history of ephemera is

⁷⁶ Clayton, 1997.

⁷⁷ George, 1959.

⁷⁸ Monteyne, 2013 and Dias, 2013. See also Heard, 2013: 53-60.

⁷⁹ Peltz, 1998: 66-68; Peltz, 1998: 6-31; Peltz, 2004: 1-161; Peltz, 2007: 33-39; Peltz, 2005: 91-135; Blake and Sillars, 2010; Pointon, 1993: 53-78.

⁸⁰ Lloyd, 2013: 843-871; Morgan, 1994: 33; Rickards, 2000.

itself a field of study that is increasingly recognized as deserving further attention; as such it is beginning to attract more scholarship.⁸¹ Maurice Rickards's monumental encyclopaedia, *Ephemera*, has been a substantial contribution to the field, especially in its contextualization of ephemera, both socially and historically. He describes the ephemera collector in a taxonomical light claiming that for he or she it is 'the gathering, the analysis, ordering and control of the material, that matters.'⁸² Leslie Shepard focuses on one specific type of ephemera, street literature, and although she takes a historical approach when analysing materials, such as chapbooks, ballads, handbills and newspapers, she also notices the challenges of trying to fit such materials into a conventional historical framework; these forms of ephemera where intended to conjure moods and express tendencies rather than supply hard facts.⁸³ In *The Politics of the Provisional*, Richard Taws studies a range of paper items, such as passports, certificates, money, almanacs and other ephemeral items as a way of engaging with revolutionary France.⁸⁴ Taws claims that it was such items that provided an effective means for negotiating the historical importance of the Revolution. Other scholars focus on the organisation and reinterpretation of ephemera in albums and scrapbooks.⁸⁵ These have been particularly useful when considering the personal aspect of Sarah Sophia's collection. The John Johnson collection at the Bodleian Library in Oxford has been a rich treasure trove for scholars working with

⁸¹ For research on 'ephemera' and 'ephemera collections' see: Murphy and O'Driscoll, 2013; Allen and Hoverstadt, 1983; King, 2003; 33-37; Rothstein, 1987. For research on the history and materiality of paper see: Sansom, 2012.

⁸² Rickards, 2000: 37.

⁸³ Shepard, 1973.

⁸⁴ Taws, 2013.

⁸⁵ Gernes, 2001: 107-127; Tucker, Ott, and Buckler, 2006; Mecklenburg-Faenger, 2009: 141-156; Ricker, 2009: 265-280; Immel, 2005, 65-85; Higonnet, 1987: 16-36;

ephemera from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century. Not only has the Bodleian collection been the focus of books written on specific items, such as trade cards, but it has also been the subject of thematic research, as in the case of Ashley Jackson and David Tomkins *Illustrating Empire*.⁸⁶ Similarly, research has been carried out on the holdings of ephemera at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁸⁷ Scholars have also recognised the pedagogical value of ephemera.⁸⁸ Like other paper collections and repositories, Sarah Sophia's assemblage raises questions about the meaning of the term 'ephemera'. In its materiality and continuing survival, her assemblage problematises the idea of impermanence typically associated with paper items.

However, it also reveals the problems of systematization that collectors, museums and archives confront when organizing collected ephemera within their broader holdings; it is difficult to relegate such material to existing categories. For example, the criteria used to identify a particular item as an invitation, visiting card, or admission ticket can differ from one institution to the next. It is not the material worth of her collection that makes it so important; it is its cultural significance and the layers of meaning that emerge when we examine seals, autographs, textual information and images that have passed through many hands. The collection is a reminder of how the narratives extrapolated from such archives of the ephemeral are constantly altered—and sometimes even forgotten—over time.

⁸⁶ The John Johnson Collection: Catalogue of an Exhibition, 1971. For research on trade cards in the John Johnson collection see: *A Nation of Shopkeepers*, 2001. For ephemera pertaining to the visual history of British Empire, see: Jackson and Tomkins, 2011.

⁸⁷ Byrne, 1989: 285-303; Mayer, 1943: 93-98.

⁸⁸ Fisher and Steinberger, 2012.

Methodology

Given its sheer scale and the fact that much of the collection has been disassembled, it would be impossible to consider all of Sarah Sophia's categories of objects and their meaning for this thesis. Instead, I have focused on her print collection and researched several of these collections in depth. These are, in turn, her collections of pocket-book illustrations, visitor cards, admission tickets and trade cards. I chose these objects for several reasons. First, very little scholarly work exists on these objects as forms of material culture. Second, in their organization, each category provides evidence of a different aspect of the collection's character and history. Thus, visitor cards and admission tickets continue to be kept in the same way that Sarah Sophia organized them, providing concrete evidence of eighteenth-century collecting practices; in contrast, the pocket books illustrations and trade cards have been re-organised, in different ways, according to the museum's needs. Thirdly, and finally, I have chosen these four categories of graphic material because they seem representative of the collection as a whole, and encapsulate both its variety and its overlapping preoccupations.

My approach to this material has been both archival and interdisciplinary. Firstly, I have sifted through a specific category within the collection (which often contains thousands of articles) and familiarized myself with what Sarah Sophia deemed important enough to garner. I have then pursued a policy of choosing selected items from this wider body of material based on several factors: the relevance and interest of their imagery and their texts and the way in which the artefact was organised and annotated. In my writing, I engage with these objects from a variety of methodological

perspectives, and with a focus that, though primarily art historical in character, is also shaped by recent forms of cultural and literary history. I also compare and contrast her collection with similar paper collections stored in other archives. Through this process, the richness and diversity of her paper collections are fully revealed for the first time.

Thesis Structure

The first chapter of this thesis offers a new reading of the imagery found in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century pocket books. In this chapter, I consider pocket books as objects of material culture and consider the ways in which women consumed them during the Georgian period. I engage with the images and examine the ways in which they express the pocket books' function. The pocket book imagery is no longer kept in the way that Sarah Sophia organized it and it has been reassembled into an oversize album by the museum. Nonetheless, I consider how Sarah Sophia integrated the images within her collection. My second chapter focuses on the eighteenth-century visitor cards found in the collection. I draw on both primary and secondary sources to contextualise these items both historically and socially. Like the rest of the items I examine in this thesis, I consider visitor cards as miniaturized works of graphic art and focus as much on their pictorial contents as on their textual components. Chapter three focuses on another type of eighteenth-century material culture: the admission ticket. Fortunately, the admission tickets—like the visitor cards—continue to be ordered in the character devised by Sarah Sophia and as such provide evidence of how some collections of ephemera were organized in her collection. Using Sarah

Sophia's categorization as a guide, I study four different categories of admission tickets, 'plays', 'concerts', 'chapels and sectaries' and 'exhibitions' as a way of engaging with different aspects of the admission ticket: its role as a form of advertisement; and its utilization of various types of imagery and narrative. I also think afresh about how the display of such objects in her collection mimics other forms of visual display in the period. Finally, in my fourth chapter, I analyse trade cards. Although this category of object has been the focus of substantial scholarly research, I offer a new interpretation that takes into consideration the artistic styles and the shifting boundaries between the imagery of science, industry and commerce during the period.

Conclusion

Sarah Sophia was 15 years old when the British Museum, the first national museum and library in the world, was opened to the public in 1759. The museum contained libraries and collections of natural and artificial rarities. The Act of Parliament with which it was founded drew on universalistic ideas to proclaim that all arts and sciences are interconnected, and the Museum was proclaimed as one devoted to the advancement and improvement of all branches of knowledge.⁸⁹ Therefore, the establishment of the British Museum, which 'aimed at universality and belonging to the nation', was motivated by the spirit of Enlightenment enquiry.⁹⁰ Thanks to the donations of numerous distinguished collectors, the British Museum continued to grow and continues to house some of the most important artefacts in the world. On 27

⁸⁹ Sloan, 2003: 14.

⁹⁰ Sloan, 2003: 14.

September 1818 Sarah Sophia died. In her will Sarah Sophia bestowed to Lady Banks ‘two hundred Guineas for a remembrance, my dear mother’s picture by Zink, all of my Royal presents, all of my Trinkets and diamonds, Seals & c, all my Music, all my Coins, Medals, Books, Effects & co.’⁹¹ When she bequeathed her collections to her sister-in-law, she trusted that Dorothea—who was also interested in collecting—would see that the collections were rightfully safeguarded for posterity. Dorothea donated her collections to the British Museum later that same year.⁹² Sarah Sophia’s obituary, printed a few months after her death in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, marked the generous gift bestowed to the British museum, claiming that it was Sir Joseph, not Lady Banks who made the donation. The *Gentleman’s Magazine*, one of the most read magazines of the time, mentioned her ‘zeal for science and the study of natural history’, noting that:

[...]Like her brother, she was strong, animated with a zeal for science and the study of natural history, of which she had made a valuable collection. But her moral worth, even more than her talents and knowledge, rendered her the object of esteem and regard to all who had the pleasure of being acquainted with her, and who from the rank and character of her brother, in addition to her own merits, constituted a very large circle of friends. By order of Sir Joseph

⁹¹ Sarah Sophia Banks, Will, 21 Sep. 1818. According to Sarah Sophia’s will, her collection of music takes precedence over the other items she collected, including her coins. Indeed, the inventory names this collection on its own, not under the heading of ‘visiting tickets’. The collection of music is not housed in the British Library or Museum, and so it is possible that Lady Banks kept these items for herself as she also had an interest in music. The women may have had a shared interest in music. See Banks, 1797-1818, CKS-U951/A75. Lady Banks’s personal expense accounts reveal that she received music lessons regularly from Dr. Burney.

⁹² *BM Letter Book*, 1802-1847, vol. 2, letter 9. ‘Portfolios of Prints belonging to Mrs. Banks’s Collections deposited in the British Museum, by Sir Henry Ellis’.

Banks (an act of munificence that cannot be too highly praised) such of her collections of books and coins as the British Museum does not already possess has been presented to that truly National Institution.⁹³

The Magazine suggested that Sarah Sophia was her brother's equal. It equally celebrates her virtuous character and role as the creator of a vast collection, deemed important enough to be gifted to the nation. Given that Sir Joseph was one of the museum's Trustees, it is possible that Sarah Sophia always envisaged her collections enjoying an afterlife at the British Museum. That they did so seems particularly appropriate, and has ensured the survival of a remarkable paper monument, one devoted to the small, everyday, seemingly ephemeral paraphernalia of Georgian Britain.

⁹³ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1818: 472.

Chapter One: The Imagery of the Pocket Book

Eighteenth-century women's pocket books were familiar objects of polite sociability. Miniature, annual publications, they united the characteristics of the almanac and the diary. Just as important, pocket books incorporated short essays, stories, songs and games alongside small engravings that highlighted a broad range of subjects from the most fashionable garments and head dresses of the day to current political and social events. This chapter engages with this intriguing but insufficiently studied imagery. Drawing upon Sarah Sophia's collection of ephemera, this chapter demonstrates how pocket books were disseminators of good taste that helped construct personal and patriotic identities for contemporary women. First, it will be useful to establish the connections between Sarah Sophia, fashion and her pocket books. Second, I engage with pocket books as artefacts of material culture and consider the ways in which women carried, read, flicked through, and wrote in those publications. I study a wide variety of name-brand pocket books, recovering their materiality and social meanings. Subsequently, I focus on the engraved illustrations and consider the contemporaneous themes that emerge: fashion, celebrity culture, patriotism and appreciation of the arts. Ultimately, I consider the fragments that Sarah Sophia cut, pasted and saved into her own albums and suggest how those images were re-contextualized within her collections.

Sarah Sophia's collection boasts over 400 engraved images that were cut out of ladies' pocket books.⁹⁴ Sarah Sophia collected frontispieces, fashion plates, written articles and pull-out pages from these publications. Sometimes she annotated them, naming the publishers and/or booksellers. According to 'A Catalogue of Books, etc. in the main house' written in Sarah Sophia's hand, her aforementioned collection was stored in the 'South Room wardrobe in the small draw bottom' the same wardrobe where she kept her court hoop.⁹⁵ This location further establishes links between her print collection and fashionable performance. The engravings are no longer arranged in the order in which they arrived⁹⁶; instead, they have been reorganized and pasted chronologically into an oversized album—a form of arrangement widely implemented by museum curators during the late nineteenth century (fig. 7).

The variety of frontispieces Sarah Sophia collected represents over 20 different brands of ladies' pocket books published in London and Birmingham between 1760 and 1818. Given that she was a 'fashionable whip' in her younger years, it is not surprising that Sarah Sophia—like so many of her contemporaries—would have been particularly attracted to the tiny fashion plates.⁹⁷ If the dates on the fashion plates are any indication of when she began assembling her collection, Sarah Sophia may have begun collecting these images when she was just 16 years old. She seems to have continued doing so until her death; pocket books attracted women of all ages. Spanning a 58-year period, this collection offers an exceptional opportunity to examine

⁹⁴ BM, C, 4. 1-468.

⁹⁵ BL, 460.d.13.

⁹⁶ BM, 234. C. 29.

⁹⁷ Smith, 1845: 214.

the fashion trends and social and political events that took place within the period.

The Pocket Book in Context

Recent scholarship pertaining to pocket books engages predominantly with the hand-written inscriptions, comments and diary entries contained in their pages, and tends to neglect the visual and material aspects of the pocket book. The most comprehensive work carried out on pocket books to date is Molly McCarthy's essay "A Pocket Full of Days: Pocket Diaries and Daily Record Keeping Among Nineteenth Century New England Women".⁹⁸ McCarthy's research focuses mainly on how New England women utilized the diary component of the pocket book and analyzes the types of messages women wrote in such publications. Meanwhile, scholars, such as Anne Buck and Harry Matthews have provided a comprehensive overview of pocketbooks, focusing on the artists and engravers who created them and the publishers and booksellers who issued them.⁹⁹ They also consider the possible influence pocket books had on eighteenth-century dress. Alison Adburgham situates pocket books in relations to types of women's magazines.¹⁰⁰ In Amanda Vickery's enlightening book, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, pocket books are also a main archival resource. Vickery studies pocket books as a means of exploring the lives of genteel women living in the provinces of Northern England. Similarly to McCarthy, Vickery's research engages predominately with women's written records, paying particular

⁹⁸ McCarthy, 2000: 274-296.

⁹⁹ Buck and Matthews, 1984: 35-58.

¹⁰⁰ Adburgham, 1972: 159-176.

attention to women's recorded expenses. In her research, Vickery suggests that pocket books are distinct emblems 'symbolizing genteel housekeeping'.¹⁰¹ However, Jennie Batchelor points out the paradox that pocket book consumption entailed; ironically, women spent money on pocket books so as to be seen to be investing in their own frugality.¹⁰² Pocket books certainly functioned as accessories of sensible economy, as Vickery suggests, but they were also used for a range of other purposes, as this chapter explores. Pocket books presented women with a particular view of the world that appealed to their interests and aspirations and signified sociability, patriotism and good taste.

Because of their size, pocket books were easily transportable and could fit conveniently into the palm of one's hand or inside one's pockets. Titles such as *Ladies Companion*, *Mental Companion* and *The Ladies Daily Companion* suggest that pocket books were meant to accompany the owner wherever she went. 'Companion' draws a parallel between those books and 'lady's companions'. A 'Lady's companion' was a term used in Britain from the eighteenth until the mid-twentieth centuries to designate women of genteel birth whose role was to spend time with their employers, provide company and conversation, help entertain guests and accompany them to social events.¹⁰³ Like those owned by other women, Sarah Sophia's pocket books must have served as 'virtual companions', accompanying her around town, on trips, and on social visits. Thomas Smith, Keeper of prints and drawings at the British Museum (1816 -1833) claimed that later in life Sarah Sophia's dress

¹⁰¹ Vickery, 1997: 133.

¹⁰² Batchelor, 2005: 97-98, 101.

¹⁰³ Hecht, 1956: 62.

was of the 'old school' and that 'her Barcelona quilted petticoat had a hole on either side for the convenience of rummaging two immense pockets, stuffed with books of all sizes'.¹⁰⁴ Some of these books might well have been the pocket books she collected.

Many pocket books in archives today are bound in natural brown leather (fig. 8). Some editions were designed so that the back cover of the book wrapped around the side and over the top cover, which bestowed the book with the appearance of a pocket or envelope. This device also provided some added protection; however, unlike diaries, pocket books never had locks to guard their contents; their information was never completely concealed. Some publications provided the owner with a pouch attached to the back cover for storing extra notes or visitor cards.

Pocket books were clearly desirable objects. Sarah Sophia's collection boasts a variety of frontispieces representing over 20 different pocket books published in London between 1760 and 1818. In an address to the ladies written at the front of *The Ladies Mirror or Mental Companion*—a publication consistently found in Sarah Sophia's collection—the book's editor declares that, "the general reception which they [ladies] have given their *Mental Companion*, calls again for our thanks".¹⁰⁵ The books were published annually. At the cost of one shilling each, pocket books would have been affordable to the middle classes and considered suitable gifts for friends and family.

¹⁰⁴Smith, 1845: 213. For more on the way pockets functioned in daily life see: Burman and Denbo, 2006. Although Sarah Sophia may have rejected contemporary fashion trends in later life, it appears that she relies on pockets as a means to cultivate her intellectual identity.

¹⁰⁵*The Ladies Mirror or Mental Companion for the Year of 1786* (London).

Although ladies' pocket books were not considered luxury objects, many of the frontispieces collected by Sarah Sophia championed the publication's 'elegance' and 'refinement'. The ideals of the genteel woman and of feminine virtue and beauty are immediately conveyed by way of the figures adorning the frontispieces, such as those seen in *The Ladies Mirror or Mental Companion* for the year 1791 (fig. 9). In the front of this particular pocketbook the editor declares that:

The book is enriched with useful subjects that will both amuse and improve. Attention has been also paid to the gay and entertaining part; the newest and most approved songs, and country dances are added such as will solace the passing hours. Under these ideas and the companion to support virtues it is again presented to the protection of its fair patronizers.¹⁰⁶

The words 'mental' and 'mirror' in this pocketbook's title suggest that the pocket book offers a means for both inward and outward contemplation. Pocket books were meant to instruct and entertain.

On the frontispiece, three fashionable women are depicted grouped together, dressed in stylish garments. Making up a group, it is implied that they all have common, shared interests. It also suggests that pocket books offered a 'bond of company' between readers. The fine, billowing skirts, ruched sleeves, twisted, ruffled collars and feathered hats are sartorial signifiers conveying these women's similar taste. Alongside the flowing waist ties, the curvilinear typography swirls around the page and simultaneously echoes feminine forms. The cotton or silk materials that would have been pinned onto the end of sleeves or covering the neckline add an overall

¹⁰⁶ *The Ladies Mirror or Mental Companion* for the year 1791 (London), 2.

softness to the image and create a subtle movement that makes the depicted women appear weightless; the figure on the left is almost floating, perhaps dancing. The women clasp hands and form a circular grouping; two of them direct subtle, inviting gazes toward the spectator. The figures' arrangement recalls the traditional compositional layout employed by artists when depicting the three graces—whose attributes—charm, beauty, and friendship—were those with which the pocket book was also associated. Consistently, the images adorning the frontispieces depict women in pairs or groups and usually show them engaging in polite social activities, such as visiting, horse riding, walking outdoors and drinking tea. The women are represented as feminised examples of 'civilized' behaviour.

Most ladies' pocket books adhere to a similar format, a format that remained, for the most part, unchanged during the years in which Sarah Sophia developed her collection. When opened, the pocket book presented the beholder with two engraved images. The smaller picture depicted the most fashionable dress of the previous year (fig. 10), while the opposite, slightly larger pullout page presented the viewer with the most stylish headdresses of the day, images of particular public events or leisure activities (fig.11). Scenes from contemporary plays and novels, were also popular staples of such imagery, as were depictions of exhibitions and theatres. At the turn of the century, engravings of country houses and English ruins were added, reflecting the rise of British country-house tourism and an increasingly popular picturesque aesthetic. When reproductions of artworks were featured, they always promoted British as opposed to continental artists. The book's frontispiece included the name and address of the printer. Advertisements

were usually excluded, but some books contained a single page announcing some other publications that were to be released on the market that year. Anonymous 'Lady's' edited most of the books in Sarah Sophia's collection.

In order to understand the social functions of the pocket book we need to consider it as part of a femininity constructed by and through the image of the 'Lady'. As Patrizia de Bello has suggested in relation to nineteenth-century photo albums, the play on the word 'lady' may suggest a woman with the means and the time to pursue her personal and social interests.¹⁰⁷ The image was desirable because of its aristocratic connotations, even as the term even as the term remained ambiguous in terms of class. 'A Lady' could be used to indicate a titled aristocrat, wife or daughter of a Peer or a Baronet, but it could also be used to designate a woman of sufficient wealth, education, and taste to behave like such elite models. The contents of the pocket books—fashion plates, songs, games, essays, dances, engravings and memorandum contributed to the attributes of a lady's femininity, or of a lady-like femininity—all contributed to constructing an ideal of lady-like femininity and sociability which, by way of the economically priced pocketbook, was made available to most women. As a result, the pocketbook would have been readily consumed and re-presented by those participants of mass culture who were anxious to learn about genteel lifestyles; we can be sure that such publications would have been bought by, and circulated amongst women of the 'middling' classes who aspired to be like the women represented in pocket books.

¹⁰⁷ Di Bello, 2007: 32.

The pocket books Sarah Sophia collected promoted British culture and history and many titles specifically targeted an audience of 'British' Ladies. Pocket books integrated women into a shared, nationalistic sisterhood that sent a message proclaiming that British women were both accomplished and practical in a competitive, comparative field of cultural imperialism. Benedict Anderson has argued convincingly that print culture allowed people to imagine themselves within the 'community' of a nation and made possible the dissemination of a national consciousness by way of stabilizing vernacular languages and organizing distant and proximate events according to 'calendrical simultaneity' of 'empty homogenous time', something which permitted readers to coordinate space and social time so that they could 'think' relations to others across countries and continents.¹⁰⁸ This type of community is imagined because it is grounded in shared interests as opposed to physical proximities. Pocket books provided one medium for articulating this sense of community. Though most readers never met in person, their shared taste in fashion, social events, national identity, and gender demonstrated their membership of and loyalty to a particular community. The presupposed 'happily united' community referred to by the pocket books would have been reinforced when the owners of such pocket books observe other women, friends, family and acquaintances, consuming the same kind of publication.¹⁰⁹ This reassured the owner that the collective offered by the pocket book was visibly rooted in the rituals of everyday life.

¹⁰⁸ Anderson, 1983; 26.

¹⁰⁹ Quote is from the *Ladies Universal Pocket Book*.

As we have noted, the frontispieces were small-scale engravings. As the images were always of events or fashions of the previous year, the pictures served as souvenirs and conjured memory. These tiny, works of art were perfect for collecting. Many of the images Sarah Sophia collected are anonymous; however, many were produced by well-known draftsmen and engravers, including Samuel Wale, Charles Grignion, William Wynne Ryland, John Hall, Henry Moses, Samuel Springsguth, John Walker, James Taylor, Richard Corbould and Thomas Bonner, among others. These images presented viewers with an array of artistic styles and interpretations. Significantly, the commercial success enjoyed by the pocket book in this period meant that their publishers could offer higher payments to engravers than could other print entrepreneurs and printers.¹¹⁰ Many of the pocket books that are now located in archives are missing the small engravings, and this suggests that women often separated the images from the book. The pocket book's foldout page was designed for removing, collecting and displaying. They offered readers a virtual 'paper gallery' that permitted women yet another way in which they could participate in and experience art. The images were novel, beautiful and indicative of good taste. Thus pocket books allowed women to participate and experience art in new ways. The inexpensive price of pocket books meant they exposed a relatively wide audience of women to polite culture. Women could swap the images with their social intimates and paste them into albums, thereby enabling purchasers to participate in a form

¹¹⁰Farington, 14 Nov. 1818. Joseph Farington wrote that, 'John Pye, the engraver called. He told me that for plates of the same size with those for the *Britannia Depicta*, Sir Joseph Banks for national work under the Admiralty pays him 45 guineas for each plate, while Cadell & Davis pay him only 35 guineas. He also gets much more by working on plates for pocket books than by engraving for Messrs. Cadell & Davis.'

of connoisseurship. Pocket-book imagery offered women the opportunity to promote and exchange cultural refinement. Readers could associate their purchase with the consumption of fine art and the display of refined tastes.

A central feature of the pocket book is the date inscribed on its front, something that connects all of its contents. However, complicating the contemporaneity suggested by the specific reference to a single year pocket-book, engravings always include pictures of previously current fashions and recent social and political events. As there were very few monthly and weekly magazines depicting dress, pocket-book fashion plates would have provided information to the middle classes on how to dress even if the fashion was of the previous year.¹¹¹ The engravings provided readers with a codified glimpse of the styles of recent fashion; as such they could be appreciated as souvenirs of fashion history as much as reports from the cutting edge. Furthermore, once the images were ripped out of the pocket book, as was intended, their original context was erased, concealing the apparently semi-anachronistic relationship between the fashion plate and the date on the pocket book.

After the engraved images, the reader encountered some brief essays on 'useful and entertaining subjects, items that Sarah Sophia sometimes also collected. Amongst the disparate topics dealt with in the essays stored in the collection are: 'The Economy of Dress', 'The American War', 'Sensibility Contrasted with Indifference', 'The Waterloo Bridge', 'The Natural History of

¹¹¹Buck, 1984: 35-58; Styles, 2010: 179-180: Styles argues that dress for the masses changed at a much slower rate than is generally believed. Batchelor, 2005: 103. Batchelor notes that pocketbook issues were compiled in the autumn prior to the year for which they were designed.

the Beaver' and a 'Description of the Town of Boston, in Lincolnshire'.¹¹² Women's pocket books also included short pieces of fiction—one such is entitled 'The Young Father'—and stories of a moralistic tone that were considered to be 'true', such as 'Virtue and Honesty Rewarded by Benevolence'.¹¹³ Pocket books also contained printed matter similar to that found in the popular almanacs of the day, including a yearly calendar and a compendium of dates, holidays, and astrological particulars, such as the phases of the moon (fig. 12).

If pocket books provided a guide to all the code of polite sociability, such as conversation and exchange, they also promoted an ideal of "utility". Pocket books contained rates and rules for paying coachmen, chairmen and watermen, information on the rank and order of monarchy and advice on market prices. These types of data were concisely presented in the same manner each year, via the format of a stockpile of "tables". One can only imagine exactly how useful all those tables of information really were to the buyers of such books. However, those types of facts bestowed the pocket book with an air of practicality. The gathered data could be neatly arranged and systematized into columns, thereby reflecting a commercial culture preoccupied with order, calculation and keeping records. Given Sarah Sophia's own organizational inclinations, this is probably one of the features of which she strongly approved.

This section of the pocket book often features financial commentaries pertaining to the latest taxes imposed on citizens and the days on which it

¹¹²BM.,C, 4. 1-431.

¹¹³ BM, C, 4. 1-431. BM, C,4.1-467.

was possible to sell stocks and collect interest meanwhile. The day-to-day expense pages encouraged women to incorporate tasks such as calculating and recording into their daily routines and thus to participate in a commercial society. Depending on the publisher, the expenses component contains anywhere between 52 to 100 ruled pages that provide the necessary columns and rows for keeping expenses in check and/or jotting daily engagements and memoranda. This section is also divided up into orderly rows and columns, which allowed the owner to record the amount of cash being carried over from the previous week, received or paid. The space provided for other, more discursive writing is very limited, so pocket books would not have been used in the same way as journals or diaries. However, they still allowed the owner to make short, quick, reminders to themselves. Harriet Guest argues convincingly that while fashionable women were attacked as emblematising excessive consumerism, women could be equally derided for not spending money and for indulging in browsing as a form of 'entertainment'.¹¹⁴ The limited space that pocket books provided for accounting promoted frugal shopping, not none at all.

Titles such as *The Ladies Annual Journal*, *The Ladies Royal and Picturesque Pocket Book*, *The Ladies Pocket Repository*, *The Women's Companion*, *Ladies' Museum* and *Ladies Mirror* reinforce notions of gender specificity. The titles suggest their feminine content and indicate that women were expected to engage differently with their pocket books than men.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Guest, 2000: 76-79.

¹¹⁵ Men's books are usually promoted as 'for the pocket or the desk', and some copies in the British Library reveal that men did actually put them to use for balancing business transactions. Men's pocket books were usually slightly larger in size, thus providing more space for detailed record keeping. McCarthy suggests that while the

Men's pocket books, which were also widely available in the period, addressed readers occupied in quintessentially masculine professions, such as tradesmen or clergyman. Some addressed husbandry. Women's pocket books also sometimes addressed gender-specific occupational categories, such as the household worker. However, Sarah Sophia tended to collect images from pocket books that featured elite women of leisure and that celebrated their participation within and influences on a burgeoning commercial society.

The diverse ways in which women interacted with the different sections of the pocket book are also revealed in their varied use that was made of the accounts/memoranda section. Many of the books housed in archives, however, demonstrate that not all women engaged with those instruments in the same way. While some books may have been employed for managerial purposes, others were used for creative applications, such as making small sketches, and many others were simply left blank. Sometimes the owner began the year keeping concise records, but soon the records become sparse. The novelty of the item may have worn off, or the limited space may have restricted detailed written accounts, especially in the case of women running a larger household. Besides recording wages and expenses, some owners recorded only birthdays and deaths of family members and friends. Pocket books also contain children's handwriting and doodles, indicating that mothers passed them along to their offspring. Unfortunately, Sarah Sophia's

accounts/memoranda section is regularly featured in both men's and women's pocket books, men and women probably would have recorded different types of expenses and notes. Although to some extent men and women did differ in their use of the accounts/memoranda section, they often noted similar expenses: wages paid, foodstuffs and money borrowed.

own pocket book records no longer exist, so it is impossible to know what messages she herself kept or if she even engaged with pocket books at all in that way. However, as her collection demonstrates, she was certainly attracted to the engraved images.

As well as a tool for the management of affairs, the pocket book aimed to provide ladies with 'entertainment' and 'amusements'. *The Ladies Own Memorandum – Book; or, Daily Pocket Journal For the Year 1780* promoted itself as a "methodical register" for "transactions of business as well as amusement". "Amusements" in pocket books included country songs, dances, games, enigmas and other types of puzzles. This suggests that pocket books were intended to divert one's mind away from matters that might prompt introspection, analysis, or reflection. Women may have engaged with this section as a way of occupying themselves when they were alone, but they might also, we can suggest, have incorporated it into a social context, solving the puzzles with other women at afternoon social visits.

In summary, pocket books are cultural repositories that offer microcosmic representations of polite eighteenth-century female society. They were thus both containers of material for readers and, in their pocket status, contained within the dress of their owners. Pocket books gestured to all the cultural products of polite culture—poetry, prose fiction, music and the visual arts—and equally aided women in cultivating their tastes and perfecting their skills, such as managing their money, visiting their friends and participating in philanthropic causes. In their provision of a section for accounts/memoranda they implied that women should incorporate ordered forms of routine and of financial calculation into their lifestyles. My examination of their material

history, however, reveals varied usage of the pocket book; routine was not always of the utmost importance. Pocket books provided women with a way of interlinking themselves with a broader sisterhood of women and a wider national and culture, and it created a space for women to think about themselves and to relate to others in new ways.

Women and Pocket Books

The pocket book contributed to the dynamic between mass culture and print. As in the case of other forms of printed ephemera, pocket-book imagery provides a point of entry into ongoing debates surrounding women's roles within society. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall engage with conduct books, sermons and other printed sources as evidence for how a patriarchal society kept women in a private, domestic sphere.¹¹⁶ In response, Vickery uses the same kinds of archival material to demonstrate that women were not confined exclusively to this realm.¹¹⁷ Cindy McCreery analyses satirical prints as a way of understanding the contemporaneous reputation of famous women and women who otherwise may have remained unknown. By dwelling on the impolite characteristics of satirical prints, McCreery contributes an alternative analysis of women's roles that challenges conventional accounts of women's behaviour based on more conventional sources.¹¹⁸ My analysis of the pocket book supports and complicates the aforementioned authors' views of women's presence in the public realm.

¹¹⁶ Davidoff and Hall, 1987: 416-49.

¹¹⁷ Vickery, 1993: 383-414.

¹¹⁸ McCreery, 2004.

The appearance of women in society is central to most of the pocket book engravings found in Sarah Sophia's collection. Women are everywhere. They are typically represented in groups, depicted outdoors and dramatized as participating in mostly public and some semi-private activities. Linda Colley argues convincingly that the literature of separate spheres was more didactic than descriptive of eighteenth-century society; in actuality, women were finding more activities in which they could partake within the public sphere.¹¹⁹ Sarah Sophia's repository contains numerous admission tickets belonging to both women and men, which confirms that during the eighteenth century, cultural institutions, such as libraries, pleasure gardens, country houses, exhibition spaces, theatres and museums did indeed permit female involvement. On the other hand, Harriet Guest demonstrates that although eighteenth-century women may have resisted the model of the separate spheres, they still remained, for the most part, excluded from political and professional careers.¹²⁰ The ephemera gathered into Sarah Sophia's collection reveals that men and women both attended numerous public events. However, as Guest rightly notes there were many more opportunities for male participation in the public realm than there were for women. Pocket books enabled female readers to take an active part in the literary public sphere.

Life for most middle-class women living in late Georgian England may have been more restrained than the pocket books would have us believe. Kathleen Wilson argues that women were 'constrained by their lack of legal

¹¹⁹ Colley, 2009: 287.

¹²⁰ Guest, 2000: 2-5.

and political status and injunctions to domesticity'.¹²¹ Pocket-book images not only edified and nurtured feminine virtues; they equally provided women with a kind of liminal space, hovering between the private and the public spheres, into which they could escape. Within these 'virtual' spaces, the reader may experience a sense of bonding within an imagined community. Through pocket books, women could fantasize about wearing elegant fashions, attending performances and exhibitions and publicly demonstrating their patriotism and nationalism by performing 'civic' duties such as fund raising and visits to camps. Many of the images promoted knowledge of contemporary visual culture through images of exhibition spaces and reproductions of well-known works of arts and larger engravings. Women's pocket books were one of the vehicles through which engravings were integrated within a broader existing culture. Though occasionally, private spaces are represented, most of the images portray a public world, which contrasted with the domestic space in which they would often have appreciated.

To better understand the ways these images fulfilled the pocket books' functions and how they were re-contextualized into Sarah Sophia's collection, we can note the dominant categories of imagery and subject-matter found within this collection of engravings, beginning with that of celebrity culture.

Celebrity

Pocket book imagery helped make public figures available for widespread consumption. The eighteenth-century print-market was flooded with a plethora of images depicting celebrated women and men, which the

¹²¹ Wilson, 1995: 78.

public greedily consumed in both public and private spaces.¹²² With the decline of monarchical power and the rise of Parliamentary control at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the theatre and other public entertainments became increasingly independent of court culture, which meant more people could participate in publicly accessible spaces. Around the same time, the Licensing Act, which controlled the number of printing presses, lapsed, which opened up the potential of print culture to address a mass audience. By 1760, London alone had close to 60 printing presses.¹²³ Furthermore, laws pertaining to personal libel were practically non-existent, so presses were free to publish any content they could sell, however detrimental to its subject. Most people would have been familiar with the figures and stories that featured in newspapers, journals, satires and other publications; journalistic speculation and media gossip were rampant and lucrative.¹²⁴ To better catch the public's attention, 'celebrities' readily exploited various venues and mediums, and public art exhibitions, theatres and other spaces for entertainment were "crucibles of celebrity".¹²⁵ Etchings, engravings, broadsides, newspapers and other forms of publications reminded the public of past events and assured their subjects' continued visibility. Pocket-book imagery played its own part in shaping and sustaining the reputations of a wide range of public figures, including aristocrats, actresses, artists, politicians and military heroes. While the date and written record implies permanence, the paper medium reinforces the ephemeral dynamics of heroism and celebrity.

¹²² Di Bello, 2007: 110-111; Postle, 2005.

¹²³ Cited in Tilyard, 2005: 62. Figures taken from the *Middlesex Journal* of July 1770.

¹²⁴ Tilyard, 2005: 63.

¹²⁵ Hallett, 2005: 35.

Although parallels can be drawn between the notion of celebrity in eighteenth-century society and our own contemporary conception of celebrity culture, they nonetheless differed considerably. Stella Tillyard proposes that it was only during the early eighteenth-century that the idea of celebrity began to exist alongside and sometimes overlap with the more traditional concept of fame.¹²⁶ Tillyard argues that fame was determined by one's achievements and relied on reputation and posthumous memory, while the notion of celebrity was rooted in the present and concerned with the moment that private life became a tradable commodity.¹²⁷ As I will discuss below, the pocket books' representation of fame and celebrity (and the correlated relationships between past and present, private and public) is far more complex than Tillyard's definition suggests. Furthermore, Tillyard suggests that celebrity—in all its negative connotations as compared to fame—is associated with a more 'feminine face than fame', because private life, and the kind of virtue around which reputations could pivot, were seen to reside in femininity and in women". Within this logic, ladies' pocket books, as gender-specific artefacts, served as the perfect tool for bolstering celebrity culture.¹²⁸ However, I will argue that pocket books promote both fame and celebrity and negotiate the gendering of these concepts ambivalently.

Many of the people depicted in pocket books, were well known to the public. Thus, *Harris's Original British Ladies Complete Pocket Book Memorandum Book for the Year 1784* features an engraving of Siddons entitled *Mrs. Siddons in the Character of Elwina in the Tragedy of Percy* (fig.

¹²⁶ Tillyard, 2005: 62, 64.

¹²⁷ Tillyard, 2005: 62, 64.

¹²⁸ Tillyard, 2005: 64.

13). Between 1782-1783 Sarah Siddons appeared 80 times at Drury Lane Theatre. The following season, in 1784-1785, she acted out 71 performances in 17 different roles, some of which she was playing for the first time.¹²⁹ In 1784, Sir Joshua Reynolds completed his full-length portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the tragic Muse, which he presented at the Royal Academy Exhibition (Fig. 14). Siddons' extraordinary visibility generated a great deal of interest among critics, and her name was continuously featured in many of the newspapers and journals circulating through London and the provinces. As Gill Perry highlights, the visibility of actresses' portraits in public spaces always attracted critical attention because it was difficult to decide whether they should be appreciated for their imaginative qualities (associated with fame) or if they were better linked with vanity and commerce (conventionally associated with celebrity).¹³⁰ Unsurprisingly, the pocket book, like other contemporaneous publications, depicts Siddons in the roles for which she was famous. She is on bended knee and dramatically clasps her hands to her heart. Her head is turned away from the actor and she looks to the woman behind her. Her furrowed brow conveys an expression of suffering. The character of Elwina is the dutiful daughter who consents to her father's request to marry a man that she does not love. This picture may represent the famous scene in which she justifies her obedience to her lover Percy by recalling 'the cruel tyranny' of a father's tears: "If thou has felt, and hast resisted these / Then thou mayst curse my weakness; but if not, / Thou canst not pity, for thou canst not

¹²⁹ Perry, 2001: 111.

¹³⁰ Perry, 2001; 113.

judge".¹³¹ Pocket-book producers capitalized on Siddons' reputation as an extraordinary and fashionable actress. The pocket book depicts Siddons in her public role, performing on stage as an accomplished actress rather than posing. Acknowledging women as public figures and their professional ambitions complicates the previously mentioned notions of masculine fame and feminine celebrity.

Unsurprisingly, pocket books exploited images of actresses to promote their own product and to surpass the competition. Capitalizing on Siddons' fame, that same year the *Ladies New and Elegant Pocket Book for 1784* also incorporated a full-length picture of the actress (Fig. 15). The actress is depicted standing in a frontal position, with her face turned away to the left in a profile view, and her eyes are locked in an upward stare. Both of her hands point off to the right. She wears the same exotic garment that she wore while performing the character Zara, from William Congreve's play *The Mourning Bride*.¹³² The image of Siddons in the role of Zara is one with which the public would have been familiar with.¹³³ The young Thomas Lawrence produced a drawing of her in this costume; Lawrence's drawing was engraved and published by John Raphael Smith in 1783 by subscription (fig. 16).¹³⁴ Around 1784, William Hamilton also painted her portrait in the role of Zara (fig.17). Mrs. Siddons' stage costume was so admired that on 29 March 1783 *The*

¹³¹ More, 1830: 198.

¹³² BL, BL,460. d.13. according to the list of her collections, Sarah Sophia owned a copy of *Zara*, which was kept at Reevesby Abby in an oak box.

¹³³ NPG D8466 Another image of Sarah Siddons wearing this costume was engraved by Thomas Cook for John Bell, published 1 May 1783. Another engraving proved that her image in the role of Zara continued to circulate in 1789.

¹³⁴ *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 7 Feb. 1783. See also Albinson, C, 2010: 33-34.

Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser published a detailed description of it for the readers' "amusement"; they praised:

the good taste and cleverness of Miss Rein, the inventress of it, who we understand is retained by the proprietors of Drury-Lane theatre for her excellence in inventing and executing the variety of dresses necessarily used in dramatic Exhibitions. The coat and train of silver tissue with an embroidery of silver on a ground of crimson satin at the bottom of a rich fringe of silver, and a drapery of crepe enriched with crimson satin and sable studded and edged with silver; the vest of emerald green satin clasped with rich embossed loops and tassels. The sleeves, silver and crepe trimming twisted of crimson sable and silver on the vest a sash of crepe ornamented with crimson, sable and silver. The fur coat a Turkish robe of yellow satin, ornamented with silver blond, loops, tassels, and Co. the headdress in the style of a turban decorated with jewels with a veil of gauze trimmed with silver.¹³⁵

Newspaper commentary and the circulation of prints was one way of disseminating news about British fashion at home and abroad. Not only was 'cleverness' of the 'inventress' Miss Rein praised, the actress' stage performance of Zara also gained the highest of accolades. As one Thomas Campbell commented, 'The disdain and indignation of Siddons, in Zara, engrossed all attention and swept away the possibility of interest in anything else. Her magnificence in the part was inexpressible. It was worth the day's trip journey to see her but walk down the stage. Her Zara was not inferior even to her Lady Macbeth'.¹³⁶

Pocket books and theatre enjoyed a symbiotic give-and-take, both supporting and being supported by the culture of celebrity and fame. This relationship functioned as a form of advertising for both pocket books and theatre. The incorporation of such theatrical imagery most likely boosted pocket book sales and would have also promoted theatregoing to a wider

¹³⁵ *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 29 Mar. 1783.

¹³⁶ *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 7 Feb. 1783.

public. By depicting actresses such as Siddons dressed in their stage costume, and performing on stage, pocket books provided viewers with a 'souvenir' of the kinds of fashion and performance that had been previously viewed in the theatre.

In contrast to its portrayal of accomplished actresses like Siddons, the pocket book also offered representations of aristocrats who were well-known for their controversial behaviour. Such figures were discussed obsessively in newspapers and periodicals. The Prince of Wales was one such aristocrat, who maintained a reputation as a rakish womanizer and carried on numerous affairs with both aristocratic women and common prostitutes. The figure of the Prince presented in pocket books provided a focus for both moral evaluation and private fantasy. For example, one image from 1784, entitled *His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, with a Lady of Quality, going to Ascot Races* (fig. 18), depicts the Prince driving a phaeton with a woman seated at his side. Both subjects turn their gazes toward the viewer, and the way that the Prince leans in close to the woman suggests the two are lovers. Although her name is not printed, viewers might have made a guess at the woman's identity, such as Mary Robinson or Frances Villiers, Countess of Jersey. Pocket books capitalized on the titillating reportage and stories of illicit sexuality passing through the capital. The visibility of the Prince affirms that subjects being portrayed in art exhibitions influenced pocket books. Like Siddons, the Prince was a highly visible icon whose image was also being showcased at public art exhibitions. In 1784, an equestrian portrait of the Prince, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, had been presented to the Royal Academy of the Arts and

received high acclaim.¹³⁷ Pocket books likewise capitalized on the Prince's political inclinations. In 1784, there is another engraving publicizing the Prince's political affiliations, 'View of the Prince of Wales's Fete in Carlton House Garden in honour of Mr. Fox's Election'. Sarah Sophia's collection also contains pictures of his two estates (Carlton House and his Pavilion at Brighton), his wedding and a fete at Frogmore in honour of his marriage. Interestingly, after the Prince's wedding, he disappears completely from the pocket book imagery Sarah Sophia collected. As commodities, pocket book imagery played an important role in generating comments and gossip.

The ubiquity of pocket book imagery helped to provide a collective experience of well-known individuals. Such examples offer an indication of how pocket books brought celebrities closer to the public. Pocket books sustained the reputations of well-known people such as actresses, aristocracy, politicians and Royalty. Together with the numerous periodicals and newspapers that included regular commentary on the lives of celebrities and other famous people, images like those seen in pocket books kept celebrity icons close. The constant presence of celebrity images in owners' lives meant familiarity, which led to a sense of intimacy. Given the omnipresence of such images, viewers could develop a personal relationship with the icons of celebrity culture. Spectators could love or hate the represented individuals, admire their actions or deem their behaviour vulgar and inappropriate. Consumers felt as if they knew these people that, in reality, they had never actually even met and who in turn knew nothing of their existence. As Ellis Cashmore highlights in *Culture/Celebrity*, these types of

¹³⁷ Ingamells and Edgcumbe, 2000: 139-140.

imagined relationships are strictly 'one way'. No interaction ever took place between the viewer and those being depicted, and most likely no interaction ever would take place between them.¹³⁸ In the imagined space of the pocket book, the consumer could still feel that there was a genuine connection between herself and the world of celebrity and fame.

Patriotism

The variety of artistic genres and subjects pocket books included in their illustrations further reinforces the idea of the pocketbook as a kind of exhibition space, a 'paper gallery'. Significantly, this imagery could include depictions of exhibitions themselves. On May 22, 1784, John Singleton Copley, an American artist working in London, exhibited his monumental sized painting *The Death of Major Pierson* (Fig. 19) in the Great Room at 28, Haymarket. The picture commemorated the heroic death of a British officer that had taken place on the battlefield three years earlier. French forces led by Baron de Rullecourt invaded Jersey on the night of 5 January 1781. A group of British officers on the island ignored French commands to surrender the island; instead, they prepared a counterattack with 24-year-old Major Francis Pierson at the forefront. After having successfully overcome the French, at the moment of British triumph, Pierson was shot dead. Copley's painting helped turn the Major into an iconic British hero, by creating an ennobling masculine image defined by the iconography of endurance, sacrificial duty, and dignity in death. Painted representations of such grand deaths drew substantial audiences: but although these images participated in

¹³⁸ Cashmore, 2006: 39. See also: Di Bello, 2007: 110

history-making it would be incorrect to accept these paintings as historically 'accurate'. Richard H. Saunders has demonstrated that Copley's painting largely ignores the facts. Instead, it provides a 'complex retelling of events'.¹³⁹ John Boydell, publisher, commissioned Copley to paint the work. For an admission fee of one shilling, exhibition visitors received a catalogue describing the picture and the opportunity to subscribe to an engraved image of the work, which was to be produced in the near future. *Fielding's Ladies Pocket Book* commemorated the exhibition on its 1785 frontispiece (Fig. 20). The pocket-book engraving was designed by Dodd (most likely D. P. Dodd, son of the painter Daniel) and engraved by the engraver Page, who contributed regularly to the pocket books collected by Sarah Sophia. The pocket-book engraving offers a depiction of how the exhibition was displayed and the social experience of the event. On the right-side wall, the *Death of the Earl of Chatham*, an earlier painting by Copley, is barely visible. *The Death of Major Pierson* is displayed above a platform, and it is decorated by heavy drapery. The *cartouche* positioned at the top middle of the picture incorporates different emblems of war, such as cannons, swords, bayonets, and spears; descending from the cartouche, a large garland sweeps across the painting. The evocation of theatrical accoutrement translates the artistic space into a type of dramatic, contemporary theatre stage celebrating British heroism and cultural taste in the visual arts. In the foreground of the image, spectators are engaged in conversation; they make comparisons between the works on display while referring to the catalogue. The exhibition space shows a clear distance between viewers and the works of art they observe. In Sarah

¹³⁹ Saunders, 1990: 5-39.

Sophia's 'paper gallery' by contrast, readers were free to hold and touch the items on display. Pocket-book viewers, similarly, could pull out the engravings in their hands.

Copley's one-man shows were often featured in ladies' pocket books; another pull-out page for the *Ladies New Memorandum Book for 1792* presented readers with a picture representing the temporary 'rotunda' that was erected in Green Park for the exhibition of Copley's painting *The Siege of Gibraltar* (1791) (fig. 21). The engraving presents the sociable exchanges that took place between visitors outside the exhibition room; some visitors stand behind a small fence, admiring the pavilion that Copley had especially built for his monumentally scaled picture. As a way of arousing public interest, the progress of the rotunda's construction was reported regularly in the newspapers, which highlighted the controversy surrounding its construction; with some regarding the structure as a 'nuisance'.¹⁴⁰ Pictured in pocket-books pages alongside 'fashionable headdresses', Copley's rotunda conveys the idea that patriotic display and fashionable performance were intertwined. Art and dress contributed to the nation's commercial prosperity. Pocket books promoted national sentiment as being in good taste. They helped define cultural refinement as an aspect of Britishness.

Pocket books also contained patriotic images that sought to mitigate the tensions brought about by political events. From June 1780 to August 1780, in response to the Gordon riots had recently ravaged the capital, four

¹⁴⁰ *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 3 May 1791. 'The Marquis of Salisbury and several noblemen in Arlington Street' went so far as to sign a petition against the construction of the building that was to be presented to his Majesty. See also *Whitehall Evening Post*, London, 28 Apr. 1791. Copley was said to have paid 'upwards of 300 L' to have it built.

camps were installed around London. Six hundred soldiers of the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry Militia camped in the gardens of the British Museum to protect the Bloomsbury neighbourhood from vandalism; their presence quickly became a popular spectacle.¹⁴¹ *A Perspective View of the Camp in the Garden at the British Museum*, also engraved by Page, provides a pictorial projection of the spatial organization of the camp (fig. 22). The Swedish naturalist Daniel Solander, who was cataloguing the museum's collections at that time, described the camp's organization:

The common men have their tents in lines on the lawn and the officers tents were in the terrace, the captains on the west side and the subalterns on the east side. The field officers have their tents in the terrace fronting the house.¹⁴²

Page's engraving appears to be after a water-colour painted by Samuel Heironymus Grimm, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1781 (fig. 23).¹⁴³ Grimm's perspective was 'taken from the centre window in the museum' and looks out to Highgate.¹⁴⁴ Both images are attempts to convey the 'peace' supposedly achieved by the battalion during the riots. (In fact, during the riots, themselves the military shot dead nearly 300 civilians and many more wounded).¹⁴⁵ Both images promote the idea of a peaceful land as opposed to the disordered and unstable government many people believed Britain had become.¹⁴⁶ However, upon closer examination, these views may be interpreted quite differently.

¹⁴¹ Caygill, 2002: 15.

¹⁴² Cited in Wilson, 2002: 49-50.

¹⁴³ Graves, 1970: 328.

¹⁴⁴ Graves, 1970: 328.

¹⁴⁵ Haywood and Seed, 2012: 8-9.

¹⁴⁶ Haywood and Seed, 2012: 7.

Grimm's watercolour represents the relaxed, social intermingling taking place between the military personnel and the visiting civilians, while Page's camp is empty. Instead, Page focuses on order; the camp is perfectly systematized especially in the case of the small tents on the lawn. Solander also noted that the British Museum's camp was 'by all esteemed the neatest of any seen'.¹⁴⁷ Page appears to misrepresent scale, miniaturising the soldier and the tiny triangular tents by comparison to the visitors chatting in the foreground. A consequence of this re-scaling of the scene is an emphasis on the genteel visitors in comparison to the lower ranks of society, especially soldiers. Unlike in Grimm's picture, social ranks do not mingle in Page's engraving. Page's miscalculation of scale is intentional; it emphasises the higher social status of the two genteel visitors. Their dress serves as distinct markers that denote specific military and social ranks. Page also adds a church, which is barely visible in the right-side distant landscape, perhaps signifying the spiritual and moral values on which British society was built. As an object aimed at mass consumption, the images engraved for pocket books depicted incidents that were media sensations, and they recorded the events that shaped a national landscape.

The inclusion of images of patriotic aristocrats is another central feature of the pocket book. An example is provided by an undated pocket-book engraving, entitled *The Military Duchess with a distant View of the Camp* (fig.24). The picture presents the viewer with a depiction of the "Military Duchess", most likely the most famous Coxheath volunteer, Georgiana, the Duchess of Devonshire. The duchess' elegant riding outfit and voguish hat

¹⁴⁷ Wilson, 2002: 49.

are easily recognizable from other fashion plates dating from 1778 found in Sarah Sophia's collection of pocket book images (fig. 25). Her statuesque height, tall plumed hat and military dress make her stand out from the rest of the crowd, and she seems to be in a commanding position; she is taller than the officer. On her head is the chic beaver hat, trimmed with ostrich feathers, a style that the Duchess of Devonshire made famous and that many aristocratic women followed enthusiastically.¹⁴⁸ The display of 'proper' patriotic fervour in dress was a part of England's nationalist agenda, but at the same time, the absorption of military motifs into women's clothing deemphasised a purely feminine sexuality and perhaps implicitly suggested the possibility of a more egalitarian existence.¹⁴⁹ The combination of fashion and military motifs also establishes a recognizable national identity. In her dedication to M. Talleyrand-Perigord, late Bishop of Autun, of the 'Vindication of the Rights of Women', Mary Wollstonecraft carefully formulated her argument for women's rights around principals of patriotism: 'If children are to be educated to understand the principle of patriotism then their mother must be a patriot'.¹⁵⁰ This engraving of the 'Military Duchess' in the pocket book reinforces Wollstonecraft's argument because it presents a woman in the role of national patriot.

As well as focusing on fashion as an expression of military sentiments, the scene offered by the engraving shows how pocket books sought to incorporate patriotic themes into their imagery. Clusters of similarly dressed people, whose backs are turned toward the viewer/reader, overlook the

¹⁴⁸ Penny, 1986: 289; Ribeiro, 2002: 45-6.

¹⁴⁹ See for example: Johnson, 2009: 149-166; Miller, 2007: 37-93.

¹⁵⁰ Wollstonecraft, 1891: ix.

Coxheath campsite. The fact that the people face away from the viewer/reader and stand in rows creates compositional depth and simultaneously invites the reader to position herself as if among the crowd. A space and a viewing position, is created that allows the reader to imagine herself among likeminded people with a similar common interest in viewing and visiting camps, an activity that was being defined as both patriotic and fashionable. By depicting the camp at a distance, the subject of war seems less terrifying, and the extravagant dress worn by the Duchess turns the preparation for conflict into the opportunity for a fashionable performance.

Pocket books offered women an implied patriotic community that would embody a grand national history. The incorporation of military and patriotic themes helped establish a recognizable national identity of which readers felt they were a part. While much of the pocket-book imagery collected by Sarah Sophia engaged with patriotic themes, those images were always combined with fashion plates. Having engaged with some examples of patriotic images in Sarah Sophia's collection, we can now turn to her fashion plates and analyse how this type of image was integrated into her collection.

Fashionable Femininity

In keeping with its emphasis on sociable exchange, Sarah Sophia's collection of pocket-book imagery promotes the notion of dress as a realm of individual and collective performance. In the eighteenth-century, clothes were conspicuous markers that often conveyed one's profession, particular social class or even the region where one lived. Fashion plates were featured regularly in ladies' pocket books, and the sartorial appearance of women as

they were celebrated in society was central to the pocket-book engravings collected by Sarah Sophia.

Not only did pocket-book imagery educate the viewer about dress, it allowed members of the *beau monde*, whose main objective was to ‘to see and be seen’, to promote themselves in a public cultural sphere.¹⁵¹ Hannah Greig describes the *beau monde* as members of an elite who relied on fashion as a way of expressing their self-identity, exclusivity, and connections. The pocket book celebrated such expressions, emphasising the artistry that lay behind fashion. The eighteenth-century hairdresser Peter Gilchrist, whose hairstyles were sometimes featured on the pocket-book pages amassed by Sarah Sophia, wrote *A Treatise on Hair*, urging hairdressers to demand recognition for their creative genius. The treatise also comments on fashion more broadly:

There is always a select party of women of quality and fashion, who possessing great advantages of person, with a refined taste in dress, are at court, and other places, more particularly taken notice of; these are they who give law in dress, are at court, and other places, more particularly taken notice of; these are they who give law in dress, and lead the fashions.¹⁵²

These were the women featured in pocket books. The images gathered into Sarah Sophia’s collection feature the most influential women of fashion, including the Marchioness of Grandby, Lady Almeria Carpenter and Lady Townsend. Gillian Russell points out that elite women exploited numerous cultural spaces as a means of promoting themselves and their status.¹⁵³ As

¹⁵¹ Greig, 2010: 236.

¹⁵² Richie, 1770: 9.

¹⁵³ Russell, 2007: 1-14.

well as providing readers with a sense of the variety of activities available to women at the time, pocket books provided a forum through which the featured women attained publicity, even if they may not have commissioned the images themselves. Russell has demonstrated that the public display of 'fashionable sociability' took many forms.¹⁵⁴ Sarah Sophia's collection of fashion plates also contained pocket-book images that reflect the concept of fashion as a phenomenon led by an elite few. Thus, one pocket book fashion page consists of an engraving depicting three especially fashionable ladies: Lady Torrington, Lady Archer and Lady Waldegrave (fig.26). According to Sarah Sophia's annotations, the picture represents the dresses of 1771. The ladies are presented in three individual panels, echoing the format of a triptych. Artists when depicting religious icons often used the format of the triptych; in this context however, the women appear to be represented as fashion icons. This format is repeated on several other pull-out pages in Sarah Sophia's collection. That the ladies are depicted in a set of three alludes to the notion of the three graces; in glorifying each of the women in turn, and representing them side by side, the pocket book illustrates three facets of a single model for feminine sociability, connecting them through their association with fashion and leisure.

Each woman is shown modelling one of the three leading dresses of fashion: the riding dress, a sporty yet stylish daytime dress worn for hunting and riding; the full dress, a more elaborate garment that was worn at court and at other special events; and the undress, a casual yet elegant dress. The

¹⁵⁴ Russell, 2007: 9. Russell points out that the 'fashionable world' not only defined itself by way of dress, but it encompassed other forms of consumerism, developments in sociability and print culture.

women's garments are well suited to their activities. Lady Torrington and Lady Waldegrave are depicted outdoors; where their highly cultivated appearance is set off by their natural settings. Lady Archer's appearance, on the other hand, is made to blend in with the decorative objects before which she is shown, emphasizing that like the ornate furniture behind her, she serves an aesthetic purpose. Dressing well was an obligation for women of a certain position, and this particular engraving also appears to advertise the social relations between members of a female elite. Sarah Sophia cut out descriptions of each of the ladies announcing their 'great beauty', 'accomplishments' and 'charms'; these likely came from features elsewhere in the pocket book.

That fine ladies were fashionable trendsetters who inspired imitation was acknowledged more broadly Sarah Sophia's collection. Pocket-book engravings reinforced the eighteenth-century idea of fashion as dictated by a certain group of elite women. Another pocket-book engraving in Sarah Sophia's collection, entitled *The Windsor Ball* (fig.27), depicts three elite women. The Duchess of Devonshire is pictured on the dance-floor, flanked by the stylish Duchess of Gloucester and Lady Barrymore. All three are coupled with dance partners. The ladies wear a similar style of full dress; a polonaise over an ankle-revealing petticoat, with swags in gauze embellished with artificial flowers, which appear to be stitched on top. The sleeves and neckline on the bodice are embellished with short ruffles. The dresses would have been worn over a corset and a false bustle pad.¹⁵⁵ This type of dress was reserved exclusively for the most formal of occasions. The silhouettes and

¹⁵⁵ Arnold, 1989: 37.

cuts of the ladies' dresses are identical. However, looking more closely, one realises that the rows of bows and ribbons decorating each skirt are different, as are the floral prints of the dress. Their hair has also been styled in a similar high fashion but ornamented with different styles of headdresses. Not only does the engraving offer the reader a pictorial projection of the social experience of Windsor Ball, it teaches readers how to distinguish the fine details of clothing. Through these means the consumers of pocket books were given the means to develop a connoisseurship of the sartorial that was especially useful in negotiating polite society.

Dress

In an essay that Sarah Sophia collected and pasted with her pocket books, entitled *The Economy of Dress*, it is written 'There is an elegance of Dress, that distinguishes people of taste from the vulgar and which consists rather in the manner of dressing, than in the dress itself'.¹⁵⁶ Some pocket books were guidebooks that offered women the opportunity to understand how to dress correctly; readers were fully aware that women who assembled outfits outside of an established canon risked being considered vulgar and excluded from a polite collective.

Much has been written on the role of dress in society. Aileen Ribeiro's research has considered issues of 'dress and morality' and the variety of relationships between specific types of dress and social customs.¹⁵⁷ Thorstein Veblen interprets dress as an important aspect of consumer behaviour. If, as

¹⁵⁶ BM *The Economy of Dress. An Essay. By a Lady.* C,4.-1-468.

¹⁵⁷ Ribeiro, 1995.

Veblen argues, consumerism becomes an index of the owner's wealth, dress conveys powerful messages about competitive status. For Veblen, dress, like consumer goods carried the same personal and social messages for all consumers, ultimately inspiring both imitation and competition.¹⁵⁸ Pierre Bourdieu emphasises the role of consumerism in consciously establishing class distinctions.¹⁵⁹ Vickery, however, recognizes the fact that consumption is fundamentally social and connective: 'Keeping up with the Joneses does not necessarily involve beating them'.¹⁶⁰ Both Bourdieu's and Vickery's reassessments of consumption question the negative connotations so often associated with consumerism and place consumerism within a realm of culture and refinement.

The newspaper clippings and imagery that were gathered, cut and pasted into Sarah Sophia's collection engage with the ideas of dress and morality, consumerism and imitation on a variety of levels. For example, one clipping from Sarah Sophia's collection engages with the negative connotations that could be generated by especially extreme breaches of sartorial convention:

The *bon ton* ladies of the present day, seem to think themselves justified in any dress they chuse [sic] to wear, or any custom they chuse [sic] to adopt, however repugnant to the established etiquette of the places they frequent. This remark is exemplified in the large broad slouched hats, most like the trenchard covering of a west country drover, that have of late made their appearances in the stage-boxes of both the theatres. How much it is to be lamented that high life and propriety are seldom bound together!¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Veblen, 1994 : 167-187.

¹⁵⁹ Bourdieu, 1979 : 378.

¹⁶⁰ Vickery, 1997:163.

¹⁶¹ BM C,4. 1-452.

Deviation from the 'established etiquette' of fashion, it is clear, exposed women to negative moral critique. However, although Sarah Sophia included this quote, she placed it alongside images showing the very types of fashion the quote criticises. By re-contextualising the excerpt in this way, Sarah Sophia draws attention to the charged interplay between taste, morality and women's dress. Her juxtaposition of text and image invites viewers to revel in the outrageousness on which it comments—in which Sarah Sophia herself clearly delighted.

Imitation was a major factor when women considered their garments. One commentator wrote that 'the female headdress is in a very unsettled state, and is likely to remain until the re-appearance in public of the Grace of Devonshire'.¹⁶² That the Duchess of Devonshire was at the forefront of fashion trends and often inspired imitation in middle- and upper-class women of her time is also conveyed in another article found in Sarah Sophia's collection:

The Duchess of Devonshire having retired from the office of leading the fashions, it is amazing what a contest there is for the temporary appointment until her Grace's lying-in permits her again to go out. One lady sports a cap, another a handkerchief, a third a petticoat, a fourth is all gauze, and a fifth deals entirely in foil. The world, however, cannot decide this important point, and the Opera must remain out of uniform until the dress fiat is announced by the appearance of its fashionable mistress.¹⁶³

Such contemporaneous commentary demonstrates how the tastes of certain elite women influenced the way in which their peers dressed. Besides general comments about fashion, newspapers consistently reported detailed

¹⁶² BM, C.4-454.

¹⁶³ BM, C.4. 431.

descriptions of the fashions worn by elite ladies at court and other special social events. Sarah Sophia frequently cut those types of notices out too and pasted them systematically into her albums.

Pocket-book imagery would have taught women how to be active investigators of fashion and to keep track of the shifts in style.¹⁶⁴ We can suggest that women would have closely observed the minute details seen on garments and in turn used their practiced eyes when judging other women's clothing or in making decisions about their own dress. Through comparing and contrasting, women learned how to distinguish fine details and perhaps even incorporate such ornaments tastefully into their dress. Materials such as fine laces, rich silks and velvets are signs of distinction and their high cost would have also signified wealth.

According to Bourdieu, different classes actively distinguish themselves from one another by way of details, including those of dress.¹⁶⁵ In the eighteenth-century, the social need for the upper class to distinguish itself from the 'middling sorts' led to the widespread use of detail to provide distinction.¹⁶⁶ Silky dresses were embellished with a variety of expensive three-dimensional ornaments including lace, ribbons, gems and flowers. Feathers and jewels composed headdresses. Distinctive dressing was an activity privileged women did collectively, not necessarily competitively. As Elizabeth Wilson recognizes, 'to dress fashionably is to both stand out and to merge with the crowd, to lay claim to the exclusive and to follow the herd'.¹⁶⁷ Wilson's observation reinforces the fact that imitation did not always

¹⁶⁴ See for example: Rothstein, 2006.

¹⁶⁵ Bourdieu, 1979: 201-02.

¹⁶⁶ Ribiero, 2002.

¹⁶⁷ Wilson, 1985: 2.

encourage competition but rather promoted a cohesive collective *within which* women distinguished themselves. Pocket-book imagery that continuously depicts even distinctively dressed women together as a part of a group or in pairs reinforces the notion that imitative dress was not necessarily competitive.

Although the fashion plates in pocketbooks expressed class differentiation, the pictures enabled a process of collective selection that allowed women to choose from different models and styles. Contemporary commentators recognized distinctive dress as facilitating access to a community:

Let us consider mankind as members of society and in that view we shall find that societies are formed of different ranks, who are best distinguished by the different degrees of dress; therefore it ought to be the care of every person to preserve a proper decorum therein, as it is a necessary qualification in life...is become like a passport that not only introduces both sexes into all polite assemblies, but attracts that respect from the world that is due to everyone behaving well into their respective stations.¹⁶⁸

It was important to keep an air of exclusivity in the face of ever-widening access to gentility. This was the result of a combination of factors; better instructions on how to be genteel circulated in publications such as pocketbooks and manuals; the growing in numbers and in purchasing power; and the range of genteel accessories available at a modest price was always increasing.¹⁶⁹ A Lady needed to keep up with the fashionable trends, even if it was only to ridicule them. But as everybody else caught up, the elite also needed to reconfigure their dress to remain exclusive. Eighteenth-century

¹⁶⁸ Ritchie, 1770: 89.

¹⁶⁹ See for example: Berg, 2005: 199-246; Brewer and Porter, 1993; Vickery, 1997: 127-194.

dress was part of a complex language, and the type of dress worn by individuals offered them the possibility to enter a variety of arenas. However, it could also exclude participation.

Headdresses

Headdresses were yet another important article of dress women used to signal distinction and to mark themselves out as members of an elite class. Recent research demonstrates the performative nature of hair and wigs and their role as signifiers of one's profession, social status and gender.¹⁷⁰ Both Ritchie and Gilchrist's treatises describe the gruelling processes of combing, teasing, ironing, twisting, plaiting, pinning, plastering (with pomatum) and powdering. Headdresses were then decorated with flowers, feathers, shells, scraps of ribbon, jewels and hats. The hair was to be dressed and decorated in specific ways that corresponded to one's type of outfit. Women were cautioned about what headdresses to choose and advised to carefully consider the styles that best enhanced their particular facial features.¹⁷¹ The process of combing hair out of the headdress was just as complicated, and ladies often complained about the pain, the tearing of the hair and the tenderness of the scalp.¹⁷² The headdresses could be admired individually or as a group; studying headdresses enabled women to participate in a collective exhibition of refined taste.

The women's headdresses shown in pocket books helped define femininity and perpetuate a 'proper' female decorum. One pull-out page

¹⁷⁰ Pointon, 1993: 107-140, Powell and Roche, 2004; 79-99. McNeil, 2013.

¹⁷¹ Ritchie, 1770: 58.

¹⁷² Ritchie, 1770: 59.

represents *Twelve fashionable Head-dresses of 1780* (fig. 28). Twelve examples of ladies' headdresses in a head-and-shoulders format are displayed. The number of headdresses implies the possibility of changing headdresses every month of the year. In this picture, the unidentified ladies are represented from numerous angles—profile, back and front—that show off the particulars of each example. The strange shapes of the hats, bonnets, hairpieces and other accessories that are attached to the women's heads draw attention to the juxtaposition of the artificial and the natural. Although they have been neatly collected, arranged and categorised within a border for comparison and instruction, their varying sizes, forms and asymmetrical systemization are intended equally to entertain and delight the reader. The women appear to be transformed into curiosities, similar to those seen in collector's cabinets. This is further emphasized by way of their de-contextualization and placement against a white background, a format used consistently not only for pocket-book fashion plates depicting head-dresses but also, for many botanical drawings, such as those Sir Joseph collected depicting butterflies executed by the Dutch artist Cornelis Danckerts II (fig. 29). Order is imposed upon their disparate forms by way of their arrangement into rows and within a borderline; the viewer is invited to scrutinize the headdresses as if they were specimens, and the picture demands that viewers pay close attention to details, again performing a kind of sartorial connoisseurship, this time gravitating towards the dressing of the head rather than the body.

Conclusion

The images depicted on pocket-book pages offer a glimpse of the broader contexts that shaped - and were shaped by - fashion, art and patriotism. Sarah Sophia's collection of pocket-book imagery shows that dress and celebrity were interconnected. In the eighteenth century women were involved with and affected by fashion and its visual imagery; dress and hair provoked interest and emulation.

Sarah Sophia's collection demonstrates that dress was related not only to celebrity but also to art. Fashion functioned as artifice, asserting one's control over nature. One piece of contemporaneous commentary found in Sarah Sophia's collection notes:

The difference of taste appears in a certain arrangement of the dress that sets off each part and gives an harmony and an elegance to the whole; like the composition of a picture which blends every figure into one design and makes the whole complete.¹⁷³

This comment demonstrates that dressing was considered a form of artistry. Although some dress was derided, dressing one's hair in an elaborate fashion was meant to 'make it by art a greater ornament than it is by nature'.¹⁷⁴ Incorporating terms such as 'arrangement', 'harmony' and 'composition' reveal that the formal properties of dress and hair styling were to be considered and appreciated in a similar way to that of painting. It places fashion within a context of the other 'high' arts that elsewhere in the pocketbooks, polite and politely dressed women are shown consuming.

¹⁷³ BM, C,4.-431.

¹⁷⁴ Ritchie, 1770: 57.

Interestingly, pocket-book images sometimes explicitly merged the imagery and consumption of art with the imagery of dress. Fashionable women were not only taught to look at images, they were encouraged to make them. One image of 'Fashionable Dress' for *Carnan's Ladies Complete Pocket Book* for 1802 depicts five ladies, indoors and standing around a drawing table (fig. 30). The picture was designed by the draughtsman and book illustrator Henry Corbould and engraved by Samuel Springsguth. One woman is engaged in copying a drawing placed on an easel in front of her while another woman points to the picture and instructs her. Two ladies watch attentively while another looks away in profile, thus strategically presenting the reader with a full view of her stylish headdress. All the women are elegantly dressed in ruffles, laces, and satins; one decorates her curled hair with flowers while the others wear bonnets, turbans and headbands. Their jewellery is strategically placed to set off the contours of their necks and full breast. Clearly, they are not just dressed for art classes. Instead, their manner of dress has turned them into works of art in their own right, and their arrangement is meant to create a pleasing display of feminine beauty and grace. Drawing was considered a proper, learned accomplishment, positioning women, like works of art, on display opposite male connoisseurs.¹⁷⁵ Women may have copied pocket-book fashion plates, similar to this one, when practicing their drawing. The increasingly popular subjects of 'accomplishments' and the fine arts were addressed in pocketbook essays entitled, 'Fundamental Rules to be Observed While Painting with Directions How to Judge of Such Pieces as Are Executed after the Best Manner' and

¹⁷⁵ Bermingham, 2000: 183-202; Bermingham, 1993: 3-20.

'Directions for Drawing'.¹⁷⁶ Meanwhile, parallels between fine art and dress are suggested elsewhere in Sarah Sophia's collection of fashion plates. According to the *Standard of Dress*, a pamphlet explaining a series of fashion plates collected by Sarah Sophia, ladies were warned against violating the 'symmetry of dress'.¹⁷⁷ The connection between dress and fine arts are further established with the advertisements at the back of the pamphlet announcing a new monthly quarto called *The Academy of Arts or Universal Drawing Master* and numerous recently published fine art engravings.

For some people, dress became part of a nationalistic preoccupation. Copying French fashion was considered potentially detrimental to a nation, especially when British women opted for designs whose loose fit was considered immoral and British money ended up in France. That British women were attracted to French designs and often imitated them is conveyed in another news clipping in Sarah Sophia's collection:

Citizen, I am just come to town; pray have the goodness to inform me how I must appear to be in the fashion? Madame, tis done in a moment; in two minutes I shall equip you in the latest style. Having the goodness to take off that bonnet. "Well."—Away with that petticoat." "There it is". "Away with these pockets." "There it is." "Away with that handkerchief." "Tis done". "Away with that corset and sleeves". "Will that do?" "Yes; Madame, you are now in the fashion. It's an easy matter you see. To be dressed in the fashion you have only to undress."¹⁷⁸

While this comment confirms that France was often seen at the forefront of fashion trends and British ladies looked to France for guidance, the stripping away of clothing equally alludes to the immorality of the French character that

¹⁷⁶ *Hinckesman's Imperial Ladies Pocket Book for the Year* (London) 1804.

¹⁷⁷ *The Standard of Taste; Representing the most Elegant Dresses worn by Ladies of Rank and Taste*, 1783:1.

¹⁷⁸ BM, C.4-49.

is conveyed through the way they dressed. Respectable British ladies were urged not to follow foreign styles.

Pocket-book imagery also engaged with the discourse between French and English dress, and comparisons between the two are present in pocket books (fig. 31). The picture shows two rows of overlapping busts. This composition makes for an easy comparison. The dresses are displayed in full frontal, three quarter profiles and rear positions. This allows multiple views of the garments for attentive observation and the image invites viewers to distinguish between French and English. The image focuses mainly on the décolletage and back of the neck and headdress. The garments are designed very differently. However, all the garments are elegant and refined. The image invites comparison and the placement of 'British' garments next to 'French' and would have kept women up to date with a variety of styles and enable them to define a style that was distinctly 'British'. For some, it may have even served as proof of the inferiority of French fashions to British. The image offers readers choices, but it also suggests that British dress was at an equal level with French and that British women were accomplished in an international, competitive, comparative field of cultural imperialism. By way of dress, the pocket-book imagery suggested women could align themselves with a specific and specifically virtuous national character; one that found expression too, in a refined connoisseurship of the arts and a consistent alignment with patriotic display, and that found entertainment and edification in the vicissitudes of celebrity.

Chapter Two: Extending the Self: 'Visiting Tickets'

Visitor cards, in their form and—in part—their function, resemble the contemporary business card. Materially, both are made from small, square bits of heavy stock paper, and while their designs, methods of printing and visual effects obviously differ, each includes some brief information, such as the card holder's name and street address. Like the rich and varied business cards circulating today, eighteenth-century visitor cards came in a wide variety of styles and were cultural artefacts used to represent an individual. Unlike business cards, however, visitor cards were not associated with trade; instead, those artefacts of material culture played a central part in the complex ritual of visiting. Like business cards, visitor cards were often exchanged between persons upon introductions; more usually, however, visiting cards were distributed among acquaintances to announce one's arrival in the city or town for the season. Visitor cards were particularly useful if one did not intend to visit but simply wanted to make a polite gesture. Essentially, visitor cards were tokens of polite sociability that helped to maintain polite contact between friends and associates.

Although the abundance of eighteenth-century literary sources and stationary advertisements prove that visitor cards were culturally significant, these instruments of sociability have attracted very little scholarly attention. Frank Staff proposes that the combination of written messages and images is what makes visitor cards a distinct ancestor of the later picture postcard.¹⁷⁹ More recent works pertaining to the subject of eighteenth century cards

¹⁷⁹ Staff, 1966: 9-22.

include the exhibition catalogue *L'Arte di Presentarsi*, and articles, such as A. Hyatt Mayors's 'Old Calling Cards', and more recently Esther Milne's 'Magic Bits of Pasteboard'.¹⁸⁰ Other works, such as Noel Riley's *Visiting Card Cases*, Edward Banfield's *Visiting Cards and Cases*, Patrizia de Bello's *Albums and Photography in Victorian England: Ladies, Mothers, and Flirts*, John Plunkett's 'Celebrity and Community: The Uncanny Poetics of the carte-de-viste' and Alice Wong's *Victorian Calling Cards* engage predominately with nineteenth-century cards, the medium of photography, material culture and the correct forms of etiquette involved with card distribution.¹⁸¹ Visiting cards are also mentioned in books and articles on the subject of ephemera such as Maurice Rickards's monumental *Encyclopedia of Ephemera* and Janet S. Byrne's, *Ephemera and the Printroom*, a survey of some of the ephemera materials housed in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹⁸²

During the eighteenth century, visiting cards (also known as calling cards and visiting tickets) introduced a new way of representing the self. While much has been written about Victorian visiting, the eighteenth-century phenomenon has been almost completely neglected. It was written in one late nineteenth-century etiquette manual that the visiting card, 'frequently is made to take the place of one's self'.¹⁸³ Visitor cards do not capture the physiognomic likeness of the signified individual like portraits do. However, like portraits, visitor cards represent individuals in their absence. Some visitor

¹⁸⁰ Hoffmann, Tittoni, and Cavazzi, 1985; Mayer, 1943: 93-98 A. Hyatt Mayor served as curator of prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York from 1946-1966. During his time there he extended the concept of collectable prints to include many forms of ephemera, including visiting cards and trade cards. Milne [accessed 21 Apr. 2011].

¹⁸¹ Riley, 1983; Di Bello, 2007; Banfield, 1989; Plunkett, 2003: 55-79; Wong, 1992.

¹⁸² Rickards, 2000: 351, 352. Byrne, 1989: 285-303.

¹⁸³ Quoted in Davidoff, 1973: 42.

cards simply feature printed text or images; others combine these with handwritten signatures, communicating the caller's identity by way of both emblematic and indexical signs. This chapter argues that the visitor cards found in Sarah Sophia Banks's collection acted as vehicles for imaginative self-projection on their owner's part. It will engage with the broad history of the visitor card and explore the social contexts of the visiting card as a phenomenon of its time. I go onto the commissioning and production of visitor cards. I also engage with the textual components of the visitor card—elements such as names, monographs, and autographs. The re-contextualisation of visitor cards in Sarah Sophia's collection provided a new form of self-representation on her own part and signalled her access to a represented contemporary community.

A History of the Visitor Card

To better understand Sarah Sophia's collection of visitor cards, it is necessary to situate the visiting card within a broader historical and global context. Although the precise origins of the visiting card are unknown, the 1985 *Museo de Roma* exhibition catalogue, *L'Arte di Presentarsi*, outlines a history of such cards that attests to their vital role in conjuring memory, expressing affections, supporting social circles and positioning one's place within those circles.¹⁸⁴ Contemporary scholars have speculated that the history of the visiting card began in Greece, when students smeared metal plates with wax in which they wrote their names, followed by witticisms or pieces of slander about the person that the card was being sent to;

¹⁸⁴ Hoffmann et al., 1985: 1-23.

sometimes, such cards seem to have been destined for teachers.¹⁸⁵ The later use of wax seals for monograms and coats of arms echoes the technique used by ancient Greek students and demonstrates that visiting has always been associated with the temporal. Lightweight, ephemeral materials such as wax and paper easily move through space, evoking physical transience, and their impermanence simultaneously reinforces the idea of fleeting time. In general, eighteenth-century visiting cards rarely feature wax seals; however, some examples from Sarah Sophia's collection include this attribute.

As early as the sixteenth century, visiting cards were utilized in China, where dignitaries wrote their names and titles on long pieces of red paper and presented them to people to whom they wished to convey their status.¹⁸⁶ This tradition continued to flourish in China even during the eighteenth century. Sarah Sophia's collection contains an example of this type of card in her collection (fig. 32). She may have received the card in 1784 from Horace Walpole; next to the card is a note, 'visitor card of Chinese bearing his name' the card is annotated in Sarah Sophia's script, 'in the hand of Horace Walpole'. The card, constructed from light weight tissue paper, is arranged into many folds, and a piece of heavier board, on which a block print depicting a group of men, is placed on top of the stack. The card is 9 ½ inches high, and once unfolded it measures 22 inches long. Once the recipient reaches the end of this unfolding ritual, the name of the sender is revealed in meticulous calligraphy down the last page.

¹⁸⁵ Hoffmann, 1985: 13.

¹⁸⁶ Hoffmann, 1985: 13

In Europe, German university students also used 'tickets', 'designed with their names and coats of arms', for greeting their friends and professors. Although early European visitor cards are extremely rare, some examples survive in the Museum Correr in Venice, Italy. One card, belonging to Giacomo Contarini, dates from the mid-seventeenth century and is decorated with 'illuminated' coats of arms surrounded by brief inscriptions. When the fashion for this kind of visiting card flourished in the late seventeenth century, engravers began producing cards that were smaller and printed on cheaper paper to keep costs to a minimum. However, they continued to follow the same decorative scheme: such cards tended to feature ornate coats of arms and a variety of other symbols, together with affectionate messages and the name of the sender, typically inscribed along the bottom of the card.¹⁸⁷ These tickets were sent, received, and collected by students and their teachers and later assembled into books called 'libri amacorum' or 'stammbucher', and some scholars suggest that Italians adopted this habit of collecting from German students visiting Italy.¹⁸⁸ Such books resemble today's guest-books or children's autograph books, which are passed around between classmates. The continuing collection of names and cards attests to long-standing cults of friendship, traditions of hospitality and records of memory. It also confirms Janet Byrne's claim that calling cards, like trade cards and greeting cards, fall into a category of ephemera that was saved for the information it supplied or out of sentimentality.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Hoffmann, 1985: 13.

¹⁸⁸ Hoffmann, 1985: 13.

¹⁸⁹ Byrne, 1989: 286.

Since visitor cards dating from the seventeenth-century are scarce, many contemporary collectors of cards deny that a tradition of visitor cards ever existed in the seventeenth-century. Instead, they claim that visitors wrote their surnames on the doors of the person to whom they intended to pay a visit to or would send their servant ahead to announce their arrival.¹⁹⁰ The tradition of writing one's name on doors is referred to on two German cards in Sarah Sophia's collection (fig. 33). This was probably a popular design as both cards are designed in exactly the same way; only the names are different. According to Sarah Sophia's annotations, the personification of Friendship is represented inscribing the visitor's name across the door.

In seventeenth-century Europe, the visitor card developed alongside portraits and miniatures as a significant means of self-representation. In his book *Visiting Cards and Cases*, Edwin Banfield suggests that visitor cards originated in France, where they circulated through the Court of Louis XIV's life.¹⁹¹ As France was considered a cultural leader in Europe, the court of Versailles offered a model for refined tastes and was well-known for its setting of artistic trends. Unsurprisingly, French manners were quickly imitated across courts throughout Europe. Toward the end of Louis XIV life, numerous members of court left Versailles and built town houses of their own in Paris. Hyatt Mayor suggests that with the decline of feudalism members of society were no longer confined within the walls of castles and palaces, so in order to

¹⁹⁰ Hoffmann, 1985: 14.

¹⁹¹ Banfield, 1989: 1.

maintain their previous social networks, members of court kept in contact by formally paying visits to one another.¹⁹²

Most scholars agree that the fashion for calling cards in the eighteenth century stemmed from the habit of writing messages on the backs of playing cards. People wrote on the backs of cards in order to record their visits or write brief notes.¹⁹³ The correlation between visiting cards and playing cards is also conveyed by some of the visitor cards found in Sarah Sophia's collecting (fig. 34). There may have been numerous reasons for writing messages on the backs of playing cards, but one reason must have been that people did so because playing cards were inexpensive, portable artefacts of material culture, which were often carried around by different classes of people in their pockets. Meanwhile, people may have also written on them as a means of recycling broken packs.¹⁹⁴ In 1731, Spanish diplomats supposedly introduced the hand written calling card to Florence and it is in Italy that engravers began to produce cards that incorporated elaborate designs and motifs.¹⁹⁵

By the mid-eighteenth century, fashionable society all over Europe, including England, adopted the custom of leaving cards specifically designed for visiting. However, the fashion for writing on the back of playing cards continued even after the invention of the decorated card. Medley prints, such as those by Edward Collyer, John Sturt and George Bickham, often depicted racks of playing cards alongside other scraps of sociable, contemporary graphic production, such as popular ballads, admission tickets, newspaper

¹⁹² Mayor, 1943: 94.

¹⁹³ Banfield, 1989:1.

¹⁹⁴ Mayor, 1943: 94; Byrne, 1989: 293.

¹⁹⁵ Mayor, 1943: 94.

fragments and portraits, thereby suggesting that visiting cards were just one example of a broader commercial, ephemeral culture.¹⁹⁶ Significantly, the artistic genre of the 'medley' is sometimes represented on visitor cards contained in Sarah Sophia's collection. One Austrian visitor card, engraved by Ridel (possibly the well-known Austrian engraver Franz Xaver Ridel), was designed especially to celebrate the New Year in 1800 (fig. 35). Religious New Year's greeting cards had been produced since the 15th century, but by the eighteenth century subjects were of a more secular nature and special visitor cards were often given away on New Year's Eve.¹⁹⁷ Many types of New Year cards are found in Sarah Sophia's collection, but they all originate from either Germany or Austria.

Ridel depicts a wooden board on which different pieces of polite culture, including a playing card, a card depicting flowers, a book, a small flute and some loose branches of flowers are positioned alongside scissors and a type of miniature pike that may have served as a letter opener. The items appear to have been gathered, arranged, and pinned securely down with a ribbon, a device that like the trompe o'oeil effect of the curling piece of paper tacked at the top of the board, works to create an illusionistic, third dimension. The card implies a multiplicity of good wishes for the New Year: flowers imply friendship, and playing cards, music and reading imply leisure. As such cultural activities were often a part of visits, the objects reinforce what is important about visiting. While the scissors may allude to the act of snipping newspaper clippings and other forms of ephemera such as that seen in the

¹⁹⁶ Hallett, 1997: 214-237; Hallett, 1999: 40.

¹⁹⁷ Byrne, 1989: 285-303.

picture, a popular pastime of that period, the scissors also appear to warn the viewer about the dangers of cutting ties with friends.¹⁹⁸ Pins, sometimes associated with luck, secure the ribbon that hold these articles close together in place, but other popular superstitions associated with pins often forewarn about ‘pricking’ friendships.¹⁹⁹ Visitor cards such as these demonstrate that gambling, playing cards, music-playing and visiting were all convivial forms of cultural practice bolstered by friendship. The fact that people wrote their names and messages on the backs of playing cards reveals that visiting had its genesis among other modes of playful sociability and leisurely activity.

The Social Workings of the Visitor Card

Scholarship pertaining to eighteenth-century visiting is surprisingly scarce. The 1985 *Museo de Roma* exhibition catalogue, *L’Arte de Presentarsi*, contains numerous Italian cards previously belonging to the eighteenth-century Italian collector of engravings Abate Carlo Trivulzio who began his card collection in 1774.²⁰⁰ The exhibition catalogue recognises that these miniature, engraved masterworks are a ‘*genere de arte che rappresenta, in termini di eleganza e di apparente frivolezza, la storia dell’incisione in Lombardia, a Venezia, a Firenze e a Roma*’.²⁰¹ The catalogue attempts to situate visiting tickets within a broader historical context

¹⁹⁸ Uncommon Scissors [accessed 14 Apr. 2011]. Some superstitions include, “you will ‘cut off’ fortune if you use scissors on New Year’s Day”, ‘giving a pair of scissors as a gift will cause problems in a friendship by cutting the relationship in half’.

¹⁹⁹ Uncommon Scissors [accessed 14 Apr. 2011]. In regard to pins it is claimed, ‘never lend a pin to a friend lest it prick the friendship’.

²⁰⁰ Hoffmann, 1985: 13.

²⁰¹ Hoffmann, 1985: 13. Translates into ‘a genre of art that represents in terms of elegance and apparent frivolity the story of engraving in Lombardy, Venice, Florence, and Rome’.

and provides a glimpse into an eighteenth-century standard of taste. Some of the visitor cards found in the Trivulzio collection contain the same designs and belong to the same persons as ones collected by Sarah Sophia. For example, one card belonged to the Italian sculptor Antonio Canova, whose name is carved into a block of stone, conveying his profession and a sense of historical permanence (fig. 36). That a male collector assembled the collection in Italy demonstrates that women and men had similar tastes in visiting cards and that cultural taste extended across national boundaries. It equally undermines the impression of Sarah Sophia as a particularly 'female' or 'British' collector. That Sarah Sophia's collection contained the same cards as other collectors of that time verifies that her collection of visiting cards adheres to a broader artistic tradition. It demonstrates that she was an accomplished collector in an international field of cultural exchange.

Other evidence of eighteenth-century collecting also supports the interpretation of Sarah Sophia's collection within a context of broader collecting practices that had neither a distinctly 'feminine' nor a distinctly 'national' character. This is confirmed when looking at a collection of eighteenth-century visitor cards now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.²⁰² The museum's scrapbook was assembled by the Baron d'Henin de Cuvillers while he was Charge d'Affairs at the French Embassy in Venice. It houses 205 cards, and like that of Sarah Sophia, contains numerous cards from Italy, Spain, Germany, France and Russia. Some cards in the Baron's collection contain the same family names and designs as those seen in the collection of Sarah Sophia. The cards at the

²⁰² Mayer, 1943: 93-98.

Metropolitan Museum of Art are no longer assembled in the way they would have been in the eighteenth century. However, it proves that Sarah Sophia was following broader trends both in the content of the collection. Meanwhile, inserted at the back of the Baron's album are contemporary advertisements by various auctions houses in newspapers containing information pertaining to the existence of other card collections. One example is a collection, 'Collection of 120 calling cards dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries originating in Vienna'.²⁰³ Although the collector of the collection advertised in the newspaper is unknown, it boasted the cards of numerous Austrian aristocratic families and well-known persons, including Mozart's sister Anna Maria Freyin von Berchfold Sonnenberg.

In 'Magic Bits of Pasteboard', Esther Milne discusses the imaginative, symbolic and rhetorical functions of the visitor card from the eighteenth-century to present. Although Milne briefly addresses the collecting of such cards, she engages predominately with visiting cards on a social level. Milne contextualises eighteenth-and nineteenth-century visiting cards within a broader range of communications technologies and claims that visitor cards are an early form of 'avatar' that anticipates a wide range of contemporary technologies, including mobile phone and text messaging.²⁰⁴

Although *Museo de Roma's* catalogue and Mayors's and Milne's articles are the only sources pertaining specifically to eighteenth-century visiting cards, there are several studies devoted to calling cards or *cartes-de-*

²⁰³ *M. M. A.* 43.40. The auction clipping is placed at the back of the album along with other information about auctions and visitor cards. Unfortunately, this particular clipping does not include the name of the auction house or where the notice was printed.

²⁰⁴ Milne [accessed 21 Apr. 2011].

viste, from the Victorian period. Alice Wong's work, for example, engages with engraved Victorian calling cards and the influence of their designs on business cards of today.²⁰⁵ Noel Riley also writes about Victorian visitor cards; however, he concentrates only on those produced and reproduced using the medium of photography.²⁰⁶ Edwin Banfield's research focuses predominately on the luxury cases that people used to carry cards while going on visits.²⁰⁷ John Plunkett demonstrates how the *carte-de-visite* 'heralded an unprecedented dynamic between mass culture and photography' and that the celebrity *carte* raised concerns about a populist broadening of the public sphere.²⁰⁸ In her book *Women's Albums and Photography in Victorian England: Ladies, Mothers, and Flirts*, Patrizia de Bello takes a feminist view and conceptualises scrapbooks of Victorian photographic visitor cards as the mnemonic traces of something that no longer exist. De Bello emphasises the importance of the tactile experience of holding and turning the pages and the touch of the woman who arranged them.²⁰⁹ Such research enables greater understanding of the meaning of cards and who used them; furthermore, it provides an introduction to the ritual of visiting and card collecting. However, it seems only to scratch the surface of a highly complex social and artistic practice.

Visiting, like letter writing, helped sustain social networks and was performed by many members of society. As Gillian Russell points out 'card correspondence was 'private' insofar as, unlike the post, it was not controlled

²⁰⁵ Wong, 1992.

²⁰⁶ Riley, 1983.

²⁰⁷ Banfield, 1989.

²⁰⁸ Plunkett, 2003: 55-79.

²⁰⁹ Di Bello, 2007: 3.

or monitored by the state'.²¹⁰ 'The letter' she suggests 'had the potential to be nation-defining and nation-building in its capacity to cross time and continents: the sphere of card correspondence, in contrast, was local and everyday'.²¹¹ However, some people believed visiting was a sign of the degeneracy of the times. Harriet Guest notes in her book *Small Change* that some eighteenth-century commentators considered both visiting and gambling as adverse signs of fashionable conduct and unrefined sociability, and it was believed that such activities distracted women from their education.²¹² That visiting was a frivolous part of a 'fashionable' lady's daily routine was frequently asserted. In the words of one contemporary: 'With the auctions in the forenoon, visiting in the afternoon, and plays, operas, Ranelagh, Vaux-hall, & c. in the evening, I doubt they [ladies] find but little time for more useful employments'.²¹³ Instead of spending their time on cultivating their own learning, it was often believed that women's participation in the ritual of visiting made them vulnerable to moral corruption. Some conduct books warned against the negative effects that visiting could have on young ladies. For example, they claimed that such rituals, which permitted women into the homes of others where, for instance, they could examine art collections, had the opposite effect of establishing refined taste by exposing young persons to unsuitable subjects. The works of art on display in elegant salons (naked Venuses, Apollos and Cupids) were considered inappropriate for young women to see and 'should be industriously concealed from the eyes of young persons'.²¹⁴ During the nineteenth century

²¹⁰ Russell, Swansea, June 2011.

²¹¹ Russell, Swansea, June 2011.

²¹² Guest, 2000: 61.

²¹³ Allen, 1760: 115.

²¹⁴ Allen, 1760: 207.

it was also warned that women would be branded ‘flirts’ if they be lavish in the distribution of their *carte-de-visite*.²¹⁵ However, visiting was also a way in which women could make their presence felt as arbiters of taste and participants within a vibrant social scene.

In *The Polite Lady: or a Course of Female Education: In a series of Letters, From a Mother to her Daughter* dating from 1760 the mother Portia, writing to her daughter Sophia, reports on the variety of diversions she found while living in London. Amongst the activities she mentions is visiting, and her comment further establishes a link between the sociable act of visiting and of card playing: ‘such crowds [sic] of company... such visiting, gaming and I don’t know what—that I almost imagine I am entered into a new world!’²¹⁶ Throughout the book Portia consistently advises her daughter to use her ‘good sense’ and warns that even though some women think that ‘[T]hey are now women and accomplished too, and therefore may devote their whole time and attention to dress, visiting, and diversions’, Sophia should strive to make progress in higher kinds of learning and virtues, such as, ‘temperance, chastity, modesty, humility, charity and benevolence’.²¹⁷ Some cards in Sarah Sophia’s collection, like that of Lady and Miss Archer, demonstrate that mothers often had their daughters’ names inscribed directly on their own cards (fig. 37). This would have served as a protective way of introducing young ladies into society. While the ritual of visiting reflected an eighteenth-century culture of display, young women were constantly reminded to stay clear from the possibilities of vice.

²¹⁵ Anon. ‘Flirts’, 1862: 163.

²¹⁶ Allen, 1760: 74.

²¹⁷ Allen, 1760: 159.

By drawing upon contemporary novels, we can gain further insight into the phenomenon of visiting and build on existing scholarship. A reference to the ritual of visiting in *Harcourt: A Sentimental Novel in a Series of letters* offers another provincial impression of visiting—once again in the format of fictionalized letters. In Letter III, Miss Montfort, who has recently moved to London, writes to Miss Sedley about her new, metropolitan lifestyle. Not only does she lament the ‘more than female effeminacy’ of the men she meets in London, but she also comments on the ritual of visiting: ‘This London is the strangest place! Such rounds of folly, visiting and cards, that *Vive la Bagatelle* is the reigning motto, and seems bandied about from Hyde-park to White-chapel’.²¹⁸ Although Miss Sedley identifies the phrase ‘long live nonsense’ as the motto of London visiting, visiting was also practiced in the provinces; however, it was obviously undertaken on a much greater scale in London. In fact, most of the English cards in Sarah Sophia’s collection carry addresses in London. Indeed, one used visiting cards to announce one’s arrival in London for the seasons and in places such as Bath, where visitors were registered upon arrival. In such environments, they would have worked to consolidate one’s social circle.²¹⁹ However, it was clearly considered by some a useless activity associated with a luxurious urban lifestyle, more of a ‘social obligation’ than an amusement. Edwin Banfield notes that ‘visiting was very much a female occupation and was regarded more as a social obligation than as an amusement’.²²⁰ The existence of Sarah Sophia’s extensive collection of

²¹⁸ Burney (?), 1780: 7-8. Translates into Long live nonsense.

²¹⁹ Genlis, 1800, vol. 4, 31. ‘We arrived here on the sixth and sent visiting cards to the intendant [sic.], who invited us to supper the next day’. See also: W. Day, 1836, 103-4.

²²⁰ Banfield, 1989: 1-2.

visiting cards endorses Miss Sedley's statement about visiting and London; however, as her brother regularly exploited circles of sociability for both his own self-promotion, it is highly unlikely that Sarah Sophia would have condemned this performance.

The fashion for distributing calling cards was also referred to on stage. In an episode of the musical interlude, *The Frolics of an Hour*, which was performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden in 1795, there occurs a serious *faux pas* involving visiting cards. In 'keeping up with 'city dignity and politeness', Lady Brilliant (Lucy's aunt) informs Lucy that she has sent the servant, Thomas, out to deliver their visiting cards. However, when they find the undelivered cards lying across the mantle piece, they immediately send for Thomas and interrogate him. Thomas explains that he followed the given instructions and wrapped approximately 'two and fifty' cards up in paper and 'carried them to all the fine folk'. Lucy and her Aunt find this strange as they only meant to send out about twenty or so cards that day. When Thomas digs into his pockets and pulls out the cards wrapped in brown paper Lucy and the Lady realize Thomas was distributing playing cards instead of the visiting cards; he had wrapped his own playing cards up and delivered them. Perturbed, the Lady asks Thomas to 'leave the house immediately'; however, Lucy interjects:

Excuse me, ma'am, if I say I think you deserve this sometimes; for why should you send visiting cards about to people whom you never wish to see; and thus keep up a cold correspondence, which chills friendship, and destroys the social bond of union between families? Surely this is wrong.²²¹

²²¹ *The Frolics of an Hour. A Musical Interlude. As Performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden, 1795: 8.*

The Aunt quickly answers, 'No child, you are quite ignorant of the ways of the world: Don't you know that everything which is fashionable is right? To which Lucy replies, 'No aunt, indeed, I don't; though I wish everything which is right was fashionable'.²²² Following this remark, Lucy's aunt exits to go and apologize to the people for her servant's blunder and warns him that if ever he makes such a mistake again she will turn him out of service immediately.

Not only does this scene make reference to the distribution of playing cards found in earlier forms of visiting, but it also provides some insight as to the number of visits servants were sometimes obliged to make on behalf of their employers on visiting days. It demonstrates the importance of doing things 'correctly' within fashionable society. Contemporaneous etiquette manuals consistently warned that servants be instructed on the intricacies of calling and leaving cards.²²³ However, Lucy's remark reveals the underlying tension that visitor cards posed. Increasingly, the personal contact involved in intimate friendships was replaced with a 'virtual' friendship that actually distanced people from one another by denying personal contact. While they may have bolstered sociability, visiting cards also kept people apart. Thomas's mistake meant that Lady Brilliant now had to go and face her neighbours herself. While some participants understood visiting to be an essentially superficial act, the volume of cards amassed in Sarah Sophia's collection demonstrates that it was still regarded by many as an important

²²² *The Frolics of an Hour. A Musical Interlude. As Performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden, 1795: 8.*

²²³ Milne [accessed 21 Apr. 2011].

ritual in which to participate, like everyone else, so that one could remain in contact with one's peers.

Other sources corroborate the understanding of visiting as frivolous. In a novel entitled *The Double Surprise* (a title that, like gambling and visiting, suggests chance and anticipation), written by an anonymous author in 1783, Lady Wentworth writes to her friend Miss Bouvery about the busy life-style she leads in London:

We have visits of ceremony to pay without end...we fly to enjoy the sweets of society ... I have five hundred acquaintances that is, such as return my courtesy in public—but not five with whom I am really on intimate, friendly footing. How can it be otherwise, all our ambition is to boast of crowded [sic] assemblies, to see our tables filled with visiting cards, and to read with rapture on them, Lady this, and Lord t' other [...] It is highly ridiculous, no rational soul can dispute, and a gratification any mortal, though an absolute idiot, may enjoy, provided they have a decent house, and will set the doors open.²²⁴

While visiting supposedly formed beneficial communication networks, Lady Wentworth's remarks reflect that it was also just one of many superficial forms of semi-public display in the period, part of a bustling performance of fashionable comings and goings, carriages and footmen. Some cards in Sarah Sophia's collection depict the many ways in which visitors travelled through the streets on their visits (fig. 38 & 39). Although it was initially an aristocratic ritual, visiting came to appeal to many levels of society in sociable eighteenth-century London as a form of entertainment and keeping up appearances.

The literary representations of visiting both confirm and complicate Peter Clark's claim that 'private' sociability, which was carried out in the home,

²²⁴ *The Double Surprise: A Novel in a Series of Letters*, 1783: 249-250.

was where the greatest volume of social contact took place.²²⁵ The ritual of leaving visitor cards testified as much to the absence as to the possibility of such private interactions. While visiting obviously entailed social exchanges, visitors (or their servants) mainly interacted with servants rather than hosts. In fact, visitors often intended to miss the residents of the houses they visited, and one published essay considering the notion of the modern gentleman claimed that gentlemen 'were never at home' and cards were usually announced.²²⁶

The anticipation brought about by the practice of visiting was clearly expressed in *The European Magazine and London Review*, which frequently featured stories with implied references to visiting. In one story, a character, Mrs. Dormer, states:

[W]hile engaged in looking over the visiting tickets which had been left during our absence, [Mrs. Dormer] cried out, 'Bless me! Lieutenant Loftus come to see us after all.' I almost shrieked with joy as I snatched the card out of my aunt's hand; on which was merely inscribed in his own writing, 'Lieutenant Loftus, at the Royal Hotel, Sidmouth'.²²⁷

The anticipation and discovery of the faceless card allowed the young woman to picture Lieutenant Loftus in her mind's eye. At the same time, by leaving a trace of himself (the handwritten name and address), the Lieutenant helped shape a social and physical environment that allowed her to 'touch' him. While both visitor and visited played a fundamental role in this act of

²²⁵ Clark, 2000; 39,192,451.

²²⁶ 'Essay on the Modern Gentleman', 1811: 17.

²²⁷ 'Domestic tales-Love Louisa's Tale' in *The European Magazine and London Review*; containing the literature, history, politics, arts and manners and amusements of the age London 1782-1826, vol. 80, 333.

exchange, the absence of one of the two persons was also of the utmost importance.

Another example of how visitor cards aroused emotions is found in the novel *Emma: or the Unfortunate Attachment*. Mrs. Walpole expresses to Lady Noel how she reacted upon finding a specific ticket waiting for her:

When we had got home, seeing several visiting cards lying on the table, I went to it, and read over the names on many of them. Taking up one, I saw hers [Lady Clarendon] on it. I cannot define to you what I felt on finding her among my visitors...he [Mr. Walpole] could not but observe my emotion when I held that [card] 'What is there in Lady Clarendon's name, my dear Emma' he interrogated 'which is so ungrateful to you? You are alternatively red and pale, as if it contained some noxious quality in it.'²²⁸

Mrs. Walpole's comment expresses how an individual's sense of self was inextricably bound to a larger collective identity and conveys how visiting was an emotional and alluring ritual that licensed a series of imaginative narratives that left hosts and visitors in a state of anticipation, rapture or disappointment. Like gambling, visiting involved chance and a game-like sense of surprise. The shared presence of guest and host is immaterial; the anticipation and aftermath are significant mechanisms for imagined exchange. Visitor cards are props reinforcing the fascinating dynamic between people—both 'real' and imagined—objects and the pursuit of pleasure.

The notion of community and the significance of visiting as a means for maintaining polite contact between friends and acquaintances in London are also suggested through the pocket-size publication *The Ladies Complete*

²²⁸ Cavendish, vol. 3, 1773: 232.

Visiting Guide.²²⁹ Although the book's title implies that visiting is a gendered activity, contemporaneous novels, journals, conduct books and the many cards belonging to men in Sarah Sophia's collection reveal that visiting was an occupation in which both men and woman participated regularly. However, within the context of sociability, the gendered title of this guide is significant. In her book, *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Season* (1973), Leonore Davidoff argues convincingly that women assumed an un-official role in charge of evaluating and placing persons at their 'proper level' in society through complex rituals of calling, visiting, dinner parties and balls, and invitations to stay at country houses.²³⁰ On a similar note, Harriet Guest highlights that women were 'the basis of sociable exchange' and the 'bond of company', which 'one can never safely be without'.²³¹ *The Ladies Complete Visiting Guide* shows that while women might have been excluded from many aspects of public citizenship they were still encouraged to participate in society. The importance of women's presence in and around the public sphere reflects ideas put forth by social theorists of the Enlightenment, such as John Locke, who would have interpreted women's active presence on the streets of the metropolis and meeting in 'an easy and sociable manner...[feeling] an increase in humanity from the very habit of conversing together' as a sign of the progress of civilization.²³² The Scottish Moralist

²²⁹ *Ladies' complete visiting guide, containing directions for footmen and porters, being calculated for the purpose of receiving and delivering* (London) 1800.

²³⁰ Davidoff, 1973.

²³¹ Guest, 2000: 2.

²³² Meek, 1976: 5-36.

James Fordyce also advised that male manners would be refined by the company of virtuous women.²³³

The Ladies Complete Visiting Guide offers an imaginative geography of London for visitors. It was 'calculated for the purpose of receiving and delivering visiting cards, and answering letters with dispatch and punctuality'. It boasts a 'correct' listing of all the most fashionable streets at the West End, dividing central London into four districts. The districts are compartmentalised as follows:

The first Division takes in all that Part of Westminster on the right of Piccadilly, extending to Lincoln's-inn-fields and the Temple, The Second Part contains all that Division between Piccadilly and Oxford-Street to Soho-square &c., The Third Part comprehends all that division from Edgeware-road between New-road, Mary-le-bone, and Oxford-street, to Tottenham-court-road, the left Hand of Holborn, to the Foundling Hospital.²³⁴

The book supplies readers with some basic advice for receiving and delivering visiting cards, and it contains essential information pertaining to the most convenient routes for footman and porters to take throughout the metropolis so that cards and letters could be delivered in the most efficient manner. Following these designated routes supposedly helped reduce one's rounds by 'a third of the time', thereby offering visitors the 'opportunity of devoting to particular friendships these additional moments, which must be highly gratifying to the susceptible and the intelligent'.²³⁵ However, even when one held 'at home' days most visits must have been brief, or included other

²³³ Fordyce, 1776: 8.

²³⁴ *The Ladies Complete Visiting Guide: 1800(?)* Frontispiece

²³⁵ *The Ladies Complete Visiting Guide: 1800(?)*, vi.

persons; therefore, the conversation was probably not that personal or relaxed.

The act of visiting linked women to a broader public community, and the book establishes safe boundaries within which women could journey. However, as servants often performed rituals of delivering one's cards, the book also provides women with a representational space in which they could imagine, plan, and record sociable exchange. Books like *The Ladies Complete Visiting Guide* permitted their readers to coordinate space and social time. One of the book's main functions was to help a visitor successfully keep track of her many visits. On the top of each page is the name of a street (fig.40). The page is then divided into six columns, which provided the necessary space to record house numbers, names of persons being visited, and the numbers of cards delivered and received. Space to record letters delivered and received was also provided. This format emphasises the utility of visiting and therefore appears to challenge the idea that visiting was a frivolous and useless activity. The specifically designated rows in which information could be neatly arranged and systematized into columns bestow the publication with an air of practicality. The book was a site of sociability that translated the act of visiting onto a two dimensional surface. It provided women with itineraries of distinct areas around the metropolis conducive to visiting. The guidebook allowed women to map out and record their own communities of networks or imagine and strategically plan new communities. The publication suggests that visiting was a performance that provided a means by which women could actively participate in and

experience the public sphere, and it demonstrates their common interest in sociable behaviour and shared community.

While visiting provided women with an effective means of participation in the public sphere, visiting cards also protected privacy. The ritual of leaving cards was dependant on a complex set of customs. The visiting card mediated social relations based on the degree of intimacy one desired, and interactions could be 'increased, maintained, or decreased' accordingly.²³⁶ While cards aroused imagination and desire, they equally preserved privacy and protected people who might fear one another's presence.

Visiting required a language system that needed to be learned, resulting in an abundance of books and instructions on how to call and leave cards. Until a formal set of rules was established, one of the many complications of the practice of visiting was that one was not sure who actually left the cards and for whom in the household the cards were to be presented; therefore, callers signified their physical presence in a variety of ways. As seen in Sarah Sophia's collection, some callers wrote simple messages such as 'en personne' on their card to inform hosts that they delivered the cards themselves (fig.41). Others simply scribbled a small mark across their tickets like the one seen on the top centre of the Countess of Elgin's card (Fig. 42). According to Warnes's later publication, the *Etiquette for Gentlemen* of 1866, if a visitor happened to call on a day that was not the family's 'at home' day, individual cards were to be left for the lady and for the master of the house and also to the daughters and sisters.²³⁷ Writing about

²³⁶ Milne [accessed 21 Apr. 2011].

²³⁷ Cited in Wong, 1992: 13.

the Victorian period, Wong notes that small details, such as the way one folded one's card, sent discreet signals to receivers. If the top-left corner was folded down, it meant that the caller paid his or her visit in person; an unfolded card meant that a servant had been sent. Folding the top-right corner signalled congratulations, and the lower-right fold betokened sympathy. A lower-left corner fold meant that the visitor was departing town on a journey of more than a few month's duration. A card that was left for a special person was always folded in half and diagonally, and if the visitor intended to see the whole family the card was folded in half like a book.²³⁸ As the Comte Joseph d'Estourmel noted, folding corners of cards was a sign of the visitor's 'real presence'.²³⁹ The fold draws attention to something outside the representation. It was a physical mark of the fact that the visitor had actually passed by the host's home himself/herself and suggests that the human subject is no longer a separate entity from the visiting card. Like portraiture, the card is a type of talisman maintaining a link between those present and those absent. Running one's fingers across the crease meant touching the exact same spot the visitor had touched previously.

It is difficult to say when exactly these folds became part of the ritual of calling and it is uncertain whether card folding was a trend that commenced on the continent and later made its way to Britain. One Italian visiting card housed in the Tivulzio collection belonging to the Senator Francesco Monti, which positions playing cards alongside dog-eared visitor cards, demonstrates that by 1775 (the time Monti was Senator), dog-earring cards was already a

²³⁸ Wong, 1992: 14.

²³⁹ Mayor, 1943: 93-98.

common practice on the continent. Sarah Sophia collected over 6,000 visiting cards and not one of them demonstrates any signs of folding. The fact that none of Sarah Sophia's cards feature folding, despite the prevalence of continental cards, indicates that she may have desired objects that were in mint condition. The absence of folds challenges the very social practice her collection appears to uphold; it suggests that many of the tickets she collected were probably given to her outside the cultural practice of visiting itself. In fact, annotations next to some of the cards in Sarah Sophia's collection confirm that some cards were brought to her 'from an engraver's book'.²⁴⁰ One Italian card in Sarah Sophia's collection comes from Milan, Italy and belonged to Il Conte Ercole. Dating from around 1782 the card actually depicts a visitor card with the top left corner folded downward. This gestures to and simultaneously challenges the etiquette of folding cards (fig. 43). Like the previously mentioned autograph stamp or imitation autograph, this trompe o'oeil feature was probably meant to signal one's actual presence, but it simultaneously erased the intimacy of the visitor's existence by turning the man-made fold into a sign that was mass-produced. Depicted under the fold, are a fly and an ant. Incorporating these insects along with the mock dog-eared corner, the engraver appears to be following a long tradition in which

²⁴⁰ Sarah Sophia Banks Collection, British Museum, London. C,1. 2182-2196. Visitor Cards 'As these were brought to me from an engravers book, therefore I have not put many in their proper places, as those I knew where to place, were very likely printed in a different colour from what their owners used'. She also notes that 'The late Sir Thomas Frankland's [card] was likely to have been disapproved and altered as the one in its place has no dog and the date is smaller'. These notes, annotated 1797, demonstrate that she was collecting cards from engravers and the fact that she knew what Sir Thomas Frankland's actual calling card looked like shows that she was aware of what cards people were using at the time. This mount contains the cards that people ordered but never picked up. There are numerous annotations next to the cards, mostly conjectures of who the cards were made for.

painters often incorporated trompe l'oeil motifs in order to show off their illusionistic skills. Perhaps the engraver wished to impress his clients by associating himself with Pliny's story of Apelles, court painter to Alexander the Great, who was praised for his ability to trick the viewer's eye. In the still life genre, flies often signify the fleeting nature of time, and the ant symbolises perseverance.²⁴¹ Therefore, these references can be interpreted as reinforcing the notions of transience and community so often associated with ephemera material and the act of visiting.

Even on the continent, visiting appears to have involved numerous formal details that needed to be observed in order to send out the appropriate messages to polite society. For example, one Parisian printer sold cards with polite abbreviations printed at each corner, so that any one of four messages could be easily conveyed in code by dog-earring. There was 'P.C.' for 'Pour Condolence,' 'P.P.C.' for 'Pour Prendere Conge', 'P.R.' for 'Partie Remise', and a smiling 'N.P.' for 'N'Oubliez Pas'.²⁴² Although none of the cards in Sarah Sophia's collection exhibit dog-earring, some cards, especially those from the continent, do have the above mentioned inscriptions hand written on them. Some English commentators noticed that although the P.P.C. inscription on the visiting cards of our 'modern fine gentlemen' signified that they had called Pour Prendre Conge, (i.e., to take leave), it was also joked that 'this has of late been ridiculed by cards inscribed D. I. O. (i.e., Damme

²⁴¹ Werness, 2006: 9,181-183.

²⁴² Mayor, 1943: 98. PC is manifestation countenance, P.P. C. message to take Leave, P.R. expressing one's thanks. These handwritten abbreviations are written across some of Sarah Sophia's cards.

[sic], I'm off').²⁴³ These cards probably didn't really exist and Sarah Sophia does not own any such examples.

Grand tourists, travellers, and foreign residents sometimes had visitor cards engraved for them while they were abroad, and such samples exist in Sarah Sophia's collection. For example, the Roman engraver Giovannini Serafino, known for his copper-plates of Roman *visti*, produced some of the cards in Sarah Sophia's collection. Mrs. Dickinson, The Viscountess and Lord Bulkeley and others all carried cards that were engraved by him and would have obtained them while abroad. Serafino offered a wide range of designs featuring engraved cursive names enclosed within highly decorative frames consisting of mythological creatures, vases and floral motifs (fig. 44). Other cards represented Roman views. One such card, belonging to Vicountess Bulkeley, depicts the popular Roman vista *Campo Vaccino*, also known as the 'cow pasture' (fig. 45). The *Campo Vaccino* had been painted and engraved on a far larger scale by many notable artists of the time including Claude Loraine and Giovanni Battista Piranesi. This eastern vista of the *Campo*, similar to one produced by the engraver Giuseppe Vasi (fig. 46), has been shrunk down to miniature size. It presents the viewer with the broken beauty of notable monuments and ruins in the Roman forum, in a form, which could be held in the palm of one's hand and widely circulated. These monuments include the three antique columns from the temple of Castore and Polluce, which are depicted in the middle of the card and the temple of Antoninus Pius and his wife Faustina, which was later converted to the church of S. Lorenzo in Miranda, which is represented on the left. Moving across the image, there

²⁴³ Grose, 1788: 273.

is a small circular building called the SS. Cosma and Damiano, and the ruinous Basilica di Massenzio is positioned just behind it. The church of Santa Maria Nova is depicted off in the distance on the far right. Although ancient Rome lay in ruins, there was always hope that it might be restored. Throughout time, men and women have mediated, rhapsodized and mourned before ruins. Besides conjuring up an emotional response antique ruins equally suggest an intellectual antiquarian pursuit. Cards with Roman vistas such as this were popular in Britain, and according to Sarah Sophia's collection they were also well-received in other countries; most of all Italy, where they would have expressed a national pride and contributed toward a sense of self-definition. Tourists continued to buy cards, and take them back to England as souvenirs.²⁴⁴ Foreign cards were not only exemplars of good taste; they also announced 'authentic' experience and the ability to partake in travel and the highly esteemed Grand Tour. They were proof of a broader cosmopolitan perspective. Their lightweight and small size would have made them ideal souvenirs.

More examples of cards used by British tourists exist in Sarah Sophia's collection. Two cards belonging to Madam Honywood and her husband the British army officer Le Generale Honywood are both noted as having been 'used abroad'. Next to one of the two cards associated with the Jocelyn family name, Sarah Sophia also annotated, '1779 used abroad' (fig. 47). The fact that Sarah Sophia annotated these cards in this way suggests that cards 'used abroad' held a certain distinction. Most likely, this card belonged to Lord Jocelyn, antiquarian and president of the Dublin Physico-Historical Society.

²⁴⁴ Hyatt, 194; 96-97.

The inscribed motto 'Faire mon Devoire' or 'doing my duty' is meant to describe Lord Joceylyn's motivations and thereby suggests a man with civic duties. The French inscription suggests the card was produced in France; however, Lord Jocelyn may have commissioned the card from an engraver working in Ireland before his departure. While foreign cards held a certain cachet in Britain, certainly, British cards themselves were prized as novelties abroad, and European people living on the continent would have been curious to encounter designs, lettering and inscribed names on British cards.

Once a host received a card, he or she decided if, how, and when he or she wanted to share an appointment with the caller, and replied accordingly with a message card. Sarah Sophia's collection reveals that hosts relied on message cards for a variety of purposes, including thanking callers for their enquiries (fig.48), announcing 'home days' (fig. 49), and inviting individuals to play cards (fig. 50) or to participate in other types of gatherings, such as assemblies and breakfast parties (fig. 51 & 52). Cards were also used to excuse someone from participating in the ritual of visiting due to family bereavement (fig.53). It was often customary to leave visitor cards for the host or hostess of balls, private recitals and dinners the day after the event. Visiting cards could also be used as greeting cards. Some cards were designed for and distributed to friends and acquaintances on special occasions and the numerous German and Austrian cards seen in Sarah Sophia's collection celebrating the 1800 New Year (fig. 54 & 55) attest to the fact that distributing such cards at certain occasions was standard practice in those countries.

Many of the sociable practices performed in the home during the eighteenth century, such as breakfast parties, tea drinking and domestic

dining, required the use of luxurious props such as porcelain and table wares, silver tea services, furniture, refined linens, and indulgent goods like sugar, tea, coffee and chocolate. Visiting also required a variety of specialised paraphernalia, such as tables, trays, pedestals and racks so hosts and visitors could see who came to visit.²⁴⁵ Upon visits, 'visitor cards were announced and laid on the tables'.²⁴⁶ Some reception halls contained small decorative racks that hung on the wall. These were made especially for placing and displaying visitor cards and other articles such as admission tickets and letters that had been delivered for the master or mistress of the house (fig). Other entrance halls set up elaborate pedestals, which were designed exclusively for holding card trays and baskets, the necessary receptacles for cards. Card trays and baskets were usually produced out of silver, silver plate, china, wood, and painted paper mache. Trays and card racks displayed cards, 'so that callers might see what distinguished company you kept'.²⁴⁷ Glancing over the cards presented on trays and tables, one could check who had paid a visit to the household that day. These status-enhancing objects served as markers of distinction.

In a society that was concerned with being seen, visitor cards, like portraits, were yet another form of personal display that attracted attention; as such, they shared certain similarities with portraits. Many English estate houses boasted elaborate drawing rooms and halls that were used specifically to show off portraits. In these designated areas, portraits were useful vehicles that supported or generated claims to elite status. Like the many portraits

²⁴⁵ Pool, 1993, 66. Staff, 1966: 12-13.

²⁴⁶ Essay on The Modern Gentleman, 1811; 515.

²⁴⁷ The Carte-De-Visite, *All the Year Round*, 1862; 165-68.

showcased in these spaces, in the public exhibitions spaces across the metropolis, such as the Royal Academy of the Arts and in private household galleries, calling cards were also displayed in areas that made them highly visible objects. Placed in trays and hung on racks at the entrance of one's home, these artefacts occupied a space that bordered between the public and private and were on exhibition to all persons entering and leaving the home. Their positioning conveyed the very nature of visiting cards themselves; they were miniature representations that easily circulated through private and public spaces and passed literally from hand to hand. Once distributed, what is essentially a private object, a small-scale representation that the owner keeps close to his or her body, enters a complex system of social exchange, thereby participating and contributing to public life. Tables, trays and racks provided the frames for a new form of conspicuous exhibition that showcased one's taste and place in society. Positioned side by side on trays and racks, the physical closeness of cards, next to each other, touching and overlapping, would have further conveyed to the viewer a shared sense of community.

Occupying both the private domestic world and the more public stage of society, visitor cards blurred distinctions between private persons and public characters. Cards were sometimes strategically arranged on trays and racks so that certain cards were more recognisable than others and callers might identify what distinguished company the host kept.²⁴⁸ Within the borders of the frame or rack, celebrities, aristocrats, men of science, politicians, artists and merchants mingled alongside friends and family. The presence of a particular card on a host's tray, especially a card belonging to a celebrity or

²⁴⁸ *'The Carte-De-Visite'*, 1862; 165-68.

well-known aristocrat, may have sparked gossip among visitors. The fantasy of being seen 'in good company' or having one's cards intermingled with those of aristocrats, enhanced the desirability of visiting cards; they made one feel closer to people who in reality they may not have really known that well.²⁴⁹ Obviously, the more one's card circulated, the more likely it captured the public imagination and promoted the person it represented. Visitor cards emphasised a socially constructed identity located not in the likeness of a person but in the presentation of his or her social place in society.

As cards represented one's self in society, how one presented his or her card was a significant part of the performance, and it was important to keep cards tidy, pristine and ordered. People used slim, rectangular cases to transport their visitor cards. Generally, cases were exquisitely crafted objects, produced from a rich variety of materials, both local and exotic, including ivory, silver, lacquer, leather, mother-of-pearl, and tortoiseshell. Although eighteenth-century card cases are scarce, one nineteenth-century visitor case is housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum (London). It was designed by George Stanton for Elkington & Co. of Birmingham (Fig. 56). This silver, parcel-gilt case with hinged lid and raised decoration was exhibited at both the Exposition Universelle of 1855 in Paris and at the International Exhibition, London, in 1862. Although cases were made in Britain, many cases were also imported from the continent, and from more far-flung territories such as Madagascar, and India.²⁵⁰ The detailed designs adorning such cases were produced using mediums like paint, carving, needlework, mosaic or

²⁴⁹ Plunkett, 2003: 71. Plunkett argues a similar point with the *carte-de-visite* and photographic studio window displays where images of royalty, celebrity and middle and working class people were arranged side by side.

²⁵⁰ Banfield, 1989: 5.

embossing. Cases represented a broad range of decorative schemes, like geometric and floral patterns and the latest in chinoiserie design. Recurring themes include bucolic landscapes, cityscapes, naturalistic scenes; other cases incorporated one's monogram. Visiting-card cases contained and protected the card while in the owner's possession, that is, until they were separated, dispersed, and reframed in someone's home. Card cases were status-enhancing accessories designed to impress.

Card cases were not the only option for keeping visitor cards tidy; toward the end of the eighteenth century, cards were often presented to hosts between two small pieces of cardboard and wrapped in decorative envelopes. One card contained within Sarah Sophia's collection, belonging to a man named Andre Neuberg, depicts a card delivered in this fashion (fig. 57). According to Maurice Rickards's *Encyclopaedia of Ephemera*, the 'decorative stationary' genre stemmed from the decorative visiting card, which is probably why Sarah Sophia gathered and systematized these items within her card collection.²⁵¹ Many examples of decorative stationary exist in Sarah Sophia's collection, and she dedicated one folio exclusively to 'message covers' (fig. 58). The distribution of cards in this manner may have been for more private or secretive contacts, since the envelopes would have kept the identity of the cardholder concealed from the eyes of others. Wrapping cards in envelopes makes them appear as gifts and heightens anticipation; cards may have been presented in this way for special occasions. Like visitor cards, envelopes came in a variety of sizes, bearing pre-printed or embossed designs consisting predominately of framed cartouches and decorative borders. Sarah

²⁵¹ Rickards, 2000: 311.

Sophia's collection contains samples featuring both single-coloured and 'rare' two-coloured stencil borders.²⁵² Many of the envelopes in Sarah Sophia's collection are addressed to the Countess of Shelburne; therefore, the Countess must have consciously gathered specimens for Sarah Sophia's collection.

Visiting, we can conclude, was an activity in which both men and women participated. As women held no official public roles, the fashionable pursuit of visiting was one that women could exploit in order to gain access to all types of political, scientific and gossipy information. Visiting was a firmly established rule of society, and visiting cards were an essential part of the formalities accompanying introductions, invitations and visits. While visiting was aligned with sociability and leisure, it was a practice that required a complex customary etiquette. Both visitor and visited played a fundamental role in this act of exchange, but the absence of at least one of the two persons was essential; visiting cards were a new way of representing the self that stood as an alternative 'social body' for the absent person. This social body allowed one to remain in the domestic and public sphere. Simultaneously, the tables, trays and racks that contained visitor cards provided frames for a new form of conspicuous exhibition that showcased one's taste and place in society.

Commissioning and Producing the Visitor Card

Visiting cards not only enabled communication between visitors and hosts: personalising the design of one's visiting card required collaborative

²⁵² Rickards, 2000: 311.

exchange between engraver and subject. Visitor cards were sometimes commissioned, or at least the product of negotiations between the artist and the person represented. Some cards were designed, engraved and signed by the most fashionable artists and engravers of the time, such as the French artist Jean Fragonard or the English engraver William Hogarth. However, the rarity of such examples in Sarah Sophia's collection suggests that this was an exception rather than the rule. Nonetheless, this confirms that visiting cards were markers of distinction and artistic taste.²⁵³ Although not all artists signed the visitor cards they produced, Sarah Sophia's collection contains examples by well-known artists/engravers of the day such as Rebecca Biaggio and Francesco Bertolozzi, who engraved Sir Joshua Reynolds's ticket (fig. 59). One card, for Miss Berrys, perhaps the author Mary Berry, was designed by the Irish artist Henry Tresham, later Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy of the Arts from 1807-1809 (fig. 60). The card was a collaborative effort; Tresham designed Miss Berrys's card and the Italian Di Vitali engraved it. The card was produced while Tresham was in Rome and she probably had the card made while she was on a tour of the continent, which included two long stays in Rome.²⁵⁴ This reveals how some artists turned to the mechanical arts and collaborated with foreign artists perhaps as a means of defining a commercial identity and raising some extra income while travelling abroad. Creating visitor cards would have been a way of advertising one's profession, in the early phases of an artist's career. Once they returned home, tourists might even order commissions from the artists they met and collaborated with

²⁵³ Banfield, 1989: 4.

²⁵⁴ Kent [accessed 15 August 2011].

while travelling. The beautiful, neo-classical design and exquisitely delineated engraving seen on Miss Berrys' card are details that reinforce their maker's aspirations to artistic sophistication. In this case, the card not only represents the visitor and their tastes; it also represents the designer and engraver. Therefore, visitor cards could announce a symbiotic relationship between artist and patron and appeal to an affluent audience with aesthetic taste. Visitor cards, like other forms of graphic culture, provided a means by which art expanded and became available to a wider public.

The annotations written next to numerous cards in Sarah Sophia's collection reveal not only her own interest in how images were consumed but the fact that printmakers and engravers kept an eye on the market in order to produce designs that could be recycled as many ways as possible. For example, Mr. John Hamilton intended to use the design from his visiting card 'when at Rome to serve for drawing his bills'.²⁵⁵ Next to the Auctioneer Jones Frome's card it is written that he also 'used part of this plate (Sir Isaac Heard's visiting ticket) for a part of his shop bill'. On another ticket in Sarah Sophia's collection is depicted a Roman mask, with the name Mr. C.W. Batt engraved on it, Sarah Sophia made a note of reference, 'An invitation of a Roman mask...see Ficoronii de Larvis Scenicis Rome 1754 2nd edition, in which there are many similar [masks] but no one exactly like this visiting ticket'.²⁵⁶ This suggests that some cards were inspired by and borrowed from pre-existing images associated with theatre and costume. Under Lady Bampfylde's ticket Sarah Sophia includes a separate note that 'the Reverend Barton, Rector of

²⁵⁵ Sarah Sophia's collection of visitor cards, British Museum, London. C.1-1330.

²⁵⁶ BM C,1.- 784.

St. Andrews Holborn, used to leave a similarly designed ticket when he called for Easter offerings'.²⁵⁷ Such annotations reveal that the designs depicted on visitor cards were reused on other forms of ephemera such as bills, admission tickets and greeting cards and vice versa, and this is evident throughout Sarah Sophia's collection as well. They also suggest that visitors could utilize cards to conjure people's memory, as people were often associated with specific images. Ephemeral paper objects were often designed to serve more than one capacity, and it is possible that the images portrayed on visitor cards were consumed in numerous ways, not only as a prop for the act of visiting. Their elaborate designs obviously appealed to collectors who pasted them into scrapbooks and albums; however, other consumers may have recycled visitor cards in a similar fashion to other forms of ephemera, for decorative purposes, such as hanging them on walls or cutting them out and pasting them onto furniture and boxes.²⁵⁸

The cards gathered into Sarah Sophia's collection indicate that some visitors kept the same style card for years, which suggests that visiting cards may not have been cheap objects. In fact, in 1796 Lady Bessborough apparently paid the Italian engraver Francesco Bartolozzi £20 for engraving her 'visitor ticket'.²⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the size of the print run is not mentioned. Individuals could use visitor cards as a way to reinvent themselves and samples in Sarah Sophia's collection demonstrate that they could be renamed or altered because many people repeatedly used the same design and only changed their addresses. Therefore, one may even refer to her collection of

²⁵⁷ BM C, 1.-784.

²⁵⁸ Byrne, 1989: 285.

²⁵⁹ Mayor, 1943: 97.

visiting cards as a way of mapping a person's residence around London. Some people used the same design and just changed the colour of the card. How often one changed the actual design of his or her card may have signalled his or her wealth and status. Visiting cards were a much cheaper alternative to portrait paintings and a much easier way for someone to reinvent or re-fashion his or her social identity over a period of time. Reusing the same design also enabled figures to construct and communicate a memorable self-image even if that image was associated with other representations. The process of mechanical production opened numerous possibilities for the distribution of the self, and the attention that people paid to the creation and dissemination of visiting cards suggests that they saw social value in the visibility of their card.

Sarah Sophia's collection also demonstrates that although some people may have commissioned artists to produce cards, stationers also offered a wide range of types. Often such cards were created from stock images. Sometimes, etchers and engravers produced one large plate with twelve or more different designs.²⁶⁰ As mentioned previously, ready-made visitor cards were sold in print shops throughout Britain, Scotland, and Ireland, as well as on the continent. These types of cards would have been less expensive than collaborating with an artist to create a personalized card.

For people who were concerned with demonstrating their high standard of good taste, but could not afford custom-made cards, generic visiting cards also offered depictions of bucolic landscapes, flowers, sumptuous or simple

²⁶⁰ Some examples survive in the Elisha Whittelsley Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 50.611.85.

frames, ancient figures or architectural views. Printed in rows across large sheets of paper, these types of cards were ready to be cut apart, pasted on thin card-board, signed and distributed.²⁶¹ These types of cards were equally popular abroad and were often advertised by engravers working in Italy, such as the Florentine engraver Giovanni Chiari, who published a volume of miniature views depicting the statues in the Boboli gardens; the *Calgographia di Piale* and *Franzetti* in Rome published a series of 320 Roman views.²⁶² Sarah Sophia's collection contains numerous cards from all over the continent and Britain that are part of a series of views and many of her sets are complete (fig. 61). As collectors are often thought of in relation to an ideal of completion, printers may have produced such cards knowing that these miniature sets would have appealed to collectors and encouraged them to purchase such cards. The Italian engraver G. Vascellini also produced sheets of cards representing Italian views of some of the most famous palazzi and ports of Venice and Florence. Not only was this genre of card available abroad, there are more local specimens depicting British, public spaces in Sarah Sophia's collection. One series of British cards depicting streets, squares, parades and the circus of the city of Bath was produced in 1782, a time when the city was a very fashionable tourist spot. Cards depicting views were especially popular with tourists who utilized them while travelling and sometimes brought them home to distribute as souvenirs. Distributed among one's peers, views of this type would have impressed friends and indicated distinction and leisurely vacation.

²⁶¹ Byrne, 1989: 298.

²⁶² Hoffmann, 1985: 12.

Commissioning artists or buying stationer's cards were not the only options for obtaining cards. Men and women designed and engraved their own visiting cards. While some men carved and printed their own cards, most of the self-made examples contained in Sarah Sophia's collection were designed and etched by women. This suggests that creating visitor cards was a polite, amateur art and that like other activities, such as playing music and drawing, it could be considered an acceptable, 'female accomplishment' and a means of display.²⁶³ One card in Sarah Sophia's collection was designed and etched by the Princess Elizabeth. Sarah Sophia's annotations indicate that women such as Miss Knight and Mrs. R. Cheney also designed and etched their own cards, and Miss Dashwood, 'who is deaf and dumb' also produced her own card.²⁶⁴ The Countess of Portarlington produced two cards, which depict views of her husband's estate. Sarah Sophia noted next to the Countess's card that the Countess 'drew and etched' her own cards'.²⁶⁵ By using the genre of estate portraiture to represent her person, the Countess identified herself as a member of the landed elite. Producing visitor cards allowed women to express their amateur artistic talents and to convey something about themselves and their family's status to a wider, public audience.

Not only did cards express one's talents, some of the cards designed in Sarah Sophia's collections reveals that they could convey the playful side of visiting. Mr. Snell designed and etched a series of cards depicting an acorn and leaf (fig. 62). Sarah Sophia explains on a separate piece of paper that

²⁶³ Bermingham, 2000; 208.

²⁶⁴ C, 1. 2200.

²⁶⁵ C, 1. 573-591.

the leaf was a pun on 'to take leave'. Although the design of the leaf remained the same on each card, Mr. Snell produced this design three times, once as an engraving and twice coloured by hand. He also produced a second Militia card on which his title Capt. Snell was engraved across a banner. This shows how the designs on cards could be interchanged to suit both the professional and private aspects of one's characters.

Miss Lind, the daughter of the naval surgeon and physician James Lind, produced a tiny card, measuring only 3/4 inch x 1/2 inch. (fig. 63) Although the design is very simple and only includes a flower and her name, the size of Miss. Lind's card suggests she may have been demonstrating her technical skills. It may also -----It certainly adds a playful element to the card, and Sarah Sophia systematised the card under 'Visiting Tickets (never intended to be used as such) or made for a joke'. Another folio contains cards 'Made for the trial of the gold upon blue'. This folio contains eight cards with 'Lady Banks' written on them. The gold lettering and borders are printed against a blue background, thereby accentuating Lady Banks's name (fig. 64). The writing on the top card 'Mr. Lloyds Comps [sic] to Lady Banks begs her acceptance of a few visiting cards' suggests that he made them for her shows both the technical variety and the personal aspect of Sarah Sophia's collection.²⁶⁶ This is the only card in the collection produced using a technique that combined gold lettering with a solid, dark, blue background. All of these cards invite the viewer to read them as forms of amusement and novelty and as representing the newest types of graphic ingenuity. Tickets such as those

²⁶⁶ Mr. Loyds compliments to Lady Banks, begs her acceptance of a few visiting cards.

belonging to Lady Banks were intended to introduce polite society to new printing technologies. Such tickets may have been reserved for special occasions. The fact that Sarah Sophia makes specific notes highlighting who produced their own cards indicates that those individuals meant to showcase not only their personal identity but their artistic prowess. Visiting cards were not considered 'high' art like painting or architecture or sculpture; nonetheless, they were a distinct graphic commodity that belonged to a cultural world whose main concern was to convey good taste, and in which the visiting card itself could be deployed as an expression of feminine artistic accomplishment.

The Pictorial Imagery of the Visiting Card

Visiting cards, like other forms of graphic culture, display a continual recycling of graphic imagery that suggests a cosmopolitan realm of visual circulation and exchange and that attests to a particular standard of taste that was being disseminated internationally. Although Sarah Sophia's collection of over 6000 cards is comprised mainly of British cards, in its adoption of international stylistic characteristics, it engages with a multicultural community and reflects a global eighteenth century.

The intricate designs found on some visitor cards bestow them with the appeal of an art print. Despite their modest proportions, visiting cards drew on contemporary artistic conventions. Some visiting cards depict still lifes, like that of the Count de Rosenberg of Austria (fig. 65), while others represent harbours or figures roaming Arcadian landscapes (fig. 66). Often, cards were influenced by the chinoiserie trend and incorporate designs that are similar to

those found adorning porcelain wares, furniture and carpets (fig. 67). Cards also capitalised on the fashion for Egyptian motifs such as the sphinx and the pyramids (fig. 68). Many cards drew on a neo-classical style; others depicted familiar Roman scenes, including famous monuments and architectural ruins similar to those presented in larger scale engravings by Giovanni Battista Piranesi or Giovanni Paolo Pannini. Visiting cards resembling sculptural monuments adorned with urns, garlands and miniature reliefs, were also common (fig. 69 & 70). Some cards drew on caricatures like those seen in the numerous graphic satires circulating throughout Europe and Britain (fig. 71). Also included in Sarah Sophia's collection are cityscapes or views of particular locations in Europe and Britain associated with the visitor. Other cards included in Sarah Sophia's collection reflect the newest styles and trends in graphic design; exhibiting simple, elegantly inscribed fonts, enclosed within floral borders, stencilled names or stylised, geometric and repetitive patterns (fig. 72 and 73). Other names are embossed and/or surrounded by fanciful decorative Rococo style cartouches or frames; others are simply stencilled (fig. 74 & 75). Visiting cards often incorporated professional signs such as instruments, paint palettes, flags, and cannons that connote occupational or military status (fig. 76 & 76). Architectural fragments were also popular and reinforce the idea of the visitor card itself as representing a part of a person. Many cards also depicted 'chimney pieces' thus emphasising hearth and home, the place where visiting took place. Some people chose to represent themselves by way of a combined signature and image or by a simple signature scribbled across a plain card. The wide variety of references

and artistic styles deployed in visitor card designs is precisely what made them modern.

The growing interest in perspective and optics during the eighteenth century gave rise to a broad range of 'trick' ephemera, including hidden silhouettes, rebuses, hold-to-light pictures, hidden words, peep shows, push and pull mechanisms and metamorphic and anamorphic images. Visitor cards also incorporated these characteristics, thereby transforming them into miniature novelties. Sarah Sophia's collection houses many such works, which often originated in Germany and Austria and are categorised under the title 'transparencies and mechanical[sic]'. These fancy cards are usually very colourful and contain devices such as messages concealed under flaps or movable figures that are controlled by push and pull mechanisms (fig. 78). Some cards incorporate astronomical views depicting the horoscopes and signifying helpful conjunctions of the stars (fig. 79). Based on transparencies, hold-to-light cards involved the printing of a secondary image on the reverse side of the primary image. In frontal light the cards were quite plain, but their design suggests a missing view (fig. 80). Once held to the light the image is completely transformed, and a secondary image 'magically' appears through the translucent paper; alternate scenes might include battles, erupting volcanoes, or sunsets (fig. 81) Through such means, visitor cards blurred the boundaries of art, theatre, and spectacle, they could become appreciated as objects that were amusing and entertaining. Not only did they act as important social signifiers; their proto- cinematic appearance embodied the technical advances and aesthetic concerns of the period from which they emerged.

Visitor cards are essentially denotative; while the image presented on the visiting card conveys nothing of one's physical countenance, the card still acts as a vehicle that helps construct an identity based on cultural tastes, achievements and social standing. The name inscribed on the card, the signifier, refers to a specific human being and conjures a mental image of that person to the viewer. By eliminating one's likeness, the printed name and image become the card's central focus. The images depicted on cards are drawn from various genres and artistic types; they thus offer a part of the person's identity that is located within a shared community defined by its associated cultural tastes. Therefore, visiting cards become markers of distinction. The cards seen in Sarah Sophia's collection make ideological statements about the values, attitudes and practices of a specific network of people.

Like painted portraits, visitor cards provide a substitute image of the self that often communicated one's achievements or familial status by way of compositional emphasis on place, or by the way of mythological references, accessories and attributes. Visitor cards fabricate an idea about the self that the subject would like to project. By incorporating specific views and/or accessories, such as globes, busts and clothing, alongside one's name, visitor cards provide the viewer with clues that reveal information about the sitter, including his or her interests, cultural tastes and social status. One card belonging to the Sicilian Prince of Butera displays emblems such as the skin of a lion and a wooden club positioned in the forefront of the picture under a tree (fig. 82). These attributes, associated with the demigod Heracles, are draped strategically around the Prince's name that has been scrawled across

a stone, thereby emphasising his great strength and good judgement. In the background is the Princes' palace in the city of Butera, located in the southwestern region of Sicily. The palace boasted towers and immense, luxurious gardens and these too are represented within the card's decorative frame. The formal gardens are organised symmetrically and the precise lines running through the garden add a sense of control.

Some of the imagery depicted on the visiting cards gathered in Sarah Sophia's collection exemplify the classical idealist tradition; here the presence of allegorical figures drawn from classical mythology worked to emphasise certain aspects of one's character. One card dated 28 March 1796, belonged to the Spanish Ambassador the Marquise de las Casas, and it incorporates a figure of Victory riding in a chariot. The Count de Fries is represented by a figure of Victory who is being crowned by Nike, pulled in a chariot by lionesses and followed by dancing satyrs clutching clusters of grapes. These types of 'allegorical cards' further distract from the physical likeness of the sitter; they transmute the substance of a person into ideas and words.²⁶⁷ As Richard Brilliant argues convincingly, allegorical portraits attempt to 'separate forms of knowledge' pertaining to a person's identity; 'knowledge of the "what" about the sitter dominates the "who"'.²⁶⁸ Allegorical portraits are less concerned with one's physical appearance than with one's associations, and many visiting cards function in a similar way, subordinating outward appearance to individual attributes.

²⁶⁷ Brilliant, 1991: 104.

²⁶⁸ Brilliant, 1991: 104.

While visiting cards engage with the concepts of recognition, self-fashioning and aristocratic genealogy, they equally initiate a process of recognition between the subject and the viewer in both a visual and imaginative sense. The visiting card requires a viewer to imagine the person it represents. It reduces the person to whom it refers to a strict system of signs and symbols. This format required one to 'see beyond' borders, which reinforces the visitor card's function as an object that circulated in and out of a public and private sphere. Visitor cards thus play a self-concealing/self-revealing type of game. They convey a community divided between its desire for wanting to be seen and not wanting to be seen and complicate the implied boundaries of the public and private spheres.

In a society preoccupied with social connections, visitor cards in their distribution and exhibition were crucial constituents of social networks that reinforced the dynamic intermixing of people. As mass-produced artefacts that circulated within society, visitor cards reveal a growing sense of a collective identity nurtured by shared tastes, which in turn helped to establish an institution of polite society. The images engraved on visitor cards assert both individual and collective cultural identity.

Debates surrounding the value of likeness in portraiture show that physical resemblance is not always deemed the only, or best, way of representing personhood; historically, individuals have been represented in a variety of ways. Within the context of the 'likeness' debate, visitor cards can be interpreted as following a dualist concept of identity, a concept that focuses mainly on the idea of one's personality or virtues, not his or her

countenance.²⁶⁹ The function of the visitor card was to act as a replacement for the fleshy body. The card itself, designed manually and mass-produced by way of the repetitive, mechanical printing process, can be interpreted as a metaphor for Descartes' 'machine-like material body'.²⁷⁰ The biodegradable paper and ink medium conveys the ephemeral nature of life itself. Visitor cards, in their mass production, wielded the image-making power of a painted portrait engraved for replication and distribution. The visiting card negotiates subjectivity in relation to cultural forms and practices rather than in relation to physical appearance, so taste becomes a type of public speaking. The visitor card's public meaning or ideological content derives more from its circulation, exchange and display than from any reference to physical likeness. The name and image clearly emphasized the visiting card's function as a mechanism of popular graphic presentation in a modern age.

As we have already begun to notice, Sarah Sophia's collection includes many examples of individuals being defined by views, including estate portraiture. For example, the Viscountess Charleville of Ireland chose to represent herself by way of the Charleville castle, seat of the Moore and Bury families (fig. 83). In 1790 and 1791, Lady Portarlington represents herself by way of two different picturesque views of Lord Portarlington's seat

²⁶⁹Woodall, 1997: 9, 10. When we consider portraiture within the context of a 'dualist' sense of identity, a division arises between the sitter as living body and his/her 'real' or 'true' self. According to the 'dualist' idea, physiognomic likeness never represents the 'true' identity of the sitter, and bodily resemblance is a barrier that ultimately prevents union between the viewer and the sitter. This sense of difference between an inner, abstract subjectivity and an objectified, material body corresponds with the consolidation of the Protestant Reformation, which 'asserted a space between sign and prototype'. The dualist, therefore, defines identity using abstract terms, such as genius, talent, soul, virtue and personality, and he or she believes that these are the characteristics that best express the sitter and should be revealed through the art of portraiture.

²⁷⁰Woodall, 1997; 10.

in Ireland (fig. 84). Three cards belonging to the Countess of Moira, sister of Francis Hastings, 10th Earl of Huntingdon present the beholder with Ashby de la Zouche castle, her late brother's seat in Leicestershire (fig. 85). This small, visual record expresses an antiquarian concern for preserving the material remains of the past on paper. These types of cards are further witness to the longstanding family interest in estate portraiture and the identities of genteel landowners. The imagery of visitor cards became a means of constructing and displaying elite identities rooted in hereditary title to land. Such cards also demonstrate a shared interest in the pursuit of genealogy, provenance, or conditions of one's own property, family or region.

Other samples in Sarah Sophia's collection demonstrate that individuals often communicated their official standing through views of cityscapes. For example, a view of St. Mark's square in Venice, the most public area of the city, taken from the lagoon, is depicted on the card of Gasparo Soderini, Minister Resident of Venice (fig. 86). Not only does the imagery on the card reinforce Soderini's public role, but it also reveals something of the Minister's architectural tastes, while also including buildings that are significant to the history of Venice. To the left, is the classically decorated library and mint, designed by the Renaissance Florentine sculptor and architect, Jacopo Sansovino, and just behind that building is St. Mark's campanile. The magnificent Doges's palace, with its richly decorated gothic arcade, is the first building located on the right and immediately next to the palace is St. Mark's cathedral. The columns holding St. Theodore and the statue of the lion of St. Mark are positioned in the front centre of the picture. This view was popular with artists such as Giovanni Pannini and Giovanni

Antonio Canaletto. In this scene the Minister's public persona is associated with the principal plaza of the city, which incorporates secular and non-secular iconography and also reflects his concerns with a national and regional identity.

Another view depicting the Protestant Abby of Gottweich in Austria, adorned the card of the Prelate of Gottweich (Fig. 87). The monumental abbey had been recently rebuilt after it was destroyed in a fire in 1718. The grandiose design of the restored abbey by Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt was supposedly inspired by Spain's famous Escorial. The bird's eye view of the abbey depicted on the card allows the viewer to enjoy a commanding view of the area. It simultaneously pulls the protective stonewalls close while elongating the structure out to the horizon line, thereby making the abbey appear immense. This stretched composition, encourages the viewer to enrich his or her sense of the physical environment and perhaps expand his or her spiritual horizons. The abbey's mountain top position meant that it was in a position of surveillance, since it afforded panoramic views of the surrounding country. The card dramatises the power of such views.

Many of the cards found in Sarah Sophia's collection invite the viewer to identify and grasp relationships between conspicuous landmarks, and Sarah Sophia often made brief annotations identifying different monuments, such as the coliseum. (fig. 88). One card that belonged to Don Luigi Braschi Onesti, Duke of Nemi and nephew of Pope Pius VI, represents the Duke as an embodiment of the city of Rome (fig. 89). Romulus and Remus, the mythical founders of Rome, are depicted on the lower left hand corner suckling from a she-wolf. A coat of arms, which establishes rights to nobility,

adorns a plinth inscribed with the cardholder's name and flanked at the sides are personifications of Virtue (standing) and Roma (seated) with her shield cast off by her side. Off to the side of Virtue are well-known monuments, such as Trajan's column, the bridge and cylindrical Castel of Sant'Angelo and the cupola adorning St. Peters. On the right is the pyramid of Cestius. The monuments were considered essential sites for those who undertook the grand tour in the eighteenth century and would have been a source of great pride for Romans staking claims that the cardholder's lineage extended as far back as the Augustan tradition. The card is a collection of signs that are associated with ideas of an ancient republic, empire and secular and non-secular power. The card celebrates the endurance of ancient monuments and acknowledges the inevitable march of time. The image associates Onesti in relation to a world of public affairs and reflects a concept of national heritage that was becoming increasingly linked with public spirit.²⁷¹

Visitor Cards and Portraiture

Visiting cards, like miniature portraits, can be interpreted as artefacts that conveniently package individuals into containers that easily transcend time and space. However, as Marcia Pointon highlights, the miniature portrait was a gendered item that women wore publically, but that men cherished privately on their persons.²⁷² This was not the case, however, with visitor cards as men and women utilized those artefacts similarly, in both private and public ways. The types of designs and fonts adorning cards in Sarah Sophia's

²⁷¹ Brokeby, 1701:12-13.

²⁷² Pointon, 2001: 59.

collection further convey that cards were not specific gendered items, as many of the cards belonging to women and men incorporated similar or identical designs and fonts. Samples in Sarah Sophia's collection show that both women and men incorporated similar typefaces, views, and classical motifs. At one point, the Duchess of Devonshire and Sir Joseph Banks had the same cards and some husbands and wives also owned matching cards. It was only cards with military motifs that were specific to men. Otherwise, designs adorning visiting cards remained within an established canon.

One of the visitor card's main objectives was to represent a subject who was actually distant in time and space as, in mediated form present. Esther Milne's research underscores the fact that cards were a part of an established communication technology and that 'telepresence can be defined as the degree to which geographically dispersed agents experience a sense of physical and/or psychological proximity through the use of particular communication technologies...visiting cards were used to stand in for the corporeal presence of their author'.²⁷³ Visitor cards have the potential to collapse temporal limits by capturing a moment in time and extending the presence of the represented individual into the present.

Not only did cards document people and their addresses and chart patterns of movement; visiting cards documented specific events. For example, in 1772 Joseph Banks organized a voyage to explore the geology and natural history of Iceland. This scientific expedition was organized in response to Banks's withdrawal from Cook's *Resolution* voyage. The voyage marks yet another pivotal moment in Banks's career and further demonstrated

²⁷³ Milne [accessed 21 Apr. 2011].

his competence as a botanist. One of the many visiting cards belonging to Joseph Banks celebrates this expedition (fig. 90). The image of the map conveys Banks's concern with encountering the wider world and the idea that the knowledge gathered by way of exploration is power. The image maps the island's longitude and latitude positions and places it within in a border; this appears to fit the island into a system. The card identifies Iceland's most active volcano Hekla known as the 'gateway to hell' and located in the south of the island. Banks's card demonstrates his understanding that maps make the world more comprehensible through a system of classification and control; in its arrangement, Sarah Sophia's collection is also a map of sorts that creates a new body based on systems of geographical location.

Another trio of visiting tickets in Sarah Sophia's collection dating 1785, belong to the Italian Compagnoni Marefoschi family of Macerata, is associated with discoveries made in an area situated in the Marche region of Italy. These include those of Cardinal Marefoschi, the Countessa Margarita Carleni, Marefoschi, and the Count Camillio Marefoschi (fig. 91) Each card depicts various Roman mosaics discovered by the Cardinal's archaeological teams carrying out excavations at Hadrian's villa, located at Tivoli just outside of Rome. These, and other mosaic panels that were recovered at the same site in 1780, are now located in both the Vatican Museum in Rome and the Museum of Berlin. Marefoschi found the mosaics in the area known as the Imperial Palace in the room called the Triclinium of the Centaurs. The excavations carried out by Cardinal Marfoschi were said to have 'remarkably

enriched the Pope's museums'.²⁷⁴ The card provides historical documentation of national heritage and the Cardinal's antiquarian mission to salvage the past.

The social and political circumstances of the sitter could be expressed by way of visiting cards, and sometimes cards dramatise a historical event, such as the battle on von Brambilla's card (fig. 92). Therefore, visitor cards clearly acted as documents of everyday life that recorded personal histories as well as public accomplishments.

Visiting cards, similar to portrait-gifts, are part of a system of exchange that binds social ties. Anthropologists have long recognized gifts as part of a system of support used to bolster friendships and communal ties. Marcel Mauss argues that to make a gift of something is to make a present of some part of oneself.²⁷⁵ If portraits work to 'actually and metaphorically secure a connection between an absent person and the viewer' visitor cards functioned in a similar way.²⁷⁶ Unlike the portrait, however, the visitor card was not a highly invested gift, and its mass production and dissemination meant it was available to many. This does not undermine the value of the visitor card as an artefact of significant social and cultural worth. While portraits were exchanged amongst friends and relatives, so too were visitor cards; however, mass produced cards had the possibility of representing one's absence across broader public and private spheres. The small size of cards functioned to create a private relationship between the subject and the viewer; they could be held in one's hands and/or kept in boxes drawers, pockets, and other

²⁷⁴ Levillain, 2002: 1022.

²⁷⁵ Mauss, 2001.

²⁷⁶ Pointon, 2001: 57.

private spaces. Since the visitor card mediated social relations according to the varying degrees of intimacy one desired, exchanging such cards, as Sarah Sophia's collection of cards demonstrates, played a fundamental role in negotiating friendships and expanding social networks.

The Textual Components of Visitor Cards

Visiting cards correspond to another kind of representation of the self: that suggested by family crests and coats of arms. For centuries, the social position of the nobility was often symbolized by way of their coat of arms. Family crests were executed in a broad range of media including on paper, painted wood, enamel, and stained glass. They could be embroidered into wall tapestries, carved into architectural details and used to decorate armour, thereby conveying one's presence, claims to titles and familial ties. They allowed for quick identification. In Henry Peacham's written work, *The Compleat [sic] Gentleman* (1622) he discusses heraldry and the design of coats-of-arms as a mode of useful learning that enabled one to distinguish ancient noble families from those who bought Arms and Honors.²⁷⁷ These types of symbolic representations presented the person as part of a complex network of kinship. However, the corruption of the 'herald's office', which reached a new apex in the eighteenth century, allowed many families to purchase sets of arms; this contributed to the eventual breakdown in the currency of heraldry. During the eighteenth century heraldry was reinvented in funerary sculpture and modelled on classical as opposed to medieval

²⁷⁷ Peacham, 1634, xii, xx, 160-213.

origins.²⁷⁸ Monograms are yet another means in which people have historically represented and continue to represent themselves. Monograms are often carved into rings or printed onto stationary and melted into seals.

The image, name or motifs that adorn a visiting card represent the abstraction of the person represented, just like seals, coats of arms, monograms, and other emblems. While visitor cards often engage with a complex discourse pertaining to lineage the image on the card replaces the pompous declaration of permanence and vainglorious pride connected with medieval heraldic emblems in exchange for a more subtle, genteel—yet nonetheless proud form of social display.

That Sarah Sophia was interested in familial lineage and took into account heraldry and even researched the names and motifs on her cards is evident in some of her annotations. One German ticket that Sarah Sophia collected depicts an old, broken tree with the names Madame La Countess de Rex Douarier and La Baronne de Hobentbot Safille written across crowned cartouches, which are positioned alongside one another under the tree (fig.93). In this image, the crowned, written names appear to stand in for the physical features of the women's faces. Under the card is a caption that Sarah Sophia received from a Mr. Cecil dating 1788, printed in her own hand. It reads:

The Tree represents the Family, which from its appearance is very old. The Head is broke off, to denote the Male Line being extinct. Two Branches only remain: that on the left represents the old Mother who is but just alive, but under it, is presented a view of her populous Country. The Branch on the right represents the Daughter: it seems a

²⁷⁸ Craske, 2007: 63-70.

healthy young Branch. Underneath it, is a Rose Tree just in full blow, and at a distance appears the commencement of a new Settlement.²⁷⁹

Although this image alerts the viewer to a crisis of primogeniture, it expresses an intention of survival and reassuringly presents the viewer with a form of succession other than that dependent on the eldest son.

Visitor cards, it seems, were a genre of material culture that could express the socially entrenched idea of the family as a community of obligation. They could attest to a family's desire to keeping 'evidence' of their lineage. As this image demonstrates, many cards were designed to be an intriguing balance of information and ornament, and the cards in Sarah Sophia's collection reveal that genealogy was a reoccurring theme. Sarah Sophia's impulse to textualise her collections within specific historical and social contexts reveals her interest in wider antiquarian preoccupations like the gathering, preserving and transferring of lost knowledge.

Like the card of Madame Douarier and La Baronne Safille, another card belonging to the Count Paleazzo Visconte, conveys the notion of ancestral bloodlines. The card depicts a creature—half man half serpent—crawling in a landscape and holding a scroll with the cardholder's name written on it. The image is enclosed within a stylised, floral frame, which appears to extend the idea of a family tree (fig. 94). Just above this card Sarah Sophia included an excerpt taken from *A Summary View of Heraldry* by Thomas Brydson, F. S. A. that explains the meaning of the creature represented. She writes:

²⁷⁹ BM D,1.-578

During the first Crusade, Otho, Viscount or Governor of Milan, killed, in a single combat, under the walls of Jerusalem, a Saracen Emir, who had defied the Christian Army. The Emir's golden helmet, retained as a trophy by the conqueror, bore a crowned serpent devouring a child. Hence did this serpent become the armorial ensigns of the Visconti Dukes of Milan.²⁸⁰

The card communicates the family's honour by way of visual signs. Importantly, the image depicted on Count Paleazzo Visconte's card traces his family's lineage back to a sturdy medieval forebear and expresses his family's seniority by alluding to the trophy of battle. The Saracen was often portrayed in the West as an enemy of Christian virtue. John Sweetman underscores how the relics brought back from the Holy Land by a crusader ancestor served as reminders of the intimate relevance of the products of the Islam world to the notion of chivalry that had grown up in Europe at the time of the Crusades.²⁸¹ Chivalry was the out come of the need of warlike aristocracies for an, 'ideal of manly perfection'.²⁸² Not only does the desirability of the card's curious image lay in its relation to a known story, the type of research carried out by Sarah Sophia reveals her interest in symbolic details and the origins, stories and histories and questions of rank. The search for origins, as Graham Perry has argued, also lay at the heart of antiquarian study.²⁸³ Her annotations and extended commentary on this card reveal her passion for the ancient legend and the preservation of the past.

The eighteenth-century engraver and Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians Charles John Smith claimed that 'next to a portrait...the Autograph of a great man is the most valuable notice of him', and in 1829 he

²⁸⁰ Brydson, 1795: 108-109.

²⁸¹ Sweetman, 1988: 6-7.

²⁸² Huizinga, 2010: chapter five.

²⁸³ Parry, 1995: 9.

produced a series entitled *Autographs of Royal, Noble, and Illustrious Persons*.²⁸⁴ The autograph differs from the aforementioned symbols in that it is a trace of one's physical presence. However, unlike the portrait or icon that conveys a physical similarity to the object being signified, the coat of arms, monogram and autograph are all symbols or marks that stand in for the representation of one's identity. Conversely, like one's footprint or fingerprint, an autograph or signature is both a sign and a trace of the person's actual existence. The coat of arms and monogram remain purely emblems; however, each is denotative and signals one's presence by symbolic means.

The mechanically printed names found on most cards present a refined façade that both conceal and reveals. The 'physiognomy' of the card's typeface stands in for the face of the cardholder. Hilary Nissen of 68 Great Tower street London advertised, 'specimens of visiting and marriage cards' (fig. 95) in his stationary catalogue. This commercial display presents an array of overlapping cards using different types of serif and sans-serif fonts. The cards convey notions of good taste by way of harmonious and elegant typographic design. The advert highlights Nissen's professional printing practice; he is able to offer the buyer many new fonts to choose from; buyers could easily change 'faces' as often as they liked. Each card represents a different person and their varying fonts suggests individuality; however, the typographical control and tidiness of mechanized productions, creates a regular, uniform appearance, which transforms the mechanically printed name into a sign.²⁸⁵ While the visitor card was used to consolidate sociability, the

²⁸⁴ Pointon, 1993: 67.

²⁸⁵ See for example: Ong, 1982: 122.

impersonal mechanical aesthetics of typeface design helped further establish impersonal boundaries. The increase in printed materials was edging out the use of manually produced works and according to Sarah Sophia's collection suggests that during the eighteenth century most people used cards with printed names as opposed to handwritten.

Eliminating handwriting might have saved the time-consuming task of writing names on dozens of cards or paying a professional penman to write your name for you, but it also concealed a person, given the fact that handwriting was often considered part of the self.²⁸⁶ That one's handwriting was considered unique was expressed by William Hogarth in his treatise, *The Analysis of Beauty*, he writes:

Observe that whatever habit the fingers get in the use of the pen, you see exactly delineated to the eye by the shapes of the letters. Were the movements of every writer's fingers to be precisely the same, one hand-writing would not be known from another, but as the fingers naturally fall into or acquire different habits of moving, every handwriting is different. Which movements, must tally with the letters tho' they are too quick and too small to be as perfectly traced to the eye; but this shews what nice differences are caused and constantly retained by habitual movements.²⁸⁷

Contemporaneous literature and plays also show that autographs or samples of handwriting could be used to identify people, such as villains or identifying a secret admirer.²⁸⁸ Handwriting was associated with the self; therefore, the printed name implies a degree of self-negation, and printed visitor cards would have been considered less personal than those with handwritten names.

²⁸⁶ Thornton, 1996.

²⁸⁷ Hogarth, 1753, 141.

²⁸⁸ Holcroft, 1795: 85; Holcroft, 1792

Although visitor cards were usually associated with a form of mechanical reproduction that eliminated the presence of the self, type design was not divorced entirely from human forms; both script and type were based on the aesthetic principles compatible with the idealised dimensions of the human body, which were either literally depicted as such or abstracted into shapes like squares and circles. Since the sixteenth century, letter copybooks and numerous treatises on print drew parallels between the human form and typography. This anthropomorphism is further emphasised by the fact that letters are identified as having faces, heads, necks, and bodies.

In 1757, the engraver J. Brooke of Fleet Street, London advertised in the *London Chronicle* that he could provide 'visiting tickets and compliment cards engraved in the most elegant manner'.²⁸⁹ Interestingly, Brooke also offered 'stamps [...] to imitate [one's] own writing'.²⁹⁰ Some examples of cards with 'imitation of writing' also exist in Sarah Sophia's collection (fig. 96). A stamped or imitation signature provided the appearance of a handwritten autograph but eliminated the personal touch of the written sign.

Sarah Sophia's Acquisition and Arrangement of Visitor Cards

While many of the visitor cards and message cards contained in Sarah Sophia's collection belonged to her and members of her family, most do not. The names on the cards demonstrate that she also obtained cards by way of her family's social circles and connections. She certainly obtained cards by way of her brother's network of national and international acquaintances.

²⁸⁹ Banfield, 1989: 1.

²⁹⁰ Banfield, 1989: 1.

Letters sent to Sir Joseph indicate that her brother's international contacts were well aware of Sarah Sophia's collection, and they readily contributed visiting cards to her growing assemblage by way of her brother. Thus, on 20 February 1783, E.V. Bossschert, writing from Brussels, notes that he has collected about 'sixty visiting cards' for Miss Banks.²⁹¹ On 21 October 1797, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, often considered the father of physical anthropology, offered Sarah Sophia a card of the widow Guinhard, 'the favorite of Frederick of Prussia'.²⁹² Sir William Hamilton, diplomatist and art collector, presented her with visiting cards from Italy.²⁹³ Sometimes, she annotates cards with names other than those that are written on the cards, perhaps indicating from whom she received them. Therefore, it is clear that a large network of people helped Sarah Sophia gather the cards she sought and that many of the specimens were obtainable because of family associations. Her collection also advertised Sarah Sophia's social connections and the power and influence of the circles of sociability in which she and her brother participated so successfully.

In her hand-written inventory, Sarah Sophia recorded where her cards were kept within the domestic quarters at 32 Soho; somewhat unexpectedly, she does not store them all together; instead they were spread across three rooms in the house: 'Mrs. Banks's Room', 'the Ante or L(ittle) Room' and 'the South Room'.²⁹⁴ She arranged them into volumes and portfolios. At the top of the page is the main heading, 'Visiting Tickets Royal Family'; four volumes are listed below: 'vol. 1, Nobility', 'vol. 2, 'some taken from vol. 1 not so amusing',

²⁹¹ Dawson, 1958: 121.

²⁹² Dawson, 1958: 115.

²⁹³ Dawson, 1958: 389.

²⁹⁴ BL 460 d 13. In the inventory she crosses through Ante and writes L(ittle).

'vol. 3. Paper with ornamental edges', 'vol. 4 Foreign visiting tickets'.²⁹⁵ These four volumes were stored in the 'L(ittle) Room', lowermost cubes one and two (see appendices C and D). This sequence is followed by two volumes of 'Visiting ticket blanks', volume one of these tickets was stored together with the aforementioned volumes in the 'L(ittle) Room' and volume two of 'blanks' in 'Mrs. Banks's Room Bookcase' behind the wire doors. This specific bookcase may have been custom built for storing her collections. The list continues onto volume 5, which contains 'Duplicate ceremonial tickets and co.' for the Knights of Bath. These were stored in the 'South Room Wardrobe, large drawer at the bottom'. Volume 6 contained 'French Prints', but the way in which this volume is listed in the inventory, under the heading of visiting tickets, indicates that she may have also kept some visiting tickets in this volume. She then lists one green portfolio containing 'Visiting Tickets not usually seen', which was also kept in the South Room Wardrobe. The fact that she divided parts of the collection of tickets throughout the house conveys the spatial dilemmas collectors face when trying to organise their expansive collections within confined, domestic areas that are not especially built for storing and displaying collections. As her collection expanded throughout the years, most likely it would have been constantly relocated to and from different rooms of the house.

The practice of collecting enabled Sarah Sophia to make up and use a range of classifications and arrangements. The cards she selected for her collection were mostly glued with wet adhesives onto large sheets of paper

²⁹⁵ Under volume two it is written 'some prints of the Royal family and co. in vol. 2', indicating that she stored these prints and cards together within this volume.

measuring 18.6 x 23.2 inches (fig. 97). Each sheet is folded in half vertically thereby creating a mount that looks like a folder. On the outside of the folder, in ink, she records what is pasted inside. She begins to organise the collection with British social hierarchies. Most likely, these volumes are those comprising the first four volumes logged in the inventory, which were kept in the 'L(ittle) Room'. She then proceeds to organise numerous tickets according to an aesthetic system based on iconography and design elements, such as antique figures, festoons, square frames, and so forth. As these cards carry no names, these are what she refers to in the inventory as her 'Blank tickets' and this category expresses her interest with graphic design. These are followed by 'Foreign tickets', which are grouped according to geographical location (fig. 98). Written at the bottom front of each folder, we find numbers corresponding to the amount of cards organized within each specific folder. These numbers do not appear to be written in Sarah Sophia's hand; most likely they are the museum's count as the numbers almost always correspond to the exact amount of cards contained in the folder, meaning that no cards were added after this final count. Alternatively, Lady Banks may have made a count of items she was bestowing to the museum as a way of making sure the collection arrived in tact. A small check is marked next to the number, indicating that someone had checked to make sure that the number written on the front corresponded to the actual number of cards pasted on the inside. Numerical differences, which are rare, are noted in pencil.

Each folder pertaining to the category of British, Scotitish and Irish titled persons is dedicated to a particular rank, which was written in ink at the top of the front page (fig. 98). Just below her main headings, the family names

of the peers contained within that particular folder are pencilled in. Similar to the aforementioned numbers, these may also be evidence of the museum's previous intervention. Beginning with 'English Dukes' her systematisation continues all the way down to 'English Peers' and then moves to Scottish 'titled persons' and 'peers' and Irish 'titled persons' and 'peers'. There are also separate folders for cards belonging to 'Bishops', Irish 'Bishop's Ladies', British 'titles presumed extinct', Irish and British 'attainted titles', 'Maids of Honour to Her Majesty', and 'Maids of Honour to H.R.H the Princess Dowager of Wales'. When descending this social hierarchy, she finishes with organising tickets belonging to British, Scottish and Irish 'persons'. Appendix folders contain numerous announcement cards, compliment cards, at home cards and returns of thanks. Emphasis on systems of categorization closely aligned Sarah Sophia to her brother's practices, but when ordering her visiting tickets she clearly created taxonomies that she felt best suited the materials she garnered.

When the folders are opened, the viewer is presented with two vertical columns on each page, and cards are pasted within the columns (fig. 97). Sarah Sophia annotates each card with a date. If the annotated dates correspond to the year she acquired tickets, she began collecting at the age of ten and stopped collecting tickets at the age of seventy-two.²⁹⁶ The bulk of her collection appears to have been gathered during the 1780's. Cards belonging to family members are always grouped together. This arrangement presents the viewer with a social structure similar to that of a family tree, characterized by nobility of blood and generations of lineage. Within this

²⁹⁶ The earliest date she records is 1754 and the latest 1816.

structure, her collection of cards becomes a metaphor for society as a whole, and family is the basis for ordering society. However, in true humanistic fashion her collection of British persons includes people such as scientists, painters and architects who gained fame by way of their outstanding achievements. While folders containing cards belonging to British persons were arranged similarly to those belonging to titled persons, the folders containing 'persons' cards were all systematized according to alphabetical sequence, thus reflecting a democratic organization. As such, her cards are a collection of different 'types' of people.

In contrast to its focus on cards belonging to British Titled persons, Peers, and Persons however, Sarah Sophia's collection of cards is grouped not only according to the persons these cards represented but also according to imagery that they carried. The collection she refers to as 'Blanks' are divided into numerous subjects, including 'agriculture', 'figures', 'archery and sporting', 'architectural views', 'birds', 'cats and dogs', 'gondolas', 'mercantile', 'ruins', 'ships', amongst other categories (Fig. 99) The cards are still pasted vertically, but in some instances they completely fill the page, sometimes touching. Elsewhere cards are grouped according to the characteristics of media and form, with sections entitled 'embossed', 'spangles and foils', 'gold' and shapes such as 'squares with festoons' and 'white ovals' with guiding pictures of what is contained inside, outside (Fig. 100) These alternative kinds of organization encourage the adoption of multiple perspectives as viewers can compare and contrast cards and on different bases than social rank.

Following the sections that are arranged according to social rank and subject and style, Sarah Sophia decided to categorise her vast collection of

'Foreign tickets' geographically. This system marks patterns of relations across time, space and generations. Within this grouping, she seems to have initially created four folders generally labelled 'Foreign' that contain cards previously owned by foreign people of distinction.²⁹⁷ These initial mounts, however, indicate that Sarah Sophia may not have expected for her collection of foreign cards to expand the way it did as she appears to change her system in order to accommodate around 1500 foreign cards. Succeeding these first four folders of 'Foreign' cards, are folders corresponding specifically to geographical location. Each location is organized alphabetically, with folder given titles such as 'Chinese', 'Denmark', 'France' and within each of these categories are alphabetical folders so that cards are systematized within folders according to geography and the person's surname. The inclusion of numerous foreigners expresses the idea of a pan-European elite community.

The seemingly precise systems Sarah Sophia employed when organising her collection of visiting tickets are often difficult for us to decipher today. For example, the left-hand columns on each page are usually complete, and the right-hand columns incomplete. The right-hand cards were added mostly at a later date, thus suggesting that this column was reserved especially for additional tickets. This indicates that the collection was constantly expanding over the years and that she continued to paste cards into folders even after she constructed them. However, this is not always the case; occasionally, a card pasted on the right-hand side, belonging to the same person on the left, carries a date that proceeds the one on the left, thus

²⁹⁷ These are arranged 'Foreign I A-B', 'Foreign II C to I', 'Foreign III L-R', 'Foreign IV S-Z'.

complicating our understanding of any specific type of sequential arrangement. Furthermore, cards occasionally carry more than one date like the compliment cards belonging to Mr. Pitt and Lady Hester Pitt.²⁹⁸ The Pitt card on the left is dated 1758 and under this date it is written (Earl of Chatham, 1776). 1758 might refer to the date the card was used, 1776 probably indicates the day Sarah Sophia received the card. The Earl may have gifted the cards to her; however, this remains speculative. Sarah Sophia probably intended eventually having these sheets bound together into albums, as this was often the way collectors amassed their graphic materials.²⁹⁹

In *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* Arnaldo Momigliano writes that the ancient Greeks and Romans advocated the notion of *bios*, or the study of types and believed that such a study could be applied either to the individual or to a the nation as a whole.³⁰⁰ The study of social systems and types was a key component in the construction of British history, and as early as the seventeenth century collectors and antiquarians began illustrating history using engraved portraits, and by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this type of visual supplement—developed by a book’s owner—became a common feature of the histories found in elite libraries.³⁰¹

When arranging her collection, not only does Sarah Sophia draw on the aesthetics of a family tree, the collection of cards constructs a miniature

²⁹⁸ C.1-1719-1746.

²⁹⁹ I thank Shelia O’Connell at the Prints and Drawings Room in the British Museum for discussing this material with me. Today, Sarah Sophia’s folders of visitor cards are stored inside six rectangular conservation drop spine boxes measuring 23 x 17 inches. Many thanks also to Angela Roche for explaining the museum’s conservation methods with me.

³⁰⁰ Momigliano, 1990: 64-67.

³⁰¹ Pointon, 1993: chapter three; 1993. Peltz, 1998: 6-31; Peltz, 2004: 1-161; Peltz, 2007: 33-39; Peltz, 2005: 91-135; Peltz, 1999: 115-134.

gallery that presents a form of biography modelled not on chronological organization but on other traditional systems of arrangement, such as that used for numismatic papers and other types of historical and biographical works. Samuel Pepys, Joseph Ames, and John Granger all gathered and systematised collections of engraved portraits. In his desire to record history, Samuel Pepys collected numerous engraved portrait heads and identified and catalogued them into albums, which were contained within his library. Again, his collection was catalogued according to a system of social hierarchies.³⁰² Ames, Secretary to the Society of Antiquaries and Fellow of the Royal Society, also amassed and documented close to two thousand English portrait heads in his 1747 work entitled *A Catalogue of English Heads*. Unlike Pepys's collection however, Ames's portraits of gentry were systematised alphabetically. Following these prototypes, Granger's *Biographical History of England* (1769) devised a system of describing English history that required an accompanying catalogue featuring engravings of notable figures that could be cut and mounted onto the book's blank pages. These forms of history also correspond to traditional biographical histories of England, such as Frederick Barlow's *The Complete English Peerage: or Genealogical and Historical Account of the Peers and Peeresses of this Realm the Year 1772*, or *A Genealogical History of the Royal Families of England from William the Conqueror to the Present Royal Grand Children: Collected from Mr. Rapin, and Other Authentic Historians* 1753 (London). Such biographies ranked social groups according to a strict order of 'classes'. Visitor cards share certain characteristics with portraiture, and Sarah Sophia's collection of

³⁰² Charrington, 1936; introduction.

visiting cards presents a form of biography modelled on a hierarchical system of organisation. As visitor cards carry names that represent specific persons, a collection of visitor cards could function as an inexpensive substitute for a coin and medal collection or perhaps, as in Sarah Sophia's case, as a supplementary to such collections. Unlike portrait print collections amassed by Ames, Granger, Evelyn, and Samuel Pepys, Sarah Sophia's collection of visitor cards does not include illustrious persons from the past. Instead, Sarah Sophia collects representations of her family, peers and their national and international networks. Although she is recording contemporary history, she continues to rely on traditional systems of classification, which rank social groups according to a strict hierarchical order of 'classes' and in turn produces a virtual community of sorts. Sarah Sophia's folios and albums, thus, act as cabinets within which the collector gathers, annotates and displays physical objects that embody the individual and the collective identities of members belonging to a specific community.

Unlike the contents of some cabinets of curiosity, Sarah Sophia's specimens are not rare. However, the numerous cards belonging to aristocrats that Sarah Sophia gathered and organized into hierarchical trees still present her as a collector of rarities and her cabinet as one that contained representations of people of rare blood. While the organization of some of Sarah Sophia's collection displays a predominately traditional emphasis on blood and lineage her inclusion of persons such as scientists, artists, doctors and other *uomini famosi* also indicates a humanistic influence based on moral virtues and achievements as a necessary credential for upward mobility in the

state.³⁰³ The humanistic project advocated a particular type of learning, rather than lineage, as qualification for positions of political influence. This new, open-ended concept of social identity, as Peter Stallybrass has described, is fundamental to the 'class aspirant' who 'has an interest in preserving social closure, since without it there would be nothing to aspire to', but who knows that this form of closure must be flexible enough to incorporate new members.³⁰⁴ This form of aspiration is best exemplified by her brother's own achievements and social mobility.³⁰⁵ Like her brother, Sarah Sophia carefully exploited circles of sociability to build her collection, and she used her collection to style herself as inhabiting an elite social realm, not only thanks to her blood, but also because of her virtue and accomplishments as a collector.

In its twinned organization, Sarah Sophia's collection conveys her preoccupation not only with genealogy and social rank but also with the art of engraving. Examining cards according to this organization, reveals how the visual language of visitor cards was highly dependent on a wide range of other kinds of representations produced elsewhere. Systematized according to designs, subjects and techniques, her collection of cards was yet another mechanism for the exercise of a certain kind of connoisseurship.

³⁰³ Thirsk, 1989: 179.

³⁰⁴ Stallybrass, 1986: 134.

³⁰⁵ Sir Joseph strategically capitalized on the nascent exploitation of the New World in order to advance his social position. His voyages allowed him to build his own rich and varied collection of botanicals and artefacts, which he kept on display at his home in Burlington Street, of which Sarah Sophia lived for a brief time. His voyages attracted fame, and he developed a network of contacts that helped him construct an international, scientific identity that led to his appointment of president of the Royal Society and director of Kew gardens. His scientific networks and accomplishments were so greatly extolled that he was eventually infiltrated to the ultimate royalist cult, the Order of the Garter in 1795.

Conclusion

Sarah Sophia's collection of visiting cards has an international character and reflects her personal exchanges with members of Europe's social, intellectual, and political elites. While her categorisation upholds nationalistic borders, it expresses a larger, global elite culture, the members of whom are all linked. Although Sarah Sophia never travelled abroad, her collection of visitor cards evolved in tandem with the rise of domestic and international tourism, and it provided an alternative geography for imagined travel. The cosmopolitan flavour of her collection of visitor cards and her annotations suggests a fascination with the global. While abroad, tourists were encouraged to 'take note of monuments of antiquity'.³⁰⁶ Sarah Sophia does so by way of her collection of visitor cards. Similar to the notes taken by amateur antiquarians when travelling abroad, Sarah Sophia's annotations, which carefully identify particular monuments, estates, and buildings, such as the Coliseum, St. Peter's cathedral, the theatre of Seguntium in Spain and Trajan's column display her educational credentials and exhibit her preoccupation with the exhibition of her ownership and knowledge of antiquity. Her collections of cards provided her with a virtual, paper 'grand tour'.

³⁰⁶ Francis Brokeby, 1701: 12-13.

Chapter Three: Admission Tickets

According to Sarah Sophia's personal inventory, now located in the British Library, 'four volumes of admission tickets' were stored in the 'South Room Wardrobe' in the 'large drawer at the bottom' (see appendices C and D).³⁰⁷ In that drawer, her admission tickets shared space with other items from her collection, including, 'various odd prints', 'French prints' and a 'large portfolio with duplicates'. As has been noted earlier in this thesis, the South Room was the largest room in the Banks's house, and one of its most 'public', in which the Banks's entertained visitors. The notion of public performance is particularly interesting when considering admission tickets, of course, because as in the case of Sarah Sophia's collection itself, admission tickets offered access to sociability.

Admission tickets in Sarah Sophia's collection relate to a broad range of events. Her collection of items consists of some four thousand tickets providing entry to a wide variety of performances, institutions and entertainments, including coronations, exhibitions, museums, concerts, commemorations, theatre, country houses, dinners, anniversaries, chapels, societies, balloon launches, balls and lectures. The admission tickets are similar to Sarah Sophia's visiting cards in their arrangement and categorization. Like the visitor cards, they are pasted on sheets of paper measuring 18 ¼ inches high and 23 ½ inches wide. The sheets of paper have

³⁰⁷ BL 460.d.13.

been folded in half vertically to create a file, the contents of which are recorded in pen on the outside. Sometimes Sarah Sophia makes annotations next to the tickets, which provide more information about an event or emphasize some personal matter, such as whether a ticket was a gift or to whom it previously belonged. Sarah Sophia often wrote down the year which she had acquired the ticket. As in the case of her visitor cards, the admission tickets were never bound into albums. Unlike them however, the folders of admission tickets are organized alphabetically according to the institution or event to which they refer. Thus the first few sections are labelled 'Apothecary's Co.', 'Archery', 'Balloons'. Occasionally, this order is complicated. Sometimes a general heading is broken down into more specific sub-headings. For example, Sarah Sophia creates one folder for 'Plays', and then other folders more specifically for 'Plays at Richmond House 1787', 'Plays (at gentlemen's houses)', 'Plays (Westminster)', 'Academy (Soho Square & co.)', and 'Plays (some impressions taken off on sattin [sic])'. The subfolders are not always alphabetized, and sometimes included tickets or other material, such as newspaper clippings, that do not appear to correspond to her heading, thus complicating our understanding of her system of classification.³⁰⁸ Like other branches of her collection, Sarah Sophia's admission tickets reflect a preoccupation with classifying and systematizing the everyday. Unlike other items of the collection, however, admission tickets are arranged into folders by the type of event and venue to which they refer.

³⁰⁸ Rickards, 2000: 4. Rickards also notes some of the problems when cataloguing collections of ephemera, including the fact that admission tickets and invitation cards closely resemble each other. Ambiguous cases are not uncommon and collections of ephemera often include items of one category among items of the other. This overlap is also evident with Sarah Sophia's collection.

The Admission Ticket in Context

Admission tickets are a type of formal social contract. In his monumental *Encyclopaedia of Ephemera* Maurice Rickards defines admission tickets within a cataloguing context as those items 'bearing the word Admit, followed by a number (two, three, etc.) or a space, or a name or names'.³⁰⁹ While this definition might be helpful for archivists and librarians organizing a broad range of tickets into their repositories, especially from different sources and collections, Sarah Sophia's collection challenges this criteria of classification, as many of the admission tickets she gathered do not bear the word 'Admit'. For example, many of Sarah Sophia's tickets are marked only with the phrase 'For the Benefit of' and by an inscription only of the purchaser's name. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the admission ticket as a ticket or pass granting access to 'an event, performance, exhibition, etc. esp. as paid for; a fee paid for such access'.³¹⁰ They are documents that indicate that one has paid for admission to an event or establishment; they are proof of a right secured. This more general definition applies more compellingly to the tickets in Sarah Sophia's collection but fails to encompass the range of materials from which admission tickets are made: silk, metal and satin as well as paper and card.

When admission tickets are exchanged, the party issuing the ticket recognizes that he or she must act or give something to the holder, usually at or within a particular time or date. In turn, the owners of admission tickets are required to abide by a strict set of rules, which may be printed directly on the

³⁰⁹ Rickards, 2000: 4.

³¹⁰ 'Admission ticket' [accessed 5 Sep. 2013].

ticket. Admission tickets help structure behaviour and reinforce convention. One ticket in Sarah Sophia's collection, for example, instructs holders to write their names on the back of the tickets. Other tickets stipulate that they are 'transferable' or 'non-transferable', specify at what time people were expected to assemble, designated seating, and/or allowed one to 'pas and repas' [sic]. Some tickets were to be left with the porter at the door, or permitted the holder to bring guests or stipulate where and how those attending should park their carriages. Though generally servants were non-admissible, Sarah Sophia's admission tickets suggest that the servants of nobility were sometimes admitted; it appears such servants may have been admitted only to occupy a seat for their employer until he or she should arrive.³¹¹ Tickets often requested that 'ladies not wear hats, bonnets, feathers or hoops'. While admission tickets are similar to vouchers and receipts, they do not always require monetary exchange; they may also be free or given as gifts. The regulations printed on the tickets in Sarah Sophia's collection provide information about what was expected of human collective behaviour at festivals, entertainments and other sociable events.

Admission tickets not only regulated access to institutions; they also assisted in ordering social activity. To prevent overcrowding and to regulate audiences, organizers usually printed a limited number of tickets for any given event.³¹² In order to accommodate large crowds and manage levels of access for public festivals and commemorations, promoters printed multiple tickets

³¹¹ Russell, 2001: 21-42.

³¹² *Public Advertiser*, 19 April 1762 (Foundling Hospital) 'To prevent the Chapel being Crouded, [sic] no more Tickets will be deliver'd [sic] than it can conveniently hold'. See also H.F.B. Compston, 191: 151. The Magdalen Hospital introduced tickets to regulate the many visitors who came to watch the veiled women—penitent prostitutes—pray in the chapel gallery.

allowing different types of access.³¹³ Issuing admission tickets for events enabled organizers to keep better track of their expenses and made it easier to tally the number of attendees. Divisions in the venue that defined the audience in terms of 'box, pit, and gallery' expressed the idea that an event should be representative of a social body as a whole.³¹⁴ The price of admission tickets varied. Much like such events today, eighteenth-century public amusements promoted different levels of access at different prices. For a performance given on 14 November 1769, at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane Theatre for example, benches in the pit cost three shillings, while places in the first gallery cost two shillings; the upper gallery was priced at one shilling, and richer patrons sat in the reserved box seats.³¹⁵ Many of the tickets in Sarah Sophia's collection are stamped with one of the aforementioned words: 'pit', 'gallery', 'upper gallery' and 'box'. The tickets reveal that most of the locations where public entertainments took place, secular and non-secular, were carefully organized into sections, whereby different classes of entrant could be separated. The hierarchical system dictating those events, however, was based on monetary not hereditary criteria. Many of the tickets Sarah Sophia collected are stamped with the assigned area where the holder sat, and only occasionally do they provide a fixed seating number, so it is likely that performances were either standing room only, or that seats and benches were available on a first-come first-serve basis. While spectators were required to behave socially within a structure reliant on a strict form of separation,

³¹³ BL, 'A Collection of Broad-sides, cuttings from newspapers, engravings, etc. of various dates formed by Miss S. S. Banks Bound in nine volumes, L. R. 301. H 3-11 (7).

³¹⁴ Russell (ed.), 1999: 226.

³¹⁵ Brewer, 1997: 326.

unassigned seating may have allowed breaches of the rigid boundaries between classes, hinting at the possibility of spectators sneaking into different spaces.

Admission tickets were active objects that were held and passed around. The tickets in Sarah Sophia's collection contain traces of their use. Many carry wax seals, stamps, autographs and initials attesting to their authenticity and circulation. These traces reinforce the notion of a contract and express a sense of interpersonal relations. Sometimes the corners of her tickets are torn away, showing proof of their use and their limited life-span. In Sarah Sophia's collection, however, admission tickets are transformed from fleeting, ephemeral objects into tangible objects of memory, exposing and recalling a multiplicity of social experiences and human relations.

Admission tickets could also be gendered objects. Some of the tickets in Sarah Sophia's collection were designated specifically for men or women, differentiated visually not through any variation in design but through the colour of the ink in which they were printed: red for women and black for men.³¹⁶ When transferable, ladies' admission tickets were passed to other ladies; gentlemen's to gentlemen. Although both men and women participated in visiting public entertainments, admission tickets enabled officials to regulate and reinforce gender differences. Thus, one ticket for the 'European Museum' specifically provides 'Free Admission for Dr. Wynne and a Lady Or any Two Ladies who may produce this Ticket, to View the above National Gallery'.³¹⁷ Interestingly, the ticket stipulates that it was 'Not Transferable to Gentlemen'.

³¹⁶ BM J. 9-572-611.

³¹⁷ BM J.9-h14

The museum clearly did not want this to be a purely male environment; they welcomed women, perhaps as a marketing strategy. Gender distinctions regulated the way admission tickets were distributed and enabled promoters to create the kind of audience they desired. As gendered articles, admission tickets can provide a glimpse into the kind of venues to which women and men were drawn and the institutions in which they participated.

Produced from paper, metal, silk, ivory, bone, satin, lead, silver or even solid gold, tickets' materiality also reveals something about the self-image that the owners and managers of venues sought to promote.³¹⁸ As metal is much more durable than paper or silk, this material was often used for the more expensive subscription tickets.³¹⁹ The catalogue pertaining to Sarah Sophia's collection of coins, medals and tokens reveals that she owned some admission tickets of this type (fig. 101). Sarah Sophia did collect metal admission tickets, but she arranged them with her coins, medals and tokens under the heading 'admission tickets', rather than with the other paper tickets. These kinds of subscription tickets were usually good for a year and their designs or the type of metal used to produce the ticket changed annually. Often, the venue and/or the owner's name were engraved directly on the ticket; sometimes these details were accompanied by a subscription number. One silver 'Opera' ticket in Sarah Sophia's collection to His Majesty's Theatre was inscribed with the name of the Earl of Bessborough (fig. 102). Sometimes the tickets contained holes so that they could be strung onto one's person. A few of the annotations accompanying her paper collection reveal that

³¹⁸ Timbs, 1860: 36. Jonathan Tyers presented William Hogarth with a solid gold pass to Vauxhall gardens, granting him and a coach-full of people perpetual free entry. See also Coke and Borg, 2011: 49, 162, 186-88.

³¹⁹ Coke and Borg, 2011: 186-88.

counterfeiting was prevalent at that time; artists designing tickets responded to this problem by changing their imagery frequently, by using expensive materials such as silk or by employing techniques such as embossing that made copying tickets more difficult. Most of the tickets Sarah Sophia collected were printed on paper or heavy card. In her collection, however, one of her folders is headed 'tickets printed on satin'. Satin tickets were novel, and the costs to produce them meant that these would have been far more difficult to copy than those produced on standard stock card. The separation of admission tickets by material shows the significance of materiality to Sarah Sophia's methods of organisation.

Few academics have engaged with eighteenth-century admission tickets. The most comprehensive study on tickets is Sarah Lloyd's 'Ticketing the British eighteenth-century: "A Thing...Never Heard Before"'.³²⁰ In her study, Lloyd places eighteenth-century tickets in a historical context, illustrating their ubiquity and the range of social settings in which they were used. She notes the variety of tickets, including admission tickets, lottery tickets, tickets used by porters to carry certain goods, tickets used by doctors to identify patients and visiting tickets, among others. Lloyd claims that tickets 'contributed to new modes of social existence', reflecting a contemporaneous 'rage for system'.³²¹ Sarah Sophia's systematizing of tickets into specific folders thus parallels the classificatory function of admission tickets themselves. In their research on Vauxhaull Gardens, David Coke and Alan Borg provide a detailed reading of the different types of designs seen on

³²⁰ Lloyd, 2013: 843-71.

³²¹ Lloyd, 2013: 843-71.

admission tickets distributed at Vauxhall and the different level of entry each provided.³²² Coke and Borg consider the design and material character of these tickets and investigate the ways in which admission tickets helped strategically promote Vauxhall's image. Meanwhile, a recent publication, *An Introduction to the Tokens at the Foundling Museum* of 2011, reveals that the use of admission tokens sometimes extended beyond their intended function. Parents struggling to survive in this period were sometimes forced to leave their children at the Foundling Hospital, where they were also asked to leave a small and distinctive token as proof of identity. In the event that parents or family wished to later reclaim their child, they were required to describe these tokens. Tokens ranged in form, from bejeweled rings to hazelnuts.³²³ However, a parent or parents sometimes left an admission ticket, usually metal, with their child.³²⁴ The use of admission tickets as identifiers bestows them with an authority outside the realm of entertainment. In another important piece of scholarship, Gillian Russell has utilized admission tickets as a way of providing information about some of the events elite women sponsored in London. Russell argues persuasively that admission tickets were 'important tokens of exchange in a commercialized public culture, denoting rights of access and in particular, the relationship between 'public' and 'private'.³²⁵ Admission tickets sometimes provide textual and visual information about events that is not available elsewhere. My research builds on these interventions by providing a systematic analysis of Sarah Sophia's

³²² Coke and Borg, 2011: 185-190.

³²³ Bright and Clarke, 2011: 9-20.

³²⁴ Bright and Clark, 2011: 13.

³²⁵ Russell, 2007: 165-166.

collection of admission tickets focusing on the imagery, display and collection practices associated with this particular form of ephemera.

Admission tickets not only provide insights into the social history of a specific time period; they present viewers with an understudied form of eighteenth-century print culture that was closely intertwined with other branches of graphic art. In this chapter, I will focus on four different categories of admission tickets in Sarah Sophia's vast collection: 'Plays', 'Concerts', 'Chapels and Sectaries', and 'Exhibitions'. Through analysing the folder of 'Plays', I will demonstrate how admission tickets worked as a form of advertisement that helped shape the audience's expectations about a given production. The admission tickets Sarah Sophia collected relied on a particular set of visual codes that conveyed something about the performance to which they promised access. This folder also reveals that admission tickets were not only meant to announce events; they served to act as souvenirs. Secondly, I will investigate a folder containing tickets to 'Concerts' in order to study the iconography found on admission tickets and to consider this iconography's relationship to other works of high art and graphic culture. This folder demonstrates that admission tickets—particularly those pertaining to 'high' cultural forms such as theatre—were meant to signify refinement and to be appreciated in ways analogous to the appreciation of fine art. Building on this, I will then analyse a folder holding tickets that provided access to different kinds of religious performance, in order to demonstrate that admission tickets of the period sometimes incorporated especially rich, highly allegorical images and strikingly complex forms of pictorial narrative. Finally, I will turn to a folder entitled 'Exhibitions' in order to consider the organization of

admission tickets in the collection. This selected folder reveals how Sarah Sophia's display of such tickets was aligned with other exhibition arrangements that were used within print collections, museums and galleries in the period.

Admission Tickets as a Form of Advertisement: 'Plays'

A single page of 'Plays' in Sarah Sophia's collection of admission tickets provides a glimpse of both the richness and the challenges presented by her collection (fig. 103). An assortment of tickets is accompanied by Sarah Sophia's distinctive personal annotations. Glued on the sheet of paper are twenty-seven admission tickets. The pasted tickets are made from cardboard or heavy paper and differ in size and shape. They make the light-weight paper file within which they are affixed feel stiff and substantial. The sheet is packed with a striking variety of images and symbols evoking the theatre. The tickets range from 3x4 inches to 7x7 inches. The use of different coloured inks hints at the complex color-coding of admission tickets of the period. Twelve of the twenty-seven tickets are printed in black ink. The others vary. Six are printed in red. Two tickets--both Parisian--are printed on coloured paper; this creates a strong contrast with the other tickets, which are all printed on white paper.³²⁶

The tickets on the left side of the double-page spread are arranged into straight rows; the right side is arranged asymmetrically.

³²⁶ Lambert, 2001: 26. During this time colour prints were limited, so using colour paper was a way of introducing colour to printed material. As Sarah Sophia never travelled to Paris herself, these would have either been bought or gifted to her, most likely by way of her brother's international contacts. The inclusion of international tickets conveys Sarah Sophia's curiosity about a broader social world.

Admission tickets not only circulated practical information about events, but they also strategically lured potential audiences into shared spaces. One ticket from the provinces depicts the newly refurbished Theatre Royal at Brighthelmston (fig.104), often referred to as a place 'of fashionable resort', in which David Garrick even performed on occasion.³²⁷ Since provincial theatres also functioned as places of assembly and forums of debate, they had significant politico-cultural roles.³²⁸ As this ticket demonstrates provincial theatres were also symbols of pride. Sarah Sophia annotates the ticket 'October 12, 1790'. On the ticket, the floor stretches back to the curtain where we find the inscription 'R. Thomas's night'. Seating areas are pictured stretching out to the sides. The card is designed so that the holder is imagined occupying the seating area opposite the curtain. However, the space is empty. The image on the ticket invited the holders to project themselves into the depicted space. Not only could they fill the space imaginatively, the ticket was also a necessary object that granted one entrance to the actual physical theatre space, where drama was performed. Such tickets thus functioned as boundary-breaking devices that led the holder from the outside of the theatre building, over the threshold, and into the world inside; in this process, the ticket holder became a beholder. Such tickets also invited the holder into an imagined future. Finally, the image's depth of field creates a pictorial effect that punctures the surface of the two-dimensional page, creating the illusion of a new, miniature theatre space that allowed viewers to look back and

³²⁷ Erredge, 1862: 206-07.

³²⁸ Russell, 1999: 226.

remember. Placed at the center of the left page, the ticket is a clear focal point, a tiny window into the world of 'Plays'.

Admission tickets promoted the idea that plays were part of high culture, and advertised very different kinds of performance. This page of 'Plays' brings together into one space a community of playhouse and actors representing a variety of theatrical modes. Across the page, patent playhouses specializing in tragedy and comedy, such as Drury Lane and Covent Garden, share space with the Haymarket, known for its burlesque productions. At the top of the left page, are two benefit tickets for shows at the Theatre Royal at Drury Lane, London's oldest, 'legitimate' (spoken word) theatre. Although officially a royal theatre, it received no royal patronage; it was a significant business, owned by a company of shareholders.³²⁹ The tickets for events at this playhouse are adorned with ancient female figures. One ticket includes a figure representing Comedy, who is depicted alongside a small child holding a sign that reads 'for the Benefit of Mrs. Colles', The playful figure on Mrs. Colles' ticket holds up a laughing mask in one hand and a portrait depicting a woman in profile in the other (fig. 105). The other ticket 'for the benefit of Mr. Fawcett', features a female representation of Tragedy (fig. 106). On the ticket, Tragedy stands on a stage and is depicted leaning against a plinth on which there is an urn of burning incense. An amphora is placed at her feet. Here the engraver of the ticket appears to be drawing on a style of imagery associated with the fashionable portraitist Sir Joshua Reynolds when painting representations of aristocratic women, such as Mrs. Theresa Parker (fig. 107). In such portraits, the sitters wore classically draped

³²⁹ Brewer, 1997: 328-29.

dresses that helped create a 'timeless' effect. They were often depicted outdoors, and sometimes positioned leaning against plinths decorated with urns. Such portraits attracted a great deal of attention at the Royal Academy exhibitions and artists such as George Romney incorporated Reynolds's style when picturing society women.³³⁰ The ticket duplicates this high pictorial language in order to advertise the kinds of refined performance that the holder could expect to encounter at Drury Lane.

Pasted next to these tickets is another ticket 'for the benefit of Mr. Fawcett' on the night of 16 May 1797 (fig.108). Charles Macklin's comedy *The Man of the World* was to be performed at the theatre at Covent Garden that evening. In contrast to the classical figures, this ticket features a somewhat grotesque-looking comical mask that occupies most of the available space of the ticket. Macklin's play provided a satirical critique of Tory ministries in power during the early years of George III; from 1770, the Examiner of Plays in London refused to license Macklin's play, prompting the author to compose a defence of satiric comedy.³³¹ It was not until 1781 that *The Man of the World* was finally performed at Covent Garden. This critical, satiric comedy is advertised through the striking and somewhat sinister image of the laughing mask that is depicted on the ticket. The actor John Fawcett, who elected mainly to play in low comedy, appeared in many productions at various venues including the Haymarket and the Freemason's Hall.³³² Although Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres had a joint monopoly on spoken drama in London, commercial pressures were unavoidable, so in order to survive

³³⁰ Penny, 1986: 199.

³³¹ MacMillian [accessed 5 September 2013].

³³² Knight [accessed 21 May 2013].

financially, both theatres often strayed from a programme comprised of strictly spoken drama and incorporated music and other entertainments into an evening's performance.³³³ Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres were thus often accused of staging lowbrow events.³³⁴ The incorporation of antique figures and classical motifs that we found on the adjoining tickets, we can conclude, may have helped divert attention away from the more popular spectacles that were also being performed at those venues, and that were so powerfully conveyed by and advertised by Macklin's ticket.

Elsewhere on the page, we find a 'box' admission ticket to the 'minor' Theatre Royal Hay Market, which was established by John Potter in opposition to patent theatres (fig.109). This venue was best known for its Tory party satires.³³⁵ In contrast to the highly traditionalistic imagery used on patent tickets, here we find a very different, strikingly direct form of pictorial advertisement; two men, perhaps characters from the play, are depicted on the ticket; one of them wears a British Infantry uniform while the other wears a white shirt and trousers. Both look out to the viewer with open arms as if they were welcoming them to the show. The ticket does not provide any information about what kind of production was being advertised or when it might have been performed. However, just above the ticket, Sarah Sophia wrote 'Burlesque'; to its right she printed the name 'Delphine'. This might be an Anglicization of the name of the famous Italian soprano singer, Francesca Margarita de L'Epine, who came to live in London and performed convincingly

³³³ John Brewer, 1997: 339.

³³⁴ Russell, 1999: 224,228; Moody, 2000: 74.

³³⁵ Brewer, 1997: 361; Moody, 2000: 74.

in both male and female roles.³³⁶ However, Sarah Sophia also annotated the date '1785', below the ticket and given the fact that the aforementioned Delphine died in 1744, and that the ticket does not seem to date from earlier in the century, it is difficult—as so often in deciphering her inscriptions—to fully understand the relevance of her annotation. However, we can confidently state that this kind of ticket represents a different style of advertisement than that found in the Drury Lane tickets, in which the two represented men function as virtual hawkers, stand-ins for the kinds of figures who might have stood outside the theatre doors of the period and who sought to lure potential attendees from the street.

Another pair of men is pictured on the ticket for 'Wilson's Night', which features two male actors dressed in extravagant wig and fine clothes performing on stage (Fig. 110). The players are pushed up to the edge of the stage, so that there is immediate proximity between the actors and the audience. The ticket holder appears to be part of the audience space.³³⁷ The actors are depicted as if 'speaking' to the ticket holder, presenting him or her with what he/she can expect at that theatre. Theatricality is explicitly coded in the variety of props—musical instruments, masks, and books—that litter the ground around them. Music, particularly tuckets, flourishes and sennets were usually played to accompany a specific character's stage entrance and exit, and Shakespeare often employed specific sounds as signifiers to pique an audience's perception in numerous ways.³³⁸ It is possible that the figures are dressed to represent specific characters who were part of a repertory of

³³⁶ Aspden [accessed 21 May 2013].

³³⁷ Roberts, 1997: 30.

³³⁸ Carpenter, 2012; 55-79

canonical roles. Hanging on the wall in the background are two small roundels one depicting a man, the other a woman. Scripts, actors and props are presented on stage. Quotes from William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Henry the IV*, and *Hamlet*, have been printed on the actor's shield, a roundel on the wall and on the page of an unrolled scroll; these work to prompt the viewer to imagine the kind of theatre that he or she will enjoy at the playhouse itself. Indeed, these fragments of text reinforce the notion of admission tickets as a kind of prologue, introducing the audience to the types of shows being performed in that space. During this period, famous actors such as Garrick, would often stand alone on stage before the main part of the evening's performance and alert the assembled theatre goers to the forthcoming play or performance through a specially written prologue; admissions tickets like these, which feature virtual versions of such actors, served as yet another kind of enticing preliminary.

Meanwhile, a 'Gallery' ticket for 'Mr. Quick's benefit' depicts a court jester, a figure often associated with folly, who is shown leaning against a bust depicting another stock character of contemporary *commedia dell'arte*, Punchinello (fig.111). Pantomines became very popular during the eighteenth century, drawing large audiences for weeks on end, and these shows together with Italian opera were seen by some as driving the more traditional forms of spoken drama from the London stage.³³⁹ The jester's bodily gesture creates a visually prominent diagonal; his leg stretches outward and his foot gently touches a cup and sword. The exterior setting in which the depicted jester stands also extends the boundaries of performance. The jester is a figure that

³³⁹ Russell, 1999: 228.

artists, including William Hogarth, often incorporated in engravings—such as *Southwark Fair* and *Masquerades and Operas*—which showed them seeking to lure people into the depicted theatres (fig. 112 and 113).³⁴⁰ Elsewhere on the same page Sarah Sophia pasted a ticket from Paris to the Theatre de Beaujolois, a puppet theatre that also presented acrobatics, tight rope performances and dancing dogs, which was located at the Palais-Royal in Paris, further attesting to the growing influence of popular theatrical performances.³⁴¹ Like other stock characters depicted on admission tickets, the Jester seems to have offered an effective form of advertisement, humorously targeting the relatively broad audiences interested in participating in the theatre.

Moving down to the last line of tickets on the left page, one encounters another example of the way admission tickets utilized the imagery of actors and text as a way of ‘speaking’ to the viewer. ‘Mr. Edwin’s Night’ is printed on the top of the ticket (fig. 114). Like others on the page, this ticket is likely to have been made for a benefit performance. The character is positioned at the edge of a straight line that creates the illusion that he is on stage. He is dressed in contemporary costume. Directly below him a quote is written across the stage: ‘I hope all my friends will drop their guineas into my ramskin budget’.³⁴² This is a line delivered by the character Jemmy Jumps, played by Mr. Edwin in John O’Keefe, Esq.’s *The Farmer: A Comic Opera in Two Acts*. *As it is performed at the Theatres Royal in London and Dublin*. The quote is an indirect way of conveying what was being performed, and it offers an

³⁴⁰ Hallett and Riding, 2007: 28; Paulson, 1989: 48; Shesgreen, 1974: 47; Russell, 2001: 228.

³⁴¹ Hemmings, 1994: 37-38.

³⁴² O’Keefe, 1788: 36.

entirely appropriate metaphor for the kind of event being advertised: benefit performances were a way that actors, authors, theatre employees and prominent women could raise money for themselves or, on occasion, for philanthropic ventures.³⁴³

Admission tickets are paper monuments; they have the capacity to turn the ephemerality of an evening's performance into something more enduring and tangible. Although most of the tickets gathered on the page are from London, the place Sarah Sophia spent most of her time, she annotates one coloured ticket dating 'March 24, 1791', with a reference to the city of Bath, a place often identified with fashion and elite display (fig.115). In the center of the ticket, the words 'Theatre Royal' and 'Mr. Rowbothan's Benefit' together with the box number are printed along the smooth surface of a thick slab of stone. The ruined stone suggests antiquity, and it conveys the passing of time; the stone is overgrown with different plants: shrubs and flowers. However the stone also symbolizes the permanence of memory; the fact that the event's details are carved into the rock adds to the commemorative value of the event. It turns the ephemeral, paper admission ticket into an object for collection and retention far beyond the date of the event it advertises. Around the stone is another sumptuous arrangement of inanimate objects denoting the theatre, such as musical instruments, a cup, a hat with a long bushy feather, flowers, mask, book, a crown and dagger. These are symbols of the senses that also convey the passing of time. Thus the ticket holder's gaze is constantly shifting between objects conveying stability and brevity. Admission tickets reveal the oscillating tensions between ephemerality and

³⁴³ Russell, 1999: 226; Gaunt, 1978: 75.

permanence. This contrast is further conveyed by way of the print medium itself; carving into stone mimics the act of carving a copper plate, while quietly betraying the fact that paper in contrast to stone is fragile, easily destroyed. The simultaneous appeal to permanence and ephemerality served to complicate the admission tickets' function as a form of commercial promotion; as well as promising to allow entrance to a particular event, it subtly invoked and advertised a future in which that event would be remembered.

Even tickets that use relatively straightforward emblems of the theatre reveal the desire to convey the notion that many of the events being performed were of high cultural status. Thus, on the left side of the folder are two tickets, one printed in black and one in red ink. The ticket printed in black is a 'Messrs. Durravans & Co. House Ticket'. (fig.116) The name 'Messrs. Durravans & Co.'s' is enclosed within an elaborate frame. Outside the frame is a bust representing Shakespeare, an iconic symbol not only of the highest forms of theatre, but of Britain's achievements in this realm. Meanwhile, the red ticket is for 'Mr. Lewis's Night', here referring to Thomas William Lewis, an actor and theatre manager whose career centered on Covent Garden (fig. 117).³⁴⁴ At the top centre, Lewis's orange-printed ticket again features a portrait of William Shakespeare, this time depicted in a small roundel, and again, conveying the idea of an elevated patriotic form of theatre.

Another ticket on the same page, advertised as being for the benefit of 'Mr. and Mrs. Graham' offers a mixture of theatrical, Masonic and religious emblems (fig.118). Depicted on the ticket are two busts, one of David Garrick and—again—one of Shakespeare. The bust of Garrick when juxtaposed to

³⁴⁴ Metcalf [accessed 21 May 2013].

that of the great playwright, serves not only to promote the involvement in the production of Britain's most popular and famous actor, but also to advertise his life-long mission to bring Shakespeare to a wider contemporary audience by way of his theatre at Drury Lane. Such images thus need to be understood as a form of marketing, here not only aligning the performance/theatre with the great figure of Shakespeare, but also evoking the possibility of enjoying a performance either by Garrick himself or—if this is a ticket that post-dates his death—one that honours the standards he set.

As this folder demonstrates, admission tickets were a form of advertisement. They drew on a particular set of motifs to help reassure their purchasers that the theatrical event concerned was a compelling one, and to showcase the kinds of performance they could anticipate enjoying in the playhouse. Some tickets incorporated specific emblems like particular theatrical characters, musical instruments, images of Shakespeare and classical imagery in order to promote different kinds of production, both high and low, while others used images of the actual theatre space so that holders could imagine themselves as part of an audience.

The Imagery of the Admission Ticket: 'Concerts'

Admission tickets were designed to advertise events, but could also be enjoyed as miniature works of art and appreciated for their aesthetic appeal.

In a letter to one correspondent, John Wilkes sends a ticket from the 1775 Mansion House Ball and wrote:

Permit me then to send to you a ticket...for the Easter festival of my Mayorality. I have saved it from the wreck of those despoiled by doorkeepers. In my opinion, it does honour to the two great artists,

Cirpirani and Bartolozzi, and to a country which distinguishes their merit.³⁴⁵

Wilkes' words position admission tickets as meritorious works, showcasing artistic talent. Here, they also prompt a sense of national pride, not so much about the artists concerned, who were both Italian, but rather about the nation, Britain, that has appreciated their achievements. Although their ephemera status suggests that they were produced to last only a fleeting moment and could expect to be thrown away very soon afterwards, this was not always the case; many people, not only Wilkes, treasured and collected admission tickets, something that reinforces their function not only as souvenirs, but as miniaturized forms of graphic art.

Sarah Sophia's collection contains several folders labelled 'Concerts' that contain samples of tickets advertising events performed at associations, festivals, societies, halls and clubs. Her collection is particularly strong in this category not only because of her own enthusiasm for attending concerts (she subscribed to many musical performances) but also because London was a thriving musical city that offered many forms of musical amusements to the public.³⁴⁶ Looking across the page, one sees a variety of types of image—religious, antique and modern—all relating to the theme of concerts (fig. 119). In this section, I will be analyzing this folder of fifteen 'Concert' tickets in order to illustrate the stylistic diversity of the admission tickets collected by Sarah Sophia and to illustrate the ways in which this diversity—which helped reinforce their status and interest as pieces of graphic art—was built upon a

³⁴⁵ Cited in Lloyd, 2013: 843-71. See also Andrew W. Tuer, 189: 109-110.

³⁴⁶ Webber, 2004: 71-92; McVeigh, 2006: 53-72, 119-128.

continual recycling of images and themes familiar from elevated forms of visual culture. The designs featured on the admission tickets Sarah Sophia collected attest to the widespread pictorial appropriation taking place within the print market; images from different branches of print culture were constantly being reused and reworked in new contexts.³⁴⁷

One ticket on the centre left page is for 'Gaudry's Night'. It is an oval ticket designed and engraved by T. Bonner, who also engraved other objects collected by Sarah Sophia, including pocketbook images (fig. 120).³⁴⁸ This ticket was produced using the woodcut medium. Bonner employs a range of curvilinear lines to create dense areas of foliage and a series of rocky ledges. These lines enliven the picture and create a sense of movement. The loose lines contrast with the stark, white areas of the card, which were produced by cutting completely away at the block. The overall effect produced by the woodcut medium contrasts noticeably with the other copper-plate engravings and etchings pasted across the page and further adds to our sense of the artistic range displayed by the admission ticket in this period. Here, too, the lush landscape, the small waterfall, the plinth, the playful putti and the kithara (a direct reference to the Greek god of music Apollo) all convey a strong sense of the classical mode that was widely understood to occupy the highest position in the hierarchy of the arts.

Reinforcing their claims to aesthetic regard was the fact that some of the admission tickets of the period were signed by the draftsmen and engravers who produced them. Admission tickets would have contributed to

³⁴⁷ See for example; Hallett, 1999.

³⁴⁸ Over the top centre of the ticket is Sarah Sophia's annotation 'No. 10421'.

the business of printsellers and enhanced the income of many engravers. Designed and engraved in many cases by artists of distinction, admission tickets could be considered works of art in their own right. Thus, on the top right page is a larger sized ticket, designed by Thomas Stothard, who studied at the Royal Academy school and rose to a position of a Royal Academician in 1794 (fig. 121).³⁴⁹ He designed illustrations for a wide range of graphic prints and his works were much sought after by collectors.³⁵⁰ William Sharp, who produced many types of ephemera during his time, including trade cards, engraved the ticket; Sarah Sophia owned his personal trade card. The admission ticket is for entry to 'Mr. Barthelemon's night' referring to a performance by the critically acclaimed French violinist and composer, who was based in London, Francois Hippolyte Barthelemon.³⁵¹ The overall image is an especially graceful one and provides viewers with insight into both of the artists' skills. The exceptional aesthetic appeal of this ticket, which is conveyed by way of the artists' technical virtuosity, tonal effects, carefully distinguished textures and close attention to details, confirms that admission tickets were sometimes designed, if only in part, to be appreciated as independent works of art. In this instance, the depicted scene may derive from a painting by Stothard; it shows the victorious Jephthah, judge over Israel for six years, returning home on horseback, followed by his army. According to biblical narrative, Jephthah, makes an oath before fighting the Ammonites, promising that whoever comes first out of the doors of his house to meet him, when he returns in peace from the people of Ammon, will be sacrificed to God

³⁴⁹ Abraham, 1986: 322.

³⁵⁰ Clayton, 1997: 220, 243-44, 258.

³⁵¹ Higham, 1896: 2-3,7-11.

as burnt offering.³⁵² This is the moment when Jephthah sees his daughter and turns away. As she is the first to greet him, he must keep his promise to God and sacrifice her. The image on the card captures all the story's drama. It is framed and draped, which adds a theatrical element to the overall scene. Admission tickets like these would have reinforced notions of taste. Like the other types of prints mentioned so far in this thesis, such as pocketbooks and visitor cards, this kind of small engraving would have been for collecting.

Although the tickets pasted across the page differ in composition, detail and skill, their designs incorporate similar visual signs. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Apollo, the ancient Greek god of music, is continuously referred to across the page. Even so, each artist appropriates or alludes to the god in his own individual way. Thus, another ticket demonstrates the use of Apollo to convey an idea of a classical, musical ideal that could be compared to the ideals of high art (fig. 122). The ticket is 'for the Benefit of Mr. Cramer', performed on 29 April 1782 at Carlisle House. Carlisle House was host to numerous sensational soirees and popular balls, masquerades and unlicensed operatic spectacles.³⁵³ The iconography of the seated Apollo on the rocks, which is incorporated in this ticket, is one that artists both British and Continental artists often used when depicting images of the Greek god, and many similar examples are pictured on frontispieces, book illustrations, and fine art prints (fig. 123). In the foreground, Apollo is seated on a rocky ledge. As the god of music, he is presented plucking the strings of a lyre, the musical instrument he mastered, which is also one of the attributes with which

³⁵² Judges 11:31.

³⁵³ Russell, 2007: 22-25; Brewer, 1997: 397.

he is associated. In the background, we find a circular temple on top of a mountain, Mount Parnassus, the sacred place of Apollo and home to the nine muses. A decorative wreath of laurel leaves, another of Apollo's attributes, surrounds the picture. They signify Apollo's many conquests, including his victories in musical contests, against contenders, such as Pan and Marsyas. The overall composition and correct proportions of the figure adhere to an ideal that conveys those notions of balance and order that were seen as characteristic of the god. The image is meticulously engraved. By employing a stippling technique, the artist achieves subtle gradations of shading, and the overall image is thereby made even more refined. Similar to other examples on this page, this ticket demonstrates how admission ticket designs drew on well-known aesthetic and artistic norms being cultivated in the eighteenth-century print market.

On the bottom right of the left-hand page there is another ticket representing Apollo, but this time the artist alludes to more than his purely musical connection and portrays his association with the nine muses. An artist named Green engraved the ticket (fig. 124).³⁵⁴ This ticket is for a performance given by The Musical Society at Oxford. Similar to the aforementioned image of Apollo, the composition of the seated Apollo in the heavens, surrounded by the performing muses, is another traditional way of depicting the god of music and the arts (fig. 125). On the ticket, Apollo is shown in all his radiant glory, seated in the heavens. He plays his lyre to the nine muses, each of whom represents one of the arts: Kalliope, epic poetry; Kleio, history; Ourania,

³⁵⁴ Several engravers went by the name of Green, so it is difficult to determine with certainty the artist's identity.

astronomy; Thaleia, comedy; Melpomene, tragedy; Polyhymnia, religious hymns; Erato, erotic poetry; Euterpe, lyric poetry; and Terpsikhore, choral song and dance. Each muse holds an identifying attribute, such as a globe, dividers, books, feather pen, and musical instruments. The lines used to produce this ticket are somewhat coarser and less controlled than those used for the other tickets on the page. Nonetheless, they increase the expressive content of the picture and convey a sense of energy. Apollo's representation with the nine muses presents his multiple identity as god of the arts more generally and Green chooses to depict him and the muses in the moment of creative genius.

Other tickets on the page situate Apollo in an even broader mythological context. The ticket at the bottom of the right page offers a dense and elaborate graphic image packed with classical and mythological references. Written across a banner is the inscription 'For the Musick[sic] prize compos'd by Mr. ----- Fryday ----- the ----- 1701' (fig. 126). The spaces are left blank. As the ticket was produced before Sarah Sophia was born, it was either given to her or purchased by her. Most likely, she was interested in the elaborate design; the ticket may have been considered rare. It was engraved by the leading French line-engraver Simon Gribelin, who arrived in London around 1680. The image is visually striking and fastidiously delineated. It presents the viewer with a kind of stage set, full of references to Greek mythology. A careful order governs the composition, with a frontal Apollo assuming a commanding seat in the center of the heavens; a consort of putti surrounds him. One plays a drum while others play string and wind instruments. The light radiating from Apollo's halo is powerful, and it burns

through the ornate picture frame. Below the heavens to the right side of the picture is a scene depicting the Judgment of Paris, one of the events leading to the Trojan Wars. To the left, seated in front of a classical building, is a woman, perhaps a muse, directing an orchestra of putti. Just as a composer balances multifarious sounds in music, Gribelin treats the individual scenes not as distinctly separate from one another but as balanced harmoniously, as in a musical arrangement. Clouds and a path are strategically placed in a way that suggests divisions, but the scenes still merge into a continuous whole, with putti appearing multiple times throughout the design. The ticket is a testament to a fascination with Greek culture and highlights key aspects of visual and musical composition. The complex arrangement, finely etched textures reinforce the printmaker's aspirations to subtlety and sophistication.

Another ticket depicting Apollo with a Muse seated amongst some rocks is a collaborative effort between father and son (fig.127). It was designed by the Flanders-born engraver and painter Michael van der Gucht, who emigrated to London in 1688, and it was engraved by his son Gerard. Unlike the other tickets, this ticket is text heavy. A concert of vocal and instrumental music was to be performed at the theatre in Lincoln Inn Fields 'for the Benefit of Mr. Smith', where Smith was to 'perform a lesson on the harpiscord'. Sarah Sophia annotates the ticket 1791, the day she received the ticket, and also writes '(old)' under the ticket. The Van der Gucht family were reputable figures in the English print market during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when the market was dominated by foreign artists

working in London.³⁵⁵ Sarah Sophia consciously arranged newer tickets besides older ones that were potentially rare and costly. In fact, as we have seen with the Musick prize ticket, Sarah Sophia did have an interest in obtaining 'old' tickets by reputable artists, and elsewhere in the collection are examples of admission tickets engraved by Vertue for a firework display in 1749 to celebrate the end of the War of Austrian Succession and the signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 (fig. 128).³⁵⁶ Pasted alongside her contemporary tickets, Van der Gucht's ticket and others from that period provided a marker for comparing and contrasting the imagery of newer cards with earlier techniques and styles. While her collection is not ordered chronologically, it can be seen as illustrating a kind of print history.

Some of the imagery found on the tickets drew associations with other types of art object. For example, there is a ticket by an unknown artist that represents a sculpture of a female figure, perhaps Artemis, goddess of music (fig. 129). She is portrayed in profile leaning against a square pillar on which 'Salisbury Concert' is written; her long, white figure contrasts with the black background on which are written the words 'Mr. Cortes Annual Concert'. Her form is strong and solid. She wears swirling, sheer drapery that clings to her body as if it were wet, both concealing and revealing flesh. In some areas it

³⁵⁵ Clayton, 1997:13.

³⁵⁶ BM C.2-1378-1372. The accompanying letter from a Mr. Brooke at Herald's College clarifies some details pertaining to the ticket. He writes that the event took place at Green Park not St. James Park as printed on the ticket and that 'it was engraved by Vertue and from the manner he [Mr. Brooke] believes it to be his, but it is not mentioned by Mr. Walpole in his *Catalogue of the works of that artist*'. Brooke then offers to procure for her a dinner ticket for the Painters Hall in 1689, 'with different devices engraved from that he formerly gave her, if she has not already got one'. Vertue's ticket depicts what appears to be an allegorical figure of Plenty. She rests against a bushel of wheat and is holding a cornucopia in her arms and olive branch in the other signifying peace. Rococo shell-like motifs and numerous military emblems surround her.

follows the curves of her breasts and legs; in others areas it hangs vertically. Enclosed within an oval frame, the design is reminiscent of a cameo. Carving cameos is highly challenging for any gemstone engraver, but during the eighteenth-century there was a revival of this ancient art.³⁵⁷ Some professional engravers worked across mediums, producing both cameos and engraved prints. The fact that the engraver of this ticket utilized a design similar to collectable cameos implies that—like the tiny, carved gems—admission tickets could be appreciated for their technical virtuosity and were open to being collected.

Some artists drew on pagan imagery as a way of representing musical entertainments; others artists chose Christian motifs to symbolize the abstract idea of musical concerts. Next to the aforementioned ticket, is an older admission ticket dating 22 November 1727 for an event hosted by the Musick [sic] Society 'to celebrate St. Cecilia' (fig.130). The ticket was engraved by a C. Gardner. St. Cecilia, a Roman noble, is considered the patron saint of musicians because even as she was being beheaded, she sang a beautiful song to God. She was a popular subject among artists. Unsurprisingly, numerous musical concerts were performed on her feast day. During the early eighteenth-century the court and the church were the main platforms for music in England; however, taverns and alehouses often mounted concerts, especially on the Day of St. Cecilia, featuring Baroque music from Italy, which was also published in teaching manuals and scores across London.³⁵⁸ The inclusion of the saint on this ticket conveys an early eighteenth-century

³⁵⁷ Seidman, 1991: 120-131.

³⁵⁸ Brewer, 1997: 366.

appetite for Italian Baroque imagery.³⁵⁹ This ticket incorporates an etching of St. Cecilia seated in front of a stone monument; she points to a plaque where it is inscribed, 'In memory of St. Cecilia'. Like Apollo, she wears a crown of laurel leaves but is depicted holding a horn as opposed to a lyre. She leans against a stack of books; musical instruments and masks are scattered on the ground next to her feet. The river is crowded with swans. Similar to the aforementioned 'Mr. Barthelemon's Night', with its direct religious implications, this ticket contrasts with the pagan references depicted on many of the other tickets; it reveals that artists readily drew on both pagan and Christian iconographies when producing such works.

Occasionally, the admission tickets Sarah Sophia collected draw on more modern references. One ticket, by an unknown artist depicts a pipe organ and carries a different type of appeal (fig. 131). The organ is shown against a white background; it appears flat, but a slight shadow on the right and an open door assists in the illusion of a third dimensional space. This instrument is a three-tower design, similar to some of the organs that were being built in England by Abraham Jordan during the early eighteenth-century.³⁶⁰ An organ similar in design was built originally for St. George's Botolph Lane in the City of London; it has since been relocated to St. George's Southall (fig.132).³⁶¹ There is no other information on the ticket. In England, as in the rest of Europe, organs were installed in churches and important civic buildings. Cities and provincial towns often employed organists to provide concerts for those unable to afford more expensive orchestral

³⁵⁹ Pointon, 1997: 229-306.

³⁶⁰ Barone, 2012: 29.

³⁶¹ Barone, 2012: 29.

concerts; such concerts introduced a larger populace to classical music. Accordingly, organs could be used as tools for cultural and civic advancement and—as this ticket conveys—were a source of pride. Its miniature size made the organ a manageable size if only in printed form; it enabled viewers to hold a virtual version of the instrument in their hands. The ticket visually evokes aural sensations and the tactile pleasures of performance.

In conclusion, this folder reveals that admission tickets were delicate pieces of engraving, sometimes fastidiously delineated, that incorporated an eclectic range of iconographies associated with the fine arts. Their designs express the tastes and ideologies of a particular eighteenth-century community that was cultured and that participated in refined urban pleasures. Admission tickets initiated a process of decoding that required familiarity with symbols and themes from classical literature and from the canon of Western art. The variety of the tickets shows a wide range of artistic interpretations of traditional artistic motifs and manners. Whatever artistic ambitions their makers may have had, such prints nonetheless significantly influenced everyday visual culture. The continued incorporation of specific motifs from high art would have helped establish, surprisingly cosmopolitan and ambitious visual *lingua franca*. Incorporating imagery similar to that used for the kind of sophisticated art engravings that attracted the most discerning of print connoisseurs, the admission tickets Sarah Sophia collected could indeed be appreciated as small-scale works of graphic art in their own right, and as deserving of visual attention.

An Alternative Visual Culture: ‘Chapels and Sectaries’

A group of twenty-seven admission tickets are categorised by Sarah Sophia under the heading of ‘Chapels and Sectaries’ (fig. 133). Chapels are alternative spaces to church, usually attached to an institution, church or private house, where members can worship. Sectaries are defined as members of a sect, or dissenters from an established church, especially Protestant non-conformists.³⁶² As Sarah Sophia collected numerous sermons and religious tracts, it is not surprising that this category is particularly strong.³⁶³ I will engage with this page as a way of exploring how admission tickets could generate a distinctive imagery of their own, one that operated beyond the spaces of fine and decorative arts; as we shall also see, such tickets sometimes featured elaborate pictorial narratives that required detailed forms of decoding. By comparing and contrasting their form and content, I will argue that the admission tickets on this page reveal the ways in which an alternative type of Christian imagery—one circulating outside the visual cultures of the established church—was being developed in eighteenth-century Britain.

This folder communicates the ideas and imagery of those Dissenting forms of belief, such as Calvinism and Methodism that stood in opposition to those promoted by the Anglican Church. Here it is worth reminding ourselves that chapels were not reserved exclusively for the elite; rather they were open to anyone who could afford a ticket. Some dissenting religions exploited the

³⁶² ‘chapel, n.’ [accessed 22 May 2013]; ‘sectary, n. and adj.’ [accessed 22 May 2013].

³⁶³ BM, 460.d.13.

admission ticket as a way of consolidating and monitoring its members. As elsewhere, tickets could be used to create a sense of community, to keep records of attendance, to signify good behaviour, and to bestow permission to attend meetings.³⁶⁴ Admission tickets to chapels and sectaries commodified access to God. While the Church of England certainly relied on its members' financial backing, it was received in the form of collections taken at services or donations. The introduction of admission tickets in the religious sphere turned religion into a form of spectacle. Religious venues were part of a larger network of new spaces being shared by a wider eighteenth-century British public, and Sarah Sophia's collection locates them within this broader social and cultural topography.

It is likely that the holders of admission tickets would have been familiar with many of the gestures and symbols depicted on tickets; however, some tickets incorporated a complex iconography that required scrutiny and informed interpretation. This is certainly the case for one ticket on the lower, right-hand page, which provides 'front gallery' access to the Monkwell Street Chapel and which dates from 1787 (fig.134). The design on the ticket is packed with a rich variety of symbols: animals, agricultural implements, hats, crown, cross, sheafs of wheat, and other emblems. The central focus is a man chopping down a tree. Next to him stands a woman with a star on her breast; she holds a book. Obviously, the picture was intended to evoke a specific religious narrative; however, the lack of any contextual or explanatory

³⁶⁴ Lloyd, 2013: 843-71; Crowther, 1815: 42; Tyson, 1995: 580-593; Harding, 2003: 127, 164-6; Hempton, 2005: 16, 52-53; Outler, 1984: 183-4, 265.

information on the card itself must have rendered its precise allusions almost impossible to decode.

Fortunately, however, in another folder of admission tickets, which relates to 'clubs and societies' contains a page entitled *The Preacher's Coat of Arms* (fig. 135).³⁶⁵ It seems to have been ripped out of from an unidentified magazine. Sarah Sophia makes a connection between this description and the admission ticket; she annotates the page 'Explanation of the small print underneath Mr. Huntington's. The ticket of the Monkwell Street Chapel is nearly the same'.³⁶⁶ *The Preacher's Coat of Arms* provides a highly detailed description of a the imagery found on the Monkwell card, and gestures to the development of a new kind of dissenting religious iconography in Britain at the time. The author of the work was 'W. H., S.S. or Sinner Saved' also known as the eccentric Calvinist preacher William Huntington.³⁶⁷ Coalheaver turned popular preacher, Huntington's highly creative preaching style, which was 'full of allegory, metaphor, paradox, and biblical texts' is conveyed in *The Preacher's Coat of Arms*; it was dense, idiosyncratic texts and images like these that earned him the name the 'Walking Bible'.³⁶⁸ The image seems to operate independently of the more traditional imagery found on other religious tickets, especially those providing entry to events taking place at Church of

³⁶⁵ Collection of Sarah Sophia Banks, Prints and Drawings, British Museum, C. 2-359.

³⁶⁶ Although this page is systematized under 'clubs and societies' none of the material organized within the 'clubs and societies' folder appears to relate to this devotional track; therefore, it seems out of place. Such apparent inconsistencies illustrate the challenges her system of classification poses to our understanding of some of the items in her collection; although she consciously sets boundaries upon the collection, sometimes these are inefficient, and items that seem to belong together under one heading are sometimes separated and organized in other parts of the collection.

³⁶⁷ Sarah Sophia owned a copy of Huntington's book, *Bank of Faith*, in her library.

³⁶⁸ Ella, 1994: 122.

England cathedrals like St. Paul's. These usually relied on a combination of highly formal civic and ecclesiastical emblems that included angels or classicised type figures. This work reveals that Huntington's choice of iconography was inspired from a pastiche of Old and New Testament biblical verses. The textual description of the image runs as follows:

The tree represents a corrupt sinner—The wood-cutter is a faithful labourer, in the word and doctrine:--The ax is the word of God;--The notch in the tree, shews [sic] that some of the old Stock will remain; albeit, that be the Case, yet an Incision is made for the Entrance of Grace; *I have hewed them by the Prophets, Hos. vi. 5.* The next Stroke is intended to lay the Ax to the Root; —The love of money; --Self-righteousness and unbelief being the three roots that hold every sinner fast in the old Adam:—If belief be cut, both the others wither of Course: The Woman with the Morning star on her breast is truth; her appearing without a hat or cap, denotes her innocency, that she is not ashamed to shew her face; her pointing with her fingers to the wood cutter, denotes her guiding him to cut lower: the mean appearance of the wood-cutter shews the Choice of God in chusing the Foolish to confound the wise, 1 Cor. i. 27. His being stript shews, that he is Earnest: The three dogs barking at him, represent erroneous preachers, evil-workers, and dividers and scatterers, Phil. iii. 2. Their standing with their feet out shows that they are afraid to attack him, though they hate him.

Anti-dissenting crowds often attacked preachers.³⁶⁹ Most likely, Huntington is representing himself as the woodcutter 'faithful labourer', and his congregation would have been encouraged to follow his model. Further along the page, *The Preacher's Coat of Arms* continues to draw on biblical verse to provide an explanation of the emblems surrounding the central image. Like bibles and other religious publications circulating at that time, admission tickets thus disseminated religious knowledge. Importantly, the description published in this unidentified journal suggests that the new religious

³⁶⁹ Ditchfield, 1998: 75.

iconographies were being formulated in such everyday settings as the admission ticket required the prop of textual explanation to function effectively; there was clearly a sense that an understanding of such complex iconography would have been entirely unforthcoming without the kind of printed explanation saved by Sarah Sophia.

Other tickets suggest the ways in which the imagery found on such objects could complicate and amplify standard biblical narratives. Pasted alongside the aforementioned ticket is another that provided access to the first of the chapels opened by Huntington on his move to London—Providence Chapel, which was located on Tichfield Street and consecrated in 1783 (fig. 136). On the lower part of this admission ticket we find the verse, ‘But Wisdom is Justified of all her Children’. It is a proverb taken from the New Testament verses Matthew 11:19 and Luke 7:35. The iconography of the picture, however, specifically the inclusion of seven stone pillars from which Wisdom builds her house, refers more specifically to the Hebrew book of Proverbs 9:1.³⁷⁰ The seven stone pillars represent the foundations of wisdom: prudence, knowledge and discretion, fear of god, counsel, sound wisdom, understanding and power.³⁷¹ Wisdom is personified as a woman, and she is shown in an unconventional way, breastfeeding a group of hungry infants; as such, the artist appears to draw on a traditional iconography associated with Charity rather than with Wisdom (fig. 137). However, her crown of light is typical of representations of Wisdom, and it signifies that she is in God’s glory. By merging aspects of both emblems the image appears to express the idea

³⁷⁰ Proverbs 9:11 [accessed 22 May 2013]. Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.

³⁷¹ Bridge to the Bible [accessed 16 June 2010].

that Charity is wise. She is surrounded by a rich abundance of ripe foods, including fruits, vegetables and wheat, together with examples of dead game. The cornucopia at her feet is an emblem also associated with allegories of Peace, Abundance and Hospitality, and it is an allusion to plenty of provisions and blessings in a time of peace.³⁷² It is written in the bible that once Wisdom appeared on earth, she 'invited to her feast those who are not yet wise'.³⁷³ The image suggests peaceful plenty and disinterested benevolence, but the verse also initiates a process of self-reflection; who are the children and how do they justify wisdom? If John the Baptist and Jesus Christ both represent wisdom in the New Testament³⁷⁴, the children might illustrate those who accept the message of John and Jesus. Again then, we find an imagery that is symbolically extremely dense—it is as if the ticket holder will only be able to fully understand the meanings of the motifs and quotations found on the card once he or she has travelled to the chapel to hear Huntington, in one of his sermons, providing the kind of textual explanation found in the *The Preacher's Coat of Arms*.

Huntington appears to have collaborated regularly with Garnett Terry on admission tickets and publications. Terry, bookseller, map-engraver and chief engraver to the Bank of England, engraved the Providence Chapel ticket. Terry was also known for his 'hieroglyphic prints' pertaining to the subject of the Millennium, and he also produced some of the other designs for religious tickets pasted on this page, such as that for the Ebenezer Chapel on

³⁷² Richardson, 1779: 31, 35.

³⁷³ Proverbs 9: 1-6.

³⁷⁴ See for example John 1: 1-2, First, like wisdom, Christ pre-existed all things and dwelt with God. See also 'Christ teaches wisdom' Matt 25: 1-12; Luke 16: 1-18; Matt 11: 25-30. He is greater than the Old Testament wise person Solomon, Matt 12: 42. In Luke 11: 49 Christ is represented as the wisdom of God.

Ratcliff Highway (fig. 138).³⁷⁵ On this ticket, Huntington is himself incorporated into biblical narrative. He points to the Ebenezer stone that in the Old testament was said to have been set between the cities of Mizpeh and Shen by the prophet Samuel as a memorial of the Israelites defeat against the Philistines. Samuel is depicted walking off to the left and it appears that Huntington takes his place as a contemporary prophet. Ancient and foreign religious iconography fascinated Terry, and he actively collected such material. Written across one of his bookseller's labels is an inscription declaring that he would give 'most money for curious old Hebrew, Greek and Latin books of Divinity'.³⁷⁶ Although employed by the government, Terry was also known to be a political radical.³⁷⁷ In the 1780's, Terry became a follower of Huntington and published many of his religious works, including apocalyptic texts.³⁷⁸ Huntington described Terry as 'a leveler, and for all things common'.³⁷⁹ Terry soon began preaching, and he built his own non-conformist chapel in Curtain Road, Shoreditch.³⁸⁰ Terry was familiar with traditional religious iconography, and he can be seen to have formulated complex pictorial composites to help explain biblical texts and promote non-conformist ideologies. Sarah Sophia writes on this page, ' Mr. Huntington preaches at Providence and Monkwell Street Chapels'. Sarah Sophia received the Providence Chapel ticket in 1787. It was during this time that Huntington fashioned himself as 'The Doctor', and became famous for wearing a clerical hat over a big, black wig and for taking lots of snuff; the artists Sir Joshua

³⁷⁵ Morton, 1999: 7-8.

³⁷⁶ BM Ken Spelman Catalogue 1993-item 415.

³⁷⁷ Carey, 1999: 217-18 and nos. 15 and 16.

³⁷⁸ Carey, 1999: 217-18 and nos. 15 and 16.

³⁷⁹ Carey, 1999: 217-18 and nos. 15 and 16.

³⁸⁰ Carey, 1999; 217-18 and nos. 15 and 16.

Reynolds, Domenicino Pelligrini and Robert Bowyer all painted his portrait (fig. 139). However, not everyone would have identified with the version of Huntington as rebel outcast. Somewhat unusual for a Calvinist dissenter, Huntington was an avid Tory, and it was said that he attracted rich and fashionable society, including Lord Liverpool and Princess Amelia who regularly attended his services.³⁸¹ Dissenting preachers like Huntington often relied on spectacle and theatricality in order to attract large and varied audiences; the tickets collected by Sarah Sophia indicate that dense, enigmatic and alluring forms of visual imagery that required special forms of decoding also played a part in his success.

At the same time, religion enabled women to promote themselves and their status in a public cultural sphere, and Sarah Sophia collected tickets belonging to women dissenter leaders. Emma Major has demonstrated how, throughout the eighteenth century, femininity, religion and patriotism were closely linked as religion provided a platform for some women to visualize themselves as active agents in shaping the nation.³⁸² This is also evident in Sarah Sophia's collection of admission tickets. One handwritten ticket on the left page contains a verse from 1 John 5:10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath witness in Himself' (fig. 140). It is dated 'March 16, 1766'. It is also inscribed 'this ticket admits the Bearer to a seat in my chapell' [sic]. It was signed by Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon 'patriarchess of the Methodists'³⁸³ and founder of the Huntingdon's Connexion [sic] (fig. 141). Huntington used her own money and aristocratic privilege to establish

³⁸¹ Heath, 2010; 348.

³⁸² Major, 2012: 1-22.

³⁸³ Horace Walpole, quoted in Ditchfield, 1998: 6.

numerous public chapels, installing Calvinist, Methodists and Evangelical preachers who received her support. This ticket may provide entry to the first chapel she opened in 1761 on the grounds of her Brighton residence, where she appointed William Romaine and Martin Madin as chaplains.³⁸⁴ Turning her home into a chapel, the countess exploited her social position to create a religious salon, fashioning herself as a hostess and patroness. Handwritten, this ticket carries a personal aspect that the others do not, and it seems more like a personal invitation, a token of affection. The Countess was known to rely on female friendship as a way of recruiting members to her churches, and the Countess may have personally given Sarah Sophia this ticket.

Within close proximity to the Countess's handwritten ticket are two more tickets that Sarah Sophia received in 1791, providing entry to the first chapel the Countess established in Bath. (fig. 142 and 143). The fashionable Bath chapel was considered to be her 'jewel' and the Countess invested large sums of money in the decoration of this as well as some of her other chapels.³⁸⁵ Her critics considered such ostentatious interiors overly theatrical; they claimed that she was on the road to 'Popery'.³⁸⁶ The Countess's pride of ornamentation and self-aggrandizement is conveyed by way of the design on the admission tickets to her chapels. These elaborate, civic-type emblems, depicting a crowned coat of arms that is flanked by a lion and dog seem official and simultaneously create an air of nobility; they provide a stark contrast to the modest, personal ticket the Countess handed out previously. Not only are they printed, but the Countess helped prepare the copper

³⁸⁴ Schlenther, 1997: 69.

³⁸⁵ Schlenther, 1997: 126-129; Welch, 1995: 69-70. Seymour Or Foster, 1839: 1.477, 1.229-30.

³⁸⁶ Schlenther, 1997: 69.

plates.³⁸⁷ The design incorporates the civic motto ‘In Veritate Victoria’—in truth there is victory—thus turning the civic motto into a religious motto. Incorporated in the design are the duchess’s initials S. H. These tickets convey an enthusiasm for heraldry and the pompous declaration of permanence, associated with landed gentry. The varying ways in which the emblem was formatted on the tickets enables each one to be interpreted quite differently. For example, the emblem on one of the tickets is stamped in the centre of a rectangular shaped card, and along the borders are seven scriptural passages reminding the holder about his or her relationship to God. The passages emphasise a religious social body, ‘For ye all are one in Christ Jesus’, ‘that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us’. This type of ticket, which is printed on slightly heavier paper may have been designed to be kept as a souvenir, promoting unity and reminding its owner of the importance of a religious community and their part within that collective. The ticket allowed holders to claim membership to the ‘Huntingdon Connexion’.

On the other ticket, the heraldic design is stamped on a piece of circular paper, giving the ticket the appearance of a coin and conveying the Countess’s reliance on market place economics. The coin format appears to be a comment on the Countess’s controversial resolution to make seating available at her main chapels by way of a purchased ticket only.³⁸⁸ The Countess did not take collections at church; as in the case of the theatre and other forms of entertainment, she produced different levels of tickets that

³⁸⁷ Schlenker, 1997:128.

³⁸⁸ Cited in Lloyd, 2013: 843-71. Chesterfield used his influence with Lady Huntingdon to secure chapel tickets for a noblewoman.

allowed paying subscribers to gain access to services in her chapels.³⁸⁹ The Countess was often accused of merging Christianity with commercialism, and the money she raised was used to purchase land, and to build, decorate, and rent numerous chapels.³⁹⁰ However, she strategically permitted notable members of society into her church for free, which some complained drew wealthy members away from the Church of England, an institution that relied heavily on the support of lay people who donated large sums of their money to sustaining its foundations.³⁹¹ The coin format may also express something about the audience attending her principal churches; it appears that most of her congregation consisted of small business entrepreneurs.³⁹² In exchange for a paper 'coin', one purchased admittance to the Countess's church and to God.

During the eighteenth century, virtue and benevolence were more than just personal attributes; it was held that they provided the framework for the building of a social body.³⁹³ Tickets often depict acts of charity or of visiting the sick, conduct considered central to religious piety. The first ticket at the top of the left-hand page, engraved by an artist named Hall, provides entry to an unnamed chapel on 'Lady Day', the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin (fig. 144).³⁹⁴ Next to this ticket is a faded counterpart depicting the exact same design and admitting entrance to Margaret Street chapel. The aforementioned preacher William Huntington occasionally preached at

³⁸⁹ Welch, 1975: 125.

³⁹⁰ Schlenker, 1997: 126. Guest, 2000: 165-169. Major, 2012: 148-151.

³⁹¹ Knight, 1995: 3. Major, 2013: 157.

³⁹² Harding, 2003: 82-83.

³⁹³ Bullock, 1996: 80-92; Lloyd, 2002: 30-32.

³⁹⁴ During this time there were several engravers working in London named Hall, so this engraver's precise identity is difficult to determine.

Margaret Street Chapel, and it is possible that these tickets provided entry to one of his sermons, which would explain why Sarah Sophia grouped them together.³⁹⁵ It is also possible that the first ticket is for the same chapel. Both tickets depict a scene from an Old Testament biblical parable, 'The Prodigal Son', which was often depicted by engravers and painters. An elderly man, dressed in what seems to be a type of Middle Eastern dress, proudly presents a young man dressed in rags, the prodigal son, to a group of people. The dress of the figures intermingles ancient, foreign and eighteenth-century garb, suggesting both contemporary relevance and conveying a timeless religious message. The result for the ticket holder is that the scene is made domestic and familiar, losing the exotic distance of the story's original setting.³⁹⁶ According to the bible, the man's youngest son pleads with his father to bestow him his part of the inheritance before his father dies. The father finally agrees and grants him his patrimony. Instead of wisely preserving his money and continuing to work for his family, the prodigal son immediately leaves his parent's home and ends up squandering all his inheritance on fancy clothing, lavish feasts, prostitutes and gambling. Famine strikes, and unsurprisingly the son falls into debt; he finds himself alone and reduced to tending pigs for money. He realises his mistake and finally musters the courage to go home and ask for his father's forgiveness. Expecting that his father will be angry; he instead finds that he welcomes him home with open arms, exclaiming, 'This my son was dead, and is alive again', Luke 15: 24. This is written across a banner on the top part of the ticket. On the bottom we find the son's plea 'I am

³⁹⁵ Brant [accessed 23 May 2013].

³⁹⁶ Brown, 1955: 47-48.

no more worthy to be called thy son' from Luke 15: 19. The story is a lesson in forgiveness and exemplifies divine love on the part of the father; it is also a warning against the lure of luxury.

The text and images on many of the admission tickets seen on this page can thus be seen to have reinforced examples that were seen to be beneficial to society; they operated as objects of pleasure, instruction and even practical devotion. And, once again, they incorporate extended forms of pictorial narrative and symbolism that turn the ticket into a kind of visual supplement to the sermons being preached within the walls of the chapels concerned. This also seems to have been the case in the ticket situated next to the Margaret Street Chapel, which depicts Christ and a woman; above the picture, written across a banner, are the words 'go and sin no more' (Fig. 145). Sarah Sophia's annotations reveal that these tickets were for sermons given at Lock Hospital, the first hospital dedicated to curing venereal disease in London, opened in 1747 by a charitable society. 'Go and sin no more' is a reference to the woman taken in adultery verse John 8:11, so it is especially apposite for the charity.

Another ticket for the Bethesda Chapel relies on narrative to convey acts of charity and healing (fig. 146). The image on the ticket would have demanded a learned pictorial response to New Testament biblical texts and a familiarity with religious imagery. Sarah Sophia annotates the ticket 'from Dublin'. Pictured, is an episode from John chapter V. v. 2-9. It shows a pool surrounded by a classical porch with five porticoes; Bethesda is written in Hebrew over the middle arch. Lame, blind and sick people are pictured gathered next to the pool; they are waiting for an angel of the Lord who

appeared at different times of the year to stir up the waters; on such occasions, whoever entered the pool first would be made well. Jesus is shown entering the left. The story focuses on the moment that Jesus encounters a lame man who had been lying there on the floor for thirty-years, unable to enter the waters. Filled with compassion, Jesus cures the man by telling him to 'get up, pick up your pallet and walk'.³⁹⁷ The man became well immediately and began to walk. This story was often the subject of 'high' art, and Hogarth painted an ambitious canvas of the same scene that still hangs today in St. Bartholomew's hospital, London.³⁹⁸ Here we find it translated into the miniature form of a admission ticket.

The tickets gathered on these two pages prove that artists were not only recycling traditional religious motifs; they were developing new iconographies that expressed new theological points of view, for new kinds of religious patrons and for new kinds of believer. In a consumer-driven society, such tickets sold access to salvation. As we have just been noting they sometimes carried an iconic imagery of the chapel and the meeting house; just as often however, they featured a biblical imagery that seems to have worked in tandem with the colourful, emotional and densely symbolic language of the sermons that were being delivered from Dissenting pulpits. Indeed, one can imagine that they may have been carried around on one's person as a type of talisman or reminder, functioning as accessible prompts for everyday prayer, and placed over a mantelpiece or kept beside one's bed.

³⁹⁷ John 5: 8.

³⁹⁸ Hallett and Riding, 2007: 17, 198-199.

The Arrangement of Admission Tickets in Sarah Sophia's Collection: Exhibitions

As demonstrated above, admission tickets were recognized as legitimate and ambitious forms of graphic culture in their own right. In this final section, I will consider one folder of twenty-one tickets, categorised under the heading of 'Exhibitions', and use this group as a way of engaging with the methods of display and organization found in this part of Sarah Sophia's collection (fig. 147). Significantly, the arrangement of Sarah Sophia's collection of admission tickets resonates with broader trends in eighteenth-century collecting, display and graphic culture. When the folded sheet of paper is opened, the middle crease seemingly creates two 'paper walls' that act as a repository for the exhibition of images. Each side is arranged in its own unique way. On this page, similar to the previously mentioned pages, tickets of various sizes, colours, and shapes are juxtaposed. Some are made up of purely decorative motifs, others reappropriate a classical language, and some are modern in design. Importantly, as the pages explored in this chapter demonstrate, Sarah Sophia's arrangement of admission tickets exchanges the top-to-bottom, taxonomical system she utilized for classifying her visiting cards for what appears to be a less rigid format that conveys visual pleasure. Unfinished pages in her collection provide insight into how she pasted admission tickets. Sometimes, she begins by pasting one ticket in the centre of the top or bottom of either side of the page and proceeds to build around this initial image (figs. 148 and 149). The placement of different tickets, side by side, calls attention to the different styles of engraving being employed and to different genres of ticket. This is exemplified on the top of the right page

where one sees a ticket for Gerrard's House Museum, the composition of which incorporates canonical sculpture, such as the statue of the Farenese Hercules, ancient ruins and the imagery of putti examining antique cameos (fig. 150).³⁹⁹ This ticket is pasted alongside a mustard coloured ticket with a black decorative frame providing entry to The Royal Mirror. Next to this, we find a ticket depicting the contemporary facade of Week's Museum.

Meanwhile, just below these are two large tickets—firstly, another ticket to Weeks' Museum—and secondly, a ticket for admitting four persons—and the other to Thomas Macklin Poets Gallery. These two large tickets are more or less equal in size as the three tickets above. Sarah Sophia's arrangement is not linear; she consciously paired contrasting artistic modes of expression that presented viewers with a dynamically varied form of pictorial display, similar to those encountered in larger exhibition spaces such as the Royal Academy of Arts and John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery.

Throughout the collection, there is a constant negotiation of order and variety. The tickets are sometimes arranged close to each other, sometimes at a distance, sometimes barely touching, overlapping or missing. Although

³⁹⁹ Sheppard [accessed 20 May 2013]. No mention is made of a museum, but the house occupied no. 34 and 35 Gerrard St. In 1781 the Adams brothers were hired to design an elaborate façade but work was never carried out. No 34 was popular with artists, Arthur William Devis, Andrew Robertson, and William Dyce Frances all lived there at different times and George F. Mulvany later exhibited from this address in 1827 and 1836. Anne Kemble, 'Old Woman's Gossip', *The Atlantic Monthly*, 1875, vol. XXXVI, pp. 290–1. Charles Kemble and his family took lodgings at 35 and Fanny Kemble wrote, 'we occupied only a part of it, the rest remaining in the possession of the proprietor, who was a picture dealer [Joseph Woodin, Lord Rancliff's tenant] and his collection of dusky chefs d'oeuvre covered the walls of the passages and staircases with dark canvas, over whose varnished surface ill-defined figures and ill-discerned faces seemed to flit, as with some trepidation I ran past them.' She goes on to describe the elaborate décor, concluding that 'the whole house with its remains of magnificence and curious lumber of objects of art and vertu was a very appropriate frame for the traditional ill-repute of its former noble owners.'

every attempt is made to fill the pages, the borders impose order and restrict the way in which the asymmetrical arrangement can be maneuvered. It is also evident that an element of chance is employed in the layout, reflected in the presence of blank spaces that are too small for any tickets. Such fragmentation adds to the overall variety of the page. The unfinished appearance of these pages also conveys a sense of loss. The decision of what to place where depended on what had already been pasted down and the possibility of pasting a different article there instead. In its push and pull between classification and disorder, this part of the collection conveys the broader tensions between scientific order and aesthetic play that characterize Sarah Sophia's organization of her works.

Sometimes she positioned works right against one another whereas at other times there are large gaps leaving parts of the page empty. Occasionally, the tickets pasted on her pages disrupt a two-dimensional surface and suggest depth and optical illusion. Placing tickets with seemingly disparate images, such as buildings, emblems and texts, alongside one another encouraged a chain of associations and invited multiple readings. In its organization, her collection of tickets is a conscious effort to present a form of variety that stimulated intellect and piqued imagination. Sometimes, Sarah Sophia's tickets are arranged into horizontal zones, divided by a continuous line of tickets such as those seen for Merlin's museum on the left-hand page, which depict a wizard leaning against a desk on which a globe is placed (fig. 151).⁴⁰⁰ Her annotations also include information about the history of tickets.

⁴⁰⁰ *Morning and Evening at Merlin's Mechanical Museum*, 1790. According to the pocket catalogue, the museum was open twice every day except Sundays from 11

For example, she writes under the five tickets to Merlin's Museum that 'when these were sealed with Merlin's seal on the reverse they are admission tickets'. Her personal annotations counter the repetitive, mechanical and reproductive nature of the commercial material she collected. Initially, such dense arrangements appear overwhelming, but they simultaneously invite comparisons between featured items.

Although in some ways the organization of Sarah Sophia's collection resembled that of other print collectors, it also conveys a personal history and a particular kind of taste.⁴⁰¹ During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many collectors of prints and drawings arranged their collections to convey the history of art and to chronicle the lives of artists; however, in the eighteenth century an arrangement that prioritized the artist's life was exchanged for one that highlighted the stylistic characteristics of their work.⁴⁰² Many eighteenth-century collections of print culture reflect this shift in attitude, using artefacts to create an art historical timeline independent of biography. The arrangement of Sarah Sophia's collection emphasizes stylistic characteristics over biography, allowing comparison of compositions and designs like other collections of its time. However, while other paper collections often followed chronological order, which illustrated developments in art or followed specific artistic schools, Sarah Sophia organizes her items and emphasises the dates on which they were acquired. It is possible to see

am to 3pm, at which time entrance fee was ½ a crown and from 7pm until 9pm at 3 shillings. The museum contained numerous mechanical amusements intended to be both 'useful and entertaining'.

⁴⁰¹ Vermeulen, 2010; Gaehtgens and Marchesan, 2011; Sicca 'The Mind behind the Collection: John Talman, Antiquary and advisor to Richard Topham and Henry Hard, 3rd Baron Coleraine' paper read at A Window on Antiquity: The Topham Collection at Eton College Library, Paul Mellon Centre, 17 May 2013.

⁴⁰² Vermeulen, 2010: 8.

artistic changes in Sarah Sophia's collection over time; however, in its dating system, the history of acquisition takes precedence over art historical chronology, replacing artist biographies with the collector's autobiography.

Despite its personal emphasis, the way Sarah Sophia showcased her items was similar to the way in which continental and national galleries exhibited works of art. The variety of her groupings echoes the way in which the Uffizi, Vienna and Mannheim galleries--as well as more private galleries—displayed the works of Old masters and more modern forms of painting (figs. 152 and 153).⁴⁰³ In England, exhibitions like the Royal Academy of the Arts or commercial spaces like the capital's print shops often hung works in rows, just as Sarah Sophia arranges her items (Fig. 154). They also positioned key pieces within clusters of smaller works, another approach Sarah Sophia employs.⁴⁰⁴ Elite residences, such as Horace Walpole's villa at Strawberry Hill, Castel Town House and Queen Charlotte's cottage at Kew, included elaborate print rooms where print collections were placed inside elegant borders and pasted directly onto walls (figs. 155 and 156).⁴⁰⁵ The variety of pictorial arrangement found in such collections of prints is strikingly similar to Sarah Sophia's. Her collection, we can conclude, complicates the distinction between grandiloquent and more domestic forms of display.

Although her collection could not display originals and lacked some of the pomp of viewing an art exhibition at a public gallery, it afforded opportunities public viewing did not allow. For example, eighteenth-century

⁴⁰³ Gachtgens, and Marchesano, 2011.

⁴⁰⁴ Solkin, 2001:1-8.

⁴⁰⁵ Heard, 2013: 53-60. 460.d. 13. Sarah Sophia owned a catalogue *Description of Strawberry Hill* and admission tickets in her collection showed she paid a visit to the house, so this is an arrangement with which Sarah Sophia would have been familiar.

galleries, often had to hang larger paintings high on the wall. In Sarah Sophia's exhibition, conversely, the flat page enables all the tickets to be equally visible, which meant that Sarah Sophia could paste items where she liked. It also meant that viewers could observe up close, even touching the surfaces of the works if they wished. Furthermore, the semi-public space of her home spared her viewers the company of gallery crowds and permitted a more intimate kind of sociability.

Perhaps one of the most significant differences between Sarah Sophia's collection and a public gallery is its personal aspect. For example, one particular type of admission ticket on this page, of which Banks owned two examples arranged on the left page, depicts an allegorical figure of Britannia Victorious holding a branch of peace seated on top of the world (fig. 157). It allowed the bearer access to an exhibition of two large pendant pictures painted by the artist Robert Cleveley, best known as a painter of naval scenes. The companion paintings on exhibit represented Britain's 'glorious victory' over the French at the Battle of Ushant, obtained under the command of Admiral Earl Howe.⁴⁰⁶ Sarah Sophia may have attended Cleveley's exhibition; alternatively, the tickets may have been donated to her by one of her or her brother's many associates. Although her collection today does not contain the engraved works after the paintings themselves, it is possible that she did indeed own them; pasted next to the two admission tickets are matching non-transferable subscriber's tickets--but both are blank. While the ticket for Cleveley's exhibition is an example of the kind of social

⁴⁰⁶ *True Briton* (London, 26 May 1795).

activities that commemorated national events, it also shows how personal histories and public histories overlap in Sarah Sophia's collection. Robert Cleveley's brother John, also an artist, accompanied Sir Joseph Banks on his Scottish/Iceland voyage of 1773. Sir Joseph employed John Cleveley to draw various scenes and vistas of the Icelandic environs. The two families' personal acquaintance may have partly motivated Sarah Sophia's inclusion of these tickets and her or her brother's decision to attend Cleveley's exhibition. At such moments, Sarah Sophia's collection provides an insight into the intimate, personal motivations that are often not recorded in conventional historical narratives.

Cutting, arranging and pasting admission tickets onto sheets of paper provided Sarah Sophia with a means of exhibiting a wide range of aesthetic values and visual standards of taste. As the layout of this page of exhibition ephemera demonstrates, the organization of Sarah Sophia's collection of admission tickets mimics the methods of display and arrangement found in exhibitions and collections during the period, while also adding a personal touch that is entirely her own. This page offers a distillation of the overall push and pull between visual order and decorative bricolage found in the organization of the collection as a whole. It veers between a chaotic jumble of seemingly unrelated objects and an enlightened 'scientific' arrangement, signifying the collection of empirical data. The pleasurable aesthetic assortment of images, characteristic of early modern print collections, was meant to arouse curiosity in the viewer. It also expresses Sarah Sophia's personal taste for variety, while the methodical ordering of items conveys her

desire to organize the everyday and to document the evolution of her collection.

Chapter Four: Trade Cards

Sarah Sophia's assemblage of trade cards, now at the British Museum, is one of the largest collections of its kind.⁴⁰⁷ It consists of around 6000 articles, dating mostly from the 1770's to the 1810's but including some from the late seventeenth century and early nineteenth century.⁴⁰⁸ Most of the cards are British, representing shops and services from London and the provinces, but Sarah Sophia also collected some foreign cards. Unlike those items which remain grouped together in the British Museum archive as part of Sarah Sophia's collection, her collection of trade cards have been dispersed among other collections within the Museum, part of an ongoing process of systematisation and on-line cataloguing.⁴⁰⁹ During her lifetime, two volumes of 'shop bills' were stored in 'Mrs. Banks's Room Bookcase wire drawers'.⁴¹⁰ Here they shared space with her 'Balloon Prints', one volume of 'Visiting Tickets', portfolios of 'Prints' and 'Miscellaneous Prints', 'Sayers Prints' and

⁴⁰⁷ Similar collections in both scale and variety are the Ambrose Heal and John Johnson collections at the British Museum and Bodleian. See following exhibition catalogues for John Johnson collection: Bodleian Library, 1971; Lambert, 2001; Jackson and Tomkins, 2011. Smaller collections of trade cards but equally important are located at the Blaise Castle House Museum in Bristol, which houses the Terrell family's collection of trade cards consisting of 570 samples. <http://www.waddesdon.org.uk/collection/special-projects/trade-cards/cataloguing-the-tradecards> (accessed 14 Aug. 2013) Waddesdon Manor's collection contains circa 500 French trade cards. Calvert, H. R., 1971. Calvert catalogues some trade cards pertaining to men of science and scientific instruments housed at London's Science Museum. The museum's collection of close to 470 cards is based on two collections: one assembled by Mr. Thomas H. Court and the second by Mr. George H. Gabbo.

⁴⁰⁸ Parkinson, 1976; Desk K. 3. 16.

⁴⁰⁹ Lambert, 2001. Making bibliographically challenging materials accessible to academics is one of the on-going challenges confronting institutions holding larger collections of ephemera. Some of the other items in her collection of ephemera that have been redistributed are caricatures, portrait prints and prints of funerals and processions.

⁴¹⁰ BL

another category of object she called 'Titles' (See appendix D). No evidence exists to the precise way she ordered the trade cards, it is possible she employed a classificatory system that divided trades into hierarchies, as in the case of the system devised in the seventeenth century by John Evelyn when compiling his list of information about individual trades for The Royal Society's History of Trades programme.⁴¹¹ Alternatively, she might have avoided such hierarchies and opted for an approach that arranged the cards alphabetically, by trade. If we analyse them today, according to the museum's D2 numbers (see appendix A), we can assume that she ordered them according to trade. What we do know is that she usually wrote the date she acquired the trade card directly on the card. Today, however, Sarah Sophia's collection is combined with Sir Ambrose Heal's collection of trade cards, and the cards are glued onto heavy board and stored in conservation albums, protected by melinex sleeves (fig.158).⁴¹² They are organised according to product or service. Some of Sarah Sophia's handwritten annotations were cut out and pasted below the cards, providing brief and often insightful commentaries on their contents (fig. 159).

That she collected such items suggests that Sarah Sophia recognized the significance of such material to anyone studying the social, aesthetic, technological and commercial developments of Britain and other countries during this period. More particularly, we can suggest that the collecting of trade cards was a practice that complemented the Royal Society's 'History of

⁴¹¹ BL, Evelyn, Add MS 78340, f.326. Evelyn included categories such as 'Usefull and purely Mechanic', 'Mean Trades', 'Curious', 'Female Artificer', 'Exotick'[sic] and very rare Seacrets [sic]

⁴¹² Thanks to Sheila O'Connell in the Prints and Drawings Room in the British Museum for discussing this material with me.

Trades' project, which had been promoted since the institution's inception in the previous century. This project had called upon the Society's members to compile complete descriptions of all trades as a way of achieving progress in the sciences and mechanical arts.⁴¹³ The scope of the History of Trades project itself was too vast to accomplish, however; the Society's members were *virtuosi* who dabbled in numerous areas, so they were unable to offer the prolonged attention that such a project demanded. As such, the project slowly petered out. However, the Royal Society continued to remain preoccupied with developing a better understanding of the workings of trade.⁴¹⁴ Sarah Sophia's collection of trade cards can also be usefully related to the concerns of The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce (the Society of Arts) set up in 1754, one year after the British Museum, and dedicated to the ideal of improvements in trade. It was established to invigorate British economic and artistic development through awarding premiums and medals, many of which were connected directly to trades and manufacturing.⁴¹⁵ Some of the trade cards Sarah Sophia collected make direct connections between particular businesses and the Society. For example, Edmond Gascoigne, lock-maker 'ordinary and extraordinary' announces on his trade card how his 'improved, rising hinges won him honour with the Society's Medal'.⁴¹⁶ Both the Royal Society and the Society of Arts

⁴¹³ See for example: Ouchs: 1985; Hanson, 2009: 75-81, 89-92; Houghton, 1941; Sprat, 1734; Fox, 2009.

⁴¹⁴ Gascoigne, 1994: 207-236. Houghton, 1941: 60.

⁴¹⁵ For more on the Society see for example: Allan, 1974; Allan, 1991: 89. The Society consisted of six main committees: agriculture, chemistry, polite arts, manufacturers, mechanics, and colonies and trades. See also: Fox, 2009: 185-220; Fox: 2003: 18-27. More specifically, for Sir Joseph and the Society see: Chambers, 2007: 313-325.

⁴¹⁶ BM, D, 2. 168.

were engaged with practical and scientific concerns, such as the manufacturing of wool and mechanical cotton spinning.⁴¹⁷ Both passed pertinent information along to each other and collaborated on a myriad of subjects relating to agriculture, weights and measures, botanical studies in Barbados, a method of writing music for the blind and the preparation of a mercurial ointment for the scab in sheep.⁴¹⁸ Additionally, Sir Joseph advised the powerful Committee of Trade, and it was through the Committee of Trade that many of Sir Joseph's plans to enhance British trading and imperial interests were promoted.⁴¹⁹ Collecting trade cards enabled Sarah Sophia to gather and record 'useful information' about commerce, improvements, industry and engineering on a more domestic level. It enabled her to survey and catalogue knowledge about a broad range of trading services and wares. As such, her collection was a mechanism that enabled her to participate in the kinds of social, cultural, and intellectual spheres associated with the Royal Society—of which her brother was President—and the Society of Arts. In these terms, her collection of these objects can be interpreted as a paper monument to the history of trades.

Andrew Parkinson, who was employed at the British Museum's prints and drawings room in the 1960s saw little evidence of such ambitions, however, and instead betrayed a more chauvinist and limited perspective on Sarah Sophia's collection. He championed Heal's meticulous cross-referencing and suggested in his introduction to the British Museum's catalogue of trade cards that since Sarah Sophia, unlike Ambrose Heal,

⁴¹⁷ Allan; 1974: 449-451. See also Sir Joseph Banks wool correspondence, Carter, 1979.

⁴¹⁸ Chambers, 2007: 323.

⁴¹⁹ Chambers, 2009: 225.

ignored cross-referencing the trade cards in her collection, she 'simply accumulated cards' rather than classifying and cataloguing them properly.⁴²⁰ Parkinson's twentieth-century opinion reveals the reactionary prejudices that have, until recently, distorted the historical activities of intellectual women such as Sarah Sophia Banks, especially when such women are seen to have entered a 'male realm' such as collecting. Such views disregard women's cultural achievements and ambitions and demean their contributions as meaningless or childish. Instead of interpreting her collecting practices as 'simple accumulation', we can see her collection of trade cards as one that testified to a sophisticated exploration on her part not only of the participants and practices of British trade, but also of its pictorial and textual self-definition.

As in the case of admission tickets analysed in the previous chapter, trade cards were a highly sophisticated form of advertisement, and Sarah Sophia's collection of such cards dramatizes the power of advertising in the world of trade. Unlike admission tickets however, trade cards were not date specific, and they would have circulated within a commercial realm for longer periods of time. Trade cards usually carried information pertinent to customers, such as the tradesman's name and address. Before streets were numbered, the shop's signboard typically formed the visual focus of a card; either that, or a lengthy text explained the shop's location. Some of the trade cards in Sarah Sophia's collection blend specialized language with bold and accessible proclamations of quality or commercial supremacy. Varieties of typefaces were strategically chosen to attract attention, and influence potential customers. In comparison to other forms of advertising, trade cards

⁴²⁰ *Index of Trade Cards: Heal and Banks*, SK.K.2.3 'Notes'.

were expensive to produce, and they would not have been a profitable means of advertising for mass distribution on street corners.⁴²¹ Sometimes the engraver and/or designer signed his/their name(s) on the cards they produced. At other times, cards were produced by anonymous jobbing engravers, who created their own designs or passed off the designs of known artists as their own. Trade cards would have targeted an elite and middle-class clientele; that is, the people with the money to spend. The producers of consumer goods chose to employ this type of advertising, which combined written work with enticing graphic designs and/or appropriate ideas of sophistication, to seduce buyers into their business premises, and to encourage them to return.

Not only did trade cards tempt the customer into the shop, they provided a means for maintaining local, national and international correspondence with current and potential customers while simultaneously introducing new products and services or announcing business changes such as a shopkeeper's latest products or a new location.⁴²² Through looking at the trade cards issued by their rivals, traders could familiarize themselves with the latest services or wares being offered for sale by the competition; by doing so, they could make sure that they quickly adapted to new ideas and products in order to keep their range of wares exclusive and up to date. Meanwhile, buyers could collect and refer to trade cards when making their final decision

⁴²¹ Berg, 1998: 196. In 1772 a Mr. Pinckney was charged 15 shillings for an engraved plate by Ralph Beilby of Newcastle and 1s 6d for a hundred prints by that plate. Later that year he was charged 2s 6d for altering the plate and another 1s 6d for the new hundred prints. Scott, 2004: 97. Drawing on the Waddesdon Collection of French trade cards, Scott claims that trade cards are a phenomena of the luxury trades.

⁴²² Berg, 2005: 272. See also Fox, 2009: 239.

regarding the different consumer goods being offered on the market. Trade cards were sometimes pasted on the inside lids of hat or instrument boxes.⁴²³ Therefore, they were not only used in the initial stages of consumer rituals; they could also mark the completion of a transaction.

The trade card draws attention to the portability and circulation of the graphic token within a consumer culture, and the movement of such objects through many hands. This was a point stressed by Edmond de Goncourt in the nineteenth century:

the 'heat' of trade cards is what made them appealing to collectors...these nothings, these tokens of circulation, touched and retouched by yesterday's hands, and which carry the dirt of a long lost humanity...speak more loudly [of the past] than cold, grand History's documents.⁴²⁴

The trade card mentally and physically transfers the product into the consumer's hands. Hands also engraved the images that adorned such cards, operated the machines that printed them and passed them on. Hands also inscribed confidential notes and bills of sales on the backs of cards, and slipped them into parcels. Snatches of writing found on the reverse of some of the cards found in Sarah Sophia's collection indicates that they were also used to take notes and record accounts for existing clients.

Trade cards were essentially expository, intended to convey information about tradesmen, services and wares in an appropriate and useful form. The designs and texts featured on the trade cards collected by Sarah Sophia celebrated new technical innovations, patents, inventions and novel

⁴²³ Calvert, 1971: 3.

⁴²⁴ Quoted in Scott, 2004: 93.

methods. In this chapter, I will engage with Sarah Sophia's trade cards and focus on the designs that merchants and craftsmen used to sell their services and products. In particular, I will explore the ways in which the compositions and iconography of such cards expressed a new aesthetics of science, technology and manufacture within British graphic culture, and look at the ways in which this modern, mechanical aesthetic of trade was often combined with, and offset against, an alternative imagery of the classical and the rococo, one that provided viewers with a more familiar, organic and soft-edged set of signs and that repackaged trade as compatible with high culture. This, in turn, will lead to a discussion of the ways in which this hybrid imagery circulated across, and expressed, the increasingly global network of British commerce and manufacture in this period. Firstly, however, it will be helpful to review the existing scholarly literature on these objects.

Recent Scholarship on Trade Cards

Recent research focusing on eighteenth-century trade cards demonstrates that they were used in numerous ways. In his *Encyclopaedia of Ephemera*, Maurice Rickards provides a detailed description of the trade card, its history and how—later in its history—it evolved into other forms of specialized advertisement, such as billheads, leaflets, posters, price lists and catalogues. He highlights the ambivalence of the term 'trade card' as it often encompasses many forms of paper give-aways.⁴²⁵ That the subject of trade was difficult to fix into anyone category is reflected in the British Museum's on-line catalogue of Sarah Sophia's collection of trade cards. Occasionally, a

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shop's billhead, pattern book or catalogue is listed under the category of trade card, indicating that during her life this ambiguity may have already been present. If the museum's online catalogue is any indication of how her collection of trade cards arrived at the museum, she too may have systematized all these varying types together. Significantly, the term 'trade cards' was not one found in the list of categories inscribed in Sarah Sophia's 'A Catalogue of Books, etc. in the main house'; instead, she records two volumes of 'Shop Bills' located in 'Mrs. Banks's Room Bookcase, wire doors'. Celina Fox writes that during the eighteenth-century, the term 'shopkeepers bill' was common for trade cards, as this type of ephemera served as both advertisement and bill.⁴²⁶ That Sarah Sophia does not use the term trade cards when describing her collection suggests that during the eighteenth century a whole range of trade related goods came under her heading of 'shop bills'.

When tracing the evolution of consumer society, cultural historians like Maxine Berg utilise trade cards as a way of engaging with the consumption of luxury goods in the eighteenth-century market place. Berg demonstrates how trade cards and other forms of graphic culture offered the most advantageous opportunities for advertising new wares. She calls trade cards 'guides for consumer choice', as they illustrated the physical properties of goods and communicated knowledge about wares.⁴²⁷ Thinking of such objects as forms of eighteenth-century advertising, Berg highlights the card's power to entice customers by way of novel images and persuasive texts. She claims that they

⁴²⁶ Fox, 2009: 239.

⁴²⁷ Berg, 2007: 273, 274.

were material evidence of a contemporaneous 'culture of consumption'.⁴²⁸ Sarah Sophia's vast collection of trade cards attests to Berg's notion of a thriving consumer culture operating not only in London but also in the provinces and abroad.

In, 'Selling Consumption in the Eighteenth Century: Advertising and the Trade Card in Britain and France', Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford focus on such objects as a way of understanding 'the economy of persuasion'.⁴²⁹ For Berg and Clifford, trade cards and catalogues provided the main form of publicity for consumer goods during the eighteenth-century. They draw on these sources to demonstrate how eighteenth-century advertisement relied as much on sophisticated forms of imagery as on persuasive texts and argue against the separation of art from technical innovation.⁴³⁰ As this chapter will show, trade cards complicate our understanding of high and low culture. Although such fine art institutions as the Royal Academy may have resisted associations with what was considered the mechanical or industrial, designers and engravers of trade cards—as in the case of admission tickets—often draw on emblems of 'high' culture, such as the motifs of classical art or well-known works by major artists, and combined them with alluring forms of text in order to construct a visual language of publicity.

Phillipa Hubbard's doctoral thesis on the topic takes into consideration eighteenth-century French, British, and North American trade cards' 'production, design, use and function'.⁴³¹ Targeted at a select audience, trade cards were essential for the self-fashioning of tradesmen, shopkeepers and

⁴²⁸ Berg, 2007: 277.

⁴²⁹ Berg and Clifford, 2007: 189.

⁴³⁰ Berg and Clifford, 2007: 192.

⁴³¹ Hubbard, 2009.

the designer-engravers who created them. Meanwhile, thanks to their status as 'miniature works of art' Hubbard claims that trade cards enabled engravers to raise their professional profiles as 'innovative artists' and to develop their print portfolio. While some of the trade cards Sarah Sophia gathered are indeed signed by individual artists, this is rare; anonymous, jobbing engravers produced most of the cards she accumulated. When engravers and artists like Francesco Bartolozzi and William Hogarth did autograph trade cards, it may have increased the card's desirability through association with high art, but it seems unlikely that they saw their own artistic status as being boosted by this aspect of their production. However, even anonymous and counterfeit trade cards were certainly collected and appreciated for their aesthetic value.

Chloe Wigston Smith draws on trade cards to analyze the imagery of clothing on such objects.⁴³² She claims trade cards placed sartorial commodities under human control by depicting garments as disembodied. Drawing on and comparing different trade cards from different archival sources, including the Sarah Sophia Banks collection. Smith concludes that trade cards helped endow material objects with subjectivity. Smith uses the collection as a way of understanding the clothing trade in the eighteenth century, showing that Sarah Sophia's collection is useful to those researching specific trades and object narratives.

Trade cards reveal the tastes of a particular time period and the characteristics of a specific pictorial style. Michael Snodin makes an important contribution to the field, using cards as a way of engaging with design,

⁴³² Smith, 2010-2011: 347-380.

engraving and the English Rococo style.⁴³³ He argues that the ornate 'rococo' designs incorporated into many trade cards dating from around the 1720s to the 1770s originate from a relatively small number of prototypes.⁴³⁴ His research highlights the fact that many trade cards incorporated designs and engraving styles in ways that were similar to other forms of ephemera, such as tickets and bookplates; in many instances, the same engravers were producing works across these different categories.⁴³⁵ Sometimes, however, trade cards include the names of three people: the person who drew the design, the engraver, and the person who conceived or 'invented' the design.⁴³⁶ In some cases, a single name assumes responsibility for all these tasks, but a single name might also belong to that of the owner of the printing establishment rather than any of the individuals involved in the process of producing the card.⁴³⁷ Sarah Sophia's collection confirms Snodin's conclusion that many designs depicted on trade cards were borrowed or reused, and that different engravers were working across different genres. However, her collection also demonstrates that many designs were original, composed by the shop owner, the engraver and designer or as a collaborative effort between all three.

Sir Ambrose Heal not only collected and catalogued trade cards; he also published extensively on the subject. Heal analyses the historical and pictorial qualities of trade cards; thus, in an article entitled '17th Century Booksellers' and Stationers' Trade-Cards', Heal considers trade cards as a

⁴³³ Snodin, 1986: 82-105.

⁴³⁴ Snodin, 1986: 83.

⁴³⁵ Snodin, 1986: 83.

⁴³⁶ Rickards, 2000: 335.

⁴³⁷ Rickards, 2000: 335.

form of memorandum, denoting information such as a shop's name and address, as well as descriptions of wares or personal notes, like the amount of money that is still owed.⁴³⁸ In *The Signboards of Old London Shops*, Heal draws parallels between the shop sign and the trade card as calculated forms of advertisement. Although most of the cards Sarah Sophia collected correspond to a later date than the ones Heal examines, some of the images on her cards combine shop signs with wares. For example, one card that she acquired in 1783 includes both the store's sign and its address (fig. 160). It depicts a cat standing on a ledge. Around the cat's neck is a chain that wraps twice around the animal's paw, and from which dangles a sign representing a seal. This card was produced for the seal engraver, Varney at Whittington's Cat. The ledge the cat is standing on is part of an architectural structure; the image of the cat clearly refers to a sculptural device that was used to support the shop-sign. However, though some of Sarah Sophia's cards incorporate shop signs, as here, Heal points to the fact that this identification between shop sign and the imagery of the trade card seems to have become far less fixed after the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

When considering eighteenth-century provincial retailing strategies and the commercial spheres extending beyond the boundaries of the shop, Victoria Morgan draws on Henri Lefebvre's study of social systems and ideas of 'mental space' to argue that trade cards occupied a separate consumer realm from the actual physical space of the shop.⁴³⁹ The address printed on the card—a prominent feature—reinforced the role of both the shop and the

⁴³⁸ Heal, 1988: 51-62. See also: Heal, 1933: 165-71; Heal, 1951: 29-32; Heal, 1948: 51-62.

⁴³⁹ Morgan, 2006: 61.

town as hosts of commerce. Thus, trade cards, similar to other forms of advertisement, were fundamental in constructing the shop's identity and bolstering the shop and town's reputation even after the moment purchases were made.⁴⁴⁰ Gathered into Sarah Sophia's portfolios and pasted onto sheets of paper, trade cards occupied a new alternative realm beyond the public sphere of the shop itself.

In 'Archives and Collections: The Waddesdon Manor Trade Cards: More Than One History' Katie Scott investigates Waddesdon's archive of trade cards.⁴⁴¹ She brings to light the history of the collection and draws on this rich source of approximately 500 trade cards as a way of engaging with eighteenth-century French trade cards' design, production and circulation. She concludes that, as in the case of British cards, designs on French cards were interchangeable and recycled. In the case of engravers and printmakers, trade cards were samples that 'offered a part in order to stimulate desire for the whole. They were both product and the argument for it'.⁴⁴² Scott notes the juxtaposition of bookplates with trade cards in the Waddesdon collection, which signals an interpenetration between scholarly reflection and commercial exchange. Sarah Sophia also collected bookplates and books. The type of ephemera collected by Sarah Sophia and seen in the Waddesdon collection suggests that the gathering of this kind of ephemera was part of a broader, international trend of collecting that continued during the nineteenth century.

As this research demonstrates, academics have engaged with trade cards in numerous contexts: social, historical, commercial and collectable.

⁴⁴⁰ Morgan, 2006: 61, 62.

⁴⁴¹ Scott, 2004: 91-104

⁴⁴² Scott, 2004: 100.

However, this research only begins to scratch the surface of trade cards and their intricate designs and complex meanings; we can now go on to explore yet another aspect of their character in this period: their role as objects, which promoted and expressed a new aesthetics of manufacture and technology.

Visual Taxonomies

The trade cards in Sarah Sophia's collection regularly exhibit a remarkable focus on particular kinds of visual taxonomy, in which the goods on sale in any given premises are laid out in highly ordered, compartmentalised, and often grid-like compositions. At a time when improved wares and services were constantly emerging in the marketplace, and the pressure for merchants and craftsmen to keep up with competitors was high, it was crucial that potential shoppers were given clear information about the goods and services on offer. Trade cards often included labels, pictures, keys, tables, catalogues, diagrams and lists that incorporated practical information and invited new ways of seeing. Wares were often depicted as organized and classified precisely into rigorously bordered sections sometimes imagined or disguised as shelves, compartments or store windows. These pictorial devices enabled merchants to include more information on the card, in a format that broke this information down into ordered segments, so that it was easy to understand, to refer to and to remember.

A couple of examples will serve to convey this distinctive form of visual ordering. One is the seventeenth-century trade card belonging to John Yarwell, optical instrument maker located 'at ye Archimedes and Three

Golden Prospects on St. Paul's church yard, London, dated 1683 (fig. 161).⁴⁴³ It depicts a carefully laid out arrangement of instruments relating to microscopic and macroscopic observation. These instruments presented a new way of understanding the world that was independent of religion and myth. In the trade card's design, traditional conventions of perspective and scale are not respected. Instead of picturing all the goods set out on the table, as they would have actually been seen in the shop, telescopes, reading glasses and spectacles are also represented laid out across the surfaces of the card itself, providing the viewer with a suitable perspective from which to inspect the wide range of instruments Yarwell produces. The scale of the instruments is sometimes gigantic when compared to the size of the man. What makes the instruments valuable is their ability to aid in 'new' scientific principals and discoveries.⁴⁴⁴ On the trade card, similar types of instruments are grouped together and each one is labelled individually; some are described according to size. Off to the left is a gentleman looking through a telescope; it has been suggested that this might be Yarwell himself.⁴⁴⁵ All traces of the workshop are erased, and the man's fancy garments suggest his genteel status, while the act of looking through the telescope dramatises gentlemanly curiosity. The man may not simply gesture to Yarwell himself but

⁴⁴³ Whipple; 1951: 64. On 14 July 1936, Sotheby's offered for sale papers of Sir Isaac Newton's papers and among the papers was this same trade card with handwritten notes Newton made on the back. The year 1683 is engraved on the back. Gascoigne, 1994: 47. Sir Joseph had interest in astronomy and when presenting William Herschel with the Copley Medal he declared that astronomy 'served to extend 'our ideas of the immensity of Space, & of the Power Goodness & wisdom of the Great Creator who has created & put into motion so many & such vast bodies'. The fact that Sarah Sophia owned numerous cards belonging to instrument makers may reflect her brother's scientific interests.

⁴⁴⁴ Syson, 2003: 108.

⁴⁴⁵ Whipple, 1951: 64.

to his targeted clientele. The trade card appears to draw on a type of pictorial genre depicting learned gentlemen that often represented the sitters accompanied with scientific objects, arranged on tables, as a way of denoting status.

Today, instruments produced by Yarwell are difficult to find, but a few microscopes survive in museums and private collections (fig. 162).⁴⁴⁶ Made from pasteboard, brass, and highly-finished, walnut wood and adorned in tooled leather, his instruments were not only functional; they would have been prized for their beauty and virtuosity.⁴⁴⁷ At the bottom of the card is a list of more wares Yarwell produced 'after the latest and most usefull Invention'. The trade card not only represents Yarwell's novel apparatus, however; we can go on to suggest that its own carefully compartmentalised, diagrammatic form of visual organisation reinforces the associations of mathematical precision and scientific rigour that Yarwell and his instruments clearly hoped to project.

Another card in Sarah Sophia's collection is pictorially composed in ways that suggest rationality, order and reproduction. The card for 'Cryer's Repository for Ladies and Gentlemen's Fancy Perukes' presents the viewer with the shop front, window display and a potential customer (fig. 163). The shop's architectural design is a departure from that found in earlier stalls or shops.⁴⁴⁸ Indeed, the card reproduces a new kind of architectural feature within late Georgian shop design, which was partly generated by the fact that only small panes of glass could be manufactured at that time.⁴⁴⁹ The whole shopfront consists of panels of wall glass; it provides ample window space for

⁴⁴⁶ Whipple, 1951: 62-69.

⁴⁴⁷ Gerard Turner *Collecting Microscopes*

⁴⁴⁸ Evans and Lawson, 1989: 117.

⁴⁴⁹ Evans, 1989: 117.

exhibiting the goods on sale. The diagrammatic, compartmentalized sequence of box-like windows on the card frames the busts that display the shop's individual wigs. The glass storefront would have been considered novel; it set the stage for by-passers to admire the spectacular display of wigs that dominates the window space. Placing wigs in windows reinforces the wig's function as a marker of conspicuous consumption.⁴⁵⁰ The visual exposition of a variety of perukes into squares also mimics the kind of display cases used for presenting objects in cabinets of curiosities and herbariums (fig. 164). It invites a type of looking that is inquisitive and comparative. In William Hogarth's famous 'Order of Wigs' (fig. 165) the artist follows a similar kind of method when satirizing wigs and canons of beauty, but it is one that was based on ancient architectural classifications rather than modern 'scientific' ones. In the trade card, by contrast, the grid is a support system that compartmentalises, arranges and frames the contents of the shop, and places its wares into a uniform and rational system that over-rides the negative connotations often associated with 'fancy perukes' and feminine performance. The imagery of the railings below the window, which provides a rigorously ordered internal caption to the image, reinforces the overriding aesthetics of the grid found within this card.

Other trade cards, though less dramatically structured by these forms of visual organisation, also promoted an aesthetics of rationality and empiricism. The card for Bristow's engine manufactory provides a good instance of this (fig. 166). The front of the card is packed with information that is presented in a variety of forms: these include figural imagery, an

⁴⁵⁰ Powell and Roach, 2004: 79-99; Pointon, 1993: 107-139; McNeil, 2013.

alphabetical key, and a central band of text. The card represents a scene that dramatizes the workings of Bristow's engines. It depicts a seaside harbour. On the left side is a building in flames; a boat sailing on the water is also on fire. The simple letter key at the bottom of the trade card corresponds to the particular types of engine manufactured by Bristow and indicates their functions in putting out different kinds of fire; it informs the viewer that A is a 'land engine' and B a 'floating engine'. In this way, complex information about engines is broken down and viewers are provided with a visual exposition of what the engines look like and how they operated. Flanking the picture are two fire fighters and winding garlands decorated with useful fire fighting tools, such as buckets and axes. A gesture to tradition is incorporated by way of the heraldic devices hanging from a banner across the top of the card, including the royal coat of arms. Along the bottom of the card is a green, swirling motif. Framing the view with these kinds of emblems and ornaments introduces a visual language suggestive of such items as contemporary antiquarian maps.⁴⁵¹ The front of the card thus expresses a concern for aesthetics, antiquity and knowledge.

However, when the card is turned over, we encounter another kind of visual address – one structured around the dynamics of the textual and the tabular (fig.167). In the upper half, the typeface used for the text oscillates between various modes of print and script. The juxtaposition produces variety and keeps the viewer interested. It also helps to emphasize certain points that the producer wants his potential clients to learn. Bristow's engines are considered 'remarkable' and 'useful'. He also sells a range of items, such as

⁴⁵¹ Barber and Harper, 2010.

buckets, leather hoses, and fire caps, 'all in the neatest and compleatest [sic] manner'. Meanwhile, below the text is a table, similar to those used by scientists when compiling observational data. The aim of Bristow's table is to summarise a set of data about his business in quickly legible forms, so that one could compare the sizes, prices and performance of different engines. The table presented particulars. Lorraine Daston, in discussing the tables that the Royal Society devised for weather watching, has argued that tables, like landscapes and maps, were meant to be surveyed; both are read and seen and 'hover between image and text'.⁴⁵² Bristow's table represents another way of interpreting and presenting knowledge that blended scientific visual codes, and confirms the extent to which trade cards—in their very graphic make-up—were often pulled towards diagrammatic forms of visual organization.

The trade cards in Sarah Sophia's collection draw on a range of systematic indexes, but whereas most cards incorporated labels, pictures, keys, and tables others were even more reliant on lists and catalogues to describe wares for sale. The card for Iverson and Stone, 'fishing-rod, fish-hook, and tackle-makers' is one example of how the list-format was used to present forms of information (fig.168). At the top of the card is an image of a trout, which appears to be on lying a table. This kind of image is similar to images of fish produced by the British engraver Eleazar Albin to document the specimens collected by Sir Josesph Banks – images such as 'A Salmon Trout from Berwick on Tweed' (fig. 169). Below the schematic image of the fish on the trade card, and below the lists of specialist goods provided by Iverson and

⁴⁵² Daston, 21 Jun. 2012.

Ston, we find a list, divided into three columns, of the items they offer for sale. Promoting their goods in this way provides a type of visual display that enables the viewer to skim through words at a glance and to easily find what they are looking to purchase. Lists invite interaction. The list's appearance is constantly changing; items might be circled, ticked off or crossed through. The format of a list makes a comprehensive compilation of sale items seem manageable, while adding a sense of visual order to the card's overall appearance.

Looking at these cards as a group suggests an underlying desire to impose order, stability, neatness and control upon the imagery of commerce. Visually organizing wares and data in this way helped make commerce, manufacture and consumption seem sensible, considered, and rational activities, driven by logical processes of choice, and serviced by modern, technologically advanced forms of production, as opposed to activities driven by greed, irrationality or chance. These cards show that engravers and designers were exploiting particular kinds of visual taxonomies in order to help regulate and shape the imagery of trade.

The Imagery of Technology

The grid-like organization of goods and signs in the imagery of the trade cards found in Sarah Sophia's collection worked in partnership with a new pictorial focus on the technological advances prompted by Britain's burgeoning industrial and manufacturing culture. Men and women are pictured busily operating machinery, and newly patented wares and new designs in architecture are visually foregrounded. Such images were

designed to convey with clarity and precision a complex array of new products and tasks. Some images in Sarah Sophia's collection include brief 'how to' instructions and present clear and full accounts of craftsmen's practices and or products. Such images express a delight in the technological apparatus of modern trade and industry, and in the imagery and workings of machinery.

Here it is instructive to turn to a trade card issued to a certain Geoghegan, letterpress and copper-plate printer, which shows Britannia on a beach (fig. 170). Pictured in the centre of the card, she unveils a roundel with the name and address of the printer's business. Printed on all four corners of the card are tiny pictures of men carrying out the principal tasks performed in his workshop; these activities include typeface setting, engraving, inking plates, pulling a sheet of paper from a tympan (a machine typical for printing relief prints), and operating a press. Since the seventeenth century, similar images of workshops had circulated across Europe, and they were also incorporated in publications such as books of trades. Moving from the top of the card to the bottom, the order of operations is presented by way of a step-by-step depiction of the production process, which has been divided between different men. Here, there is no mess or dirt; instead, the imagery is suggestive of an orderly workspace. Each man is pictured carrying out an individual task; the men are not distracted but completely occupied with the job at hand. The only exception is the man turning the press at the lower left corner of the card, who looks out to the viewer, perhaps denoting a sense of pride in his work. The trade card expresses an idea of British patriotism, built on the virtues of industry and the harmonious combination of workers and machinery.

Meanwhile, an early form of washing machine is pictured on a trade card belonging to the actor turned inventor Edward Beetham (fig.171). A woman is presented operating 'Beetham's Royal Patent Washing Mill'. Unlike Geoghegan's card, there is no hint of a workshop setting. Just above her it is written 'If economy be necessary or cleanliness desirable, this is the way to obtain it'. The card claims that the 'invaluable invention' rendered 'linen whiter and cleaner than it can be made by any other method'. Her white, pristine garment, and the immaculately blank white space in which she is set, reinforces the notion of desirable cleanliness. She is representative of the fact that in many trade cards during this period, humans do not interact with each other; they interact with machines. On the front of Beetham's machine, meanwhile, there is found the British monarchical symbol of the lion and unicorn, advertising the fact that the machine had earned a royal patent. This also reassured potential buyers that purchasing this product was patriotic. Interestingly, Beetham's wife, Isabella, a practicing silhouette artist who opened a studio above her husband's warehouse, designed this trade card.⁴⁵³ In the lower left hand corner of the card the mill is pictured in profile, in ways that are analogous to the workings of a silhouette portrait. This view simplifies the object; it is flattened and broken down into geometrical shapes and lines. Here, emphasis is placed on the mill's simple elegant forms; it becomes a kind of machine-portrait, depicted in profile like one of the fashionable subjects more typically represented by a silhouette artist. The card thus provides an emblematic demonstration of the mill's sleek modern design. As this card demonstrates, the invention of machines not only stimulated market

⁴⁵³ Ruskin, 2009: 26.

growth; it also enabled artists to experiment with and develop a new pictorial language that consciously transformed the mechanical object—here a mere washing machine—into a desirable icon of modern affluence, trade and improvement.

As well as human-operated machinery, the trade cards in Sarah Sophia's collection promoted an array of inventions and improved products, such as North's 'new invented portable engine with Lloyd's patent boiler for steaming hot houses' (fig. 172). The image appears to be a close study of the engine itself, which is shown isolated from the production process and placed against a simple white background. This is a product that we can imagine would have interested Sir Joseph, given the fact that he had numerous hot houses on his property at Spring Grove, where he and other naturalists kept a rich source of live botanicals and carried out numerous agricultural and horticultural experiments.⁴⁵⁴ As a counterpart to her brother's collection of natural history, Sarah Sophia's collection can be interpreted as one that housed an imagery advocating the benefits of mechanical invention and technological progress. Like many of the other trade cards in Sarah Sophia's collection that boast the latest mechanical advancements, the trade card depicting North and Lloyd's engine provides an example of innovation, translated into stark, graphic and oddly anthropomorphic form.

Finally, a card representing Fowler's Mill offers an early example of a new hard-edge manufacturing aesthetic and of the ways in which the imagery of the grid and the industrial could be fused (fig. 173). The growing demand for mill-produced goods in the eighteenth century stimulated the development

⁴⁵⁴ Spring Grove archive, San Francisco California.

of mechanical skills in this area and, once again, Sir Joseph had a close interest in such matters, exploring the possibilities of producing cheaper flour and alternative sources of power offered by steam engines.⁴⁵⁵ Fowler's Mill was erected in 1788, on the grounds of Bolingbroke House. Commissioned by Thomas Fowler and designed by Stephen Hooper, the air mill measured close to 120 feet in height, making it one of the tallest windmills in England.⁴⁵⁶ The base of the building was three storeys high, and the windmill, a twelve-sided tower measuring 80 feet tall, was mounted onto the base.⁴⁵⁷ The mill contained a steam engine and drove six pairs of millstones; there were a total of 96 sails with the same amount of shutters, so they could be opened to regulate the flow of air throughout the structure.⁴⁵⁸ The mill was used to produce linseed oil and grind malt. On the card, the white background serves to dislocate the building. The artist represents the mill from a slightly lower perspective, thus investing the tall, severe tower with the same kind of brute power conveyed in ancient towers; it invites the viewer to interpret modern technology as a new form of classicism. Just as interestingly, the surfaces of the tower, and of the building that it surmounts, are criss-crossed and compartmentalised by an industrialized lattice-work that echoes those diagrammatic grid-like forms of pictorial composition explored earlier in this chapter, and that are here reinforced by the stark geometrics of the fence that runs across the foreground. Here, a vivid iconography of modern technology is perfectly fused with a rigid and diagrammatic form of pictorial composition.

⁴⁵⁵ Klingender, 1972: 9-10. See also Gascoigne, 1994: 210.

⁴⁵⁶ Farries and Mason, 1966: 50-53.

⁴⁵⁷ Farries and Mason, 1966: 50-53.

⁴⁵⁸ Farries and Mason, 1966: 50-53.

Rococo and Classical Counterpoint

As we have seen so far, trade card producers created designs that foregrounded taxonomic forms of pictorial organization and highlighted a new machine aesthetic. These visual languages enabled buyers, sellers and craftsmen to associate their trades with a seemingly scientific language of order and technological advancement. However, trade card producers equally drew upon 'rococo', 'baroque' and 'neo-classical' imagery as a means of associating their wares and services with 'elevated' artistic traditions, and with older, more organic kinds of imagery. Whereas for the forms and iconographies explored so far appear to emphasize the virtues of empiricism and technology, and place them at the heart of a new age of improvement, the rococo, baroque and classical decorative motifs that we also find proliferating across the trade cards of the period invite an identification with a culture of luxury, grandeur and elegance.

Rococo is a style of art that, in traditional art-historical terms, is usually viewed as running parallel with the final phase of the Baroque. Emerging in France toward the end of the seventeenth century, it is a style that is particularly characteristic of the reign of Louis XV, but that continued to be popular throughout the reign of Louis XVI.⁴⁵⁹ Significantly, it was an aesthetic that was championed for its 'beauty without order'.⁴⁶⁰ Although most often associated with France, the rococo exerted a wide influence and infiltrated art

⁴⁵⁹ For research on the Rococo style see: Levey, 1997: 9-13; Snodin and Styles, 2001: 192-96; Coffin et. al., 2008; Craske, 1997: 78. Colley and Snoden, et. al. 1984. Craske highlights the difficulties scholars face when defining the term 'rococo' and the time period it covers.

⁴⁶⁰ Snodin and Styles, 2001; 196.

throughout most of Europe. In contrast to the geometrical, grid-like and hard-edged forms that we have just been examining, the rococo, with its flexible asymmetrical curves, delicate frames and irregular shapes, evokes an enchanted theatrical realm, a diversion from real life. The rococo in France is usually associated with a shift in aristocratic tastes toward a new type of art that was better suited for domestic—rather than public—spaces. The rococo style is considered light and playful, unrestrained, and organic. Its stylized motifs, drawn from nature, and frequently mixed with the oriental iconography associated with the similarly fashionable taste for chinoiserie, signified abundance, proliferation and cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, Rococo imagery—thanks partly to its artistic origins in a French culture that continued to be invoked as a benchmark of elegance—was also often associated with refinement. The rococo thus became a means for entrepreneurs to link their businesses to a visual rhetoric that connoted fashionable gentility and urbane politeness.⁴⁶¹ The incorporation of rococo decoration into trade card design helped elevate the status of one's products and services.

One trade card, engraved by a T. Gardner for the silk dyers Ann and John Boyer, incorporates an astonishingly elaborate architectural structure that incorporates double-columns at its sides, and that is interwoven with exotic tress and plants (fig. 174). Snodin identified a similar composition as having been engraved after designs by Chippendale.⁴⁶² Crowning the architectural frame is a Chinese man seated in a pagoda. Just below him is a picture of a finely dressed gentleman surrounded by an elegant inner frame;

⁴⁶¹ Hallett, 1999: 144-145.

⁴⁶² Snodin, 1986: 94.

This decorative layout, featuring a frame within a frame, characterises most rococo style trade cards dating from around the 1740's onward.⁴⁶³ The textiles for sale are listed in the middle of the card. Overall, the undulating line and irregular shape of the decorative structure makes everything look organic, and abundant. The card thus carries a quality of the natural, communicates an elaborate form of ornamentation, and suggests a sense of continual growth and abundance. This card, which fuses the forms of the rococo with the motifs of Chinoiserie – here we can notice the Chinese-style pagoda and the images of Chinese figures and exotic plants - advertises products – important silks and fine textiles – that themselves carried the associations of the foreign, the luxurious, and the decorative. Its design, associated with refinement, cosmopolitanism, and abundance, was useful in encoding social distinction in an age of global, commercial expansion.

While some of the trade cards in Sarah Sophia's collection drew on rococo characteristics as a way of promoting goods to a burgeoning consumer public, others drew upon those more classical forms of art that, as we have already seen, provided another marker of refinement in eighteenth century England. Thus, Thomas Jefferys, 'Geographer to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales', draws on the allegorical figures of Geography and Invention, and places them in a elegant classical setting, as a way of linking his services and wares to a polite consumer culture (fig.175). Jefferys sold prints 'by the most celebrated masters and all sorts of maps and globes'. Anthony Walker produced the engraving, and it is of the highest quality. Indeed, it is one that marries classical iconography with the flickering,

⁴⁶³ Snodin, 1986: 89.

undulating line associated with the rococo. The figure of Geography is seated leaning against a globe and holding a compass and pointing toward the information written on the middle of the card. Meanwhile, the figure of Invention is shown as a woman with a small flame over her head and wings on either side of her temples. She holds a scroll in one hand and engraving implements in the other. The figures appear to be in dialogue, and Invention also points to the sign acknowledging Jefferys' business. The card follows an iconographic and stylistic formula that expresses knowledge and refinement. The quasi-sculptural forms of Invention and Geography are positioned in front of a balustrade and a column from which sweeps a heavy drape; numerous books and fine prints litter the ground around them. Meanwhile, the elaborate assortment of objects that hangs beneath the pictured column introduces a sign of rococo abundance into the image, as do the swirling, elaborate forms of the calligraphy that dominates the trade cards centre. The card is clearly designed for a learned audience that would have been familiar with such icons and imagery, and that identified itself with the elegance they signified.

A Hybrid Aesthetic of Trade

Some cards fused such rococo and classical forms with the more geometric and mechanical modes of imagery explored earlier in this chapter, generating a hybrid form of expression that linked the virtues of aesthetic refinement with those of commerce, industry and manufacture. Here, the innovation and novelty of the products and services being advertised was matched by the elaborately inventive pictorial combinations found on the cards themselves.

The trade card for ‘Dobson and Kynvin, leather pipe and bucket makers’ is one example of how designers and engravers blended rococo design with the imagery of the mechanical arts (fig. 176). As Snodin has observed, the rococo style frame was a decorative element that readily accommodated numerous commodities within an overall design.⁴⁶⁴ Here, the dynamic, sculptural frame dominates the card. It drips with all sorts of mechanical instruments: buckets, hoses, cups and pails. The utilisation of this framing device serves to showcase the bucket-maker’s wares in a way that echoes the manner in which shopkeepers hang their wares. It is a fancy structure that simultaneously elevates the mechanical art of leather pipe and bucket production to a polite status. The shop’s proximity to the Banks’s home, ‘near Soho Square’, suggests that the Banks’s may have purchased wares there. The trade card prepares shoppers for what they will find in the store and in theory it is intimately related to the shop’s contents. It functions as a virtual, ornamental entrance to the goods on offer at Dobson and Kynvin’s premises.

Sarah Sophia’s trade cards continually reveal that artists and designers incorporated the pictorial device of the rococo frame to arouse consumer interest and to blur the lines between the decorative and mechanical arts. The card for Joseph King, maker and seller of ‘perpetual ovens and smoak[sic]-jacks’, goes one step further, and adds the iconic motif of the classical tradition – the column – to rococo decorative fantasy (fig. 177). The classical style was often referred to as ‘rococo’s dignified alternative’.⁴⁶⁵ Here, the trade

⁴⁶⁴ Snodin, 1986: 82-103.

⁴⁶⁵ Levey, 1977: 121.

card's designer juxtaposes the two styles, and uses them to frame an assemblage of resolutely utilitarian manufactured goods. Positioned precariously over two Doric columns is a highly ornate rococo frame. Whereas the Doric order expresses permanence, solidity and continuity with the past; the rococo frame suggests modernity, the organic, and novelty. This dualised form of framing encases a series of mundane metal objects whose designs switch between the plain and – in one instance at least – the decorative: keys, a bell, a pot, a box with a switch, and – exceptionally – a hinge that itself exhibits a rococo flourish. A ceaseless play of delicate concave and convex surfaces and borders runs around this assemblage, and we are continually asked to move between the three-dimensional forms of perspective suggested by the frame and by such details as the hanging bell, and the flattened, stark and more two-dimensional rhetoric of goods diagrammatically laid out across the surface of the picture plane. The card, through such means, offers a form of visual display that was meant to entertain and delight customers while simultaneously promoting the virtues of utility and manufacture.

Another card, for Richard Arundell and Son, frames mechanical goods in a more muted rococo register. (fig.178). Some of the decorative rococo and classical elements are present but here they are underplayed. A large rectangular frame encloses the information printed in the middle of the card. On the left and right sides of the frame we find parts of a brick patterned wall and two pairs of columns. Curling, plant-like motifs branch out from the columns and create an arch on the top centre of the card. Above and below the frame, within the arch and off to the sides we find the imagery of gun

carriages and ploughshares. Interestingly, the card – the upper and lower sections of which are split into three - offers an echo of the tripartite forms of the traditional altarpiece; here, however, the engraver exchanges religious icons with symbols of industry and commerce. The forms of machinery have been completely integrated into an ornamental scheme in which no clear distinction exists between the decorative and the functional.

Novelty and invention are central to the appeal of the trade cards collected by Sarah Sophia. Another card, for a copper plate maker named Jones, extols the merits of a newly invented machine that polishes ‘copper plates for calico printers and engravers’ making them ‘exceedingly smooth and level’ (fig. 179). In Britain, cotton textile production was a major industry, and the design of printed cotton received much public attention.⁴⁶⁶ The introduction of engraved copper plates, as opposed to woodblock, made a significant difference to the appearance and quality of calico prints, as they added more detail and permitted larger patterns to be printed.⁴⁶⁷ In this image, there is once again no workshop setting; the machine and operator are isolated on a blank page. The large machine is depicted at a slightly higher level to the man, so he appears to be dwarfed by the apparatus. The body is rendered in a particular way that explains the narrative. That turning the wheel could be a strenuous job is conveyed by the operator’s stance. To minimise the risk of back injury, the man is forced to reposition himself; his legs are parted and bent slightly at the knees, while his whole arms are pulled in close against his body, enabling him to push up with his quadriceps. This position

⁴⁶⁶ Forty, 1986: 45; Styles, 2007: 109-132.

⁴⁶⁷ Forty, 1986: 45.

enables him to keep his back straight while rotating the wheel. The stiff posture renders the man inflexible; he appears to be an extension of the machine. Here, however, this machine aesthetic is juxtaposed with an intricate floral frame that encircles the text within. The blending of the imagery of mechanisation and decorative elaboration is a distinctive feature of the trade cards of the period.

Trade cards also merged decorative, high, and mechanical arts as a way of creating a polite aesthetic of trade. This is nicely conveyed by a trade card for Ranson and Carbys', for example, which depicts a man pouring beer at a manually operated pump (fig. 180). Whereas the people operating machinery in the images discussed in the previous section above are clearly artisans at work, wearing the humble clothes associated with manual labour, this image shows a man dressed in fine garments, operating the 'safe beer engine' advertised by the card in a manner suggestive instead of a polite gentleman standing at his desk. Above the man is pictured an allegorical figure of Genius is blowing a trumpet. Her presence elevates the maker and operator of the machine to the status of a public-minded hero or genius, whose engine conveys his devotion to noble ends. Another card for 'Hunter and Haas, mathematical, philosophical and optical instrument makers' incorporates putti, who playfully engage with all types of mathematical and optical instruments under the watchful eye of Britannia seated in the clouds (Fig. 181). During the eighteenth century industrialists and craftsmen relied on classical models to help consumers overcome resistance to new products and

changes brought about by industry.⁴⁶⁸ Many of the trade cards in Sarah Sophia's collection exemplify this reliance on an imagery of the classical and the rococo to provide a kind of pictorial buffering for manufactured goods; however, the Hunter and Hass card is also entirely representative in its demonstration of the ways in which this decorative imagery was creatively entwined with another imagery, that of the mechanical, the novel and the scientific, here expressed by the ordered array of machine-crafted telescopes, scales, air-pumps and tripods that is distributed across the pictured foreground.

Conclusion

As has become apparent, this distinctive interaction between very different forms of imagery within the trade card was not an isolated phenomenon; rather, it was evident throughout Sarah Sophia's collection. One final example will serve to suggest the ubiquity of this pictorial phenomenon to disseminate the kinds of imagery discussed in this chapter. On a global basis, the card for 'T.I Plucknett's Mowing and Reaping Machine' was 'calculated' to cut grass, corn and sugar canes (Fig. 182). The card provides the viewer with a dramatic demonstration of how this machine works. Its power is conveyed by the size of the two wheels that are pushed along by a large horse. The machine easily cuts through a clump of tall, thick grass. The instrument is described as one that can be 'successfully used in America East and West Indies', thus alluding to the commercial value of colonial crops and the supply of equipment to rapidly growing colonies. Just as significantly

⁴⁶⁸ Forty, 2005: 13-14.

for our purposes, the trade card once again offers a pictorial hybrid that in this instance overlays a traditional iconography of rural labour and plenty, familiar from the paintings of Stubbs – the image of a supervisor on his horse, and of tall bushels of corn – with an iconic motif of modern manufacture: the remarkable image of the wheel that dominates the image, the precise, geometric forms of which, themselves inscribed on the paper in unbroken, precise lines, push up dramatically against the more obviously hand-crafted and hand-shaded imagery that lies behind.

Such images can be understood as providing the pictorial expression for a broader drive to ‘improvement’ that sought to reconcile – often with some anxiety - the advances of modern manufacture and commerce with a broader, self-consciously refined culture of politeness and learning. The inventory of her library further reveals her interest in improvements; Like her brother, she owned numerous books pertaining to trade, agriculture and medicine.⁴⁶⁹ As a member of the landed gentry and sister of the President of the Royal Society, Sarah Sophia would have been acutely conscious of the Royal institution’s ideals and the numerous programs headed by her brother. Sarah Sophia’s paper collections—in particular her trade cards—helped support these projects.

At the forefront of Sir Joseph’s projects for the state was a creed of ‘improvement’, which he and his contemporaries saw as marking a society’s degree of civilization.⁴⁷⁰ Here, we can remind ourselves that the desire to improve industry for the benefit of the nation was the original impetus for the

⁴⁶⁹ BL, 460.d.13. For example she owned copies of the *Description of Trades* (1747), *Plans of Hot Houses and Greenhouses* by George Tod (1812) and Dr. Mead’s *Physick on Poisons* (1702), among others.

⁴⁷⁰ Gascoigne, 1994: 185-236; Gascoigne, 1998.

Royal Society's agenda, and that the History of Trades project was fundamental in developing new attitudes towards industry and science. Bacon argued that the study of industry would increase knowledge and improve technologies. In his work, *Novum Organon*, Bacon claimed that those who viewed nature by way of craft could gain a better understanding and improve the arts:

Among the parts of history, which I have mentioned, the history of arts is of the most use because it exhibits things in motion and leads more directly to practice. Moreover, it takes off the mask and veil from natural objects, which are commonly concealed and obscured under the variety of shapes and external appearance.⁴⁷¹

Bacon's study of science and industry was reliant on practices of collecting, observation and empirical analysis. Following his example, the Royal Society's committees on Mechanics and the History of Trades dedicated themselves to producing reports on contemporary products, and aimed to improve industry. They reported their findings at meetings and in the Society's *Philosophical Transactions*. The journal addressed the processes of making useful and luxurious goods such as silk, porcelain, varnishes, enamels, engravings, parchment, leather, paper, tapestry and red glass. The society was also concerned with constructing watches, dying cloth, making felt and crafting candlesticks.

In the *History of the Royal Society of London: For the Improving of Natural Knowledge*, Tomas Sprat celebrates the purposes of the institution and its underlying dedication to improving trades as a point of national interest, claiming that:

⁴⁷¹ Bacon, V.

There can never be an overcharge of trades themselves. That country is still the richest and most powerful, which entertains most Manufacturers. The hands of men employed are true riches; the saving of those Hands by Inventions of Art, and applying them to other works, will increase those Riches.⁴⁷²

The collection of trade cards amassed by Sarah Sophia is one that she herself, and her brother, would no doubt have seen as providing material evidence of a country that prided itself on enjoying such riches, and that had thrived thanks to the 'Inventions of Art'. What a closer examination of these same cards reveals, however, is the extent to which they helped shape a new and powerful imagery of trade in their own right, one that in its hybrid character expressed both the centrality of manufacturing and machinery to Britain's commercial progress *and* the justification of such progress through demonstrating the cultural refinements it had brought in its wake.

⁴⁷² Sprat, 166, 399-400.

Conclusion

Sarah Sophia Banks's collection of graphic materials is one that, as well as encouraging us to think afresh about such everyday but distinctive objects as the pocket book illustration, the visitor card, the admission ticket and the trade card, also encourages more general reflections about the character of her collecting, and about the character and history of the collection itself. In conclusion, we can point to the fact that Sarah Sophia's collection of ephemera found at the British Museum is one that is strikingly global in its interests and reach, powerfully eloquent of 'enlightenment' discourses and ambitions, and of crucial value in alerting us to the conditions and character of female collecting in the Georgian period. Finally, the collection is also extremely revealing of the ways in which such bodies of material are continually being reshaped by the dictates of the institution in which they are housed and preserved.

The Collection and Its Preoccupations

We can begin by noting that Sarah Sophia's collection of ephemera, though crowded with images from the shops, theatres and households of London, is international in scope. It maps a personal geography onto the geography of nations, and reflects personal exchanges with members of Europe's social, intellectual and political elites. While the collection's organization upholds nationalistic borders, it also mimics a larger world within which different national cultures interact and overlap. Although Sarah Sophia never travelled

abroad, her collection of visitor cards evolved in tandem with the rise of domestic and international tourism, and it provided an alternative geography for imagined travel. The cosmopolitan flavour of her collection of visitor cards and her annotations suggests a fascination with the global. While abroad, tourists were encouraged to take note of monuments of antiquity.⁴⁷³ Sarah Sophia does so by way of her collection of visitor cards. Her annotations to these cards, which carefully identify particular monuments, estates, and buildings, such as the Coliseum, St. Peter's cathedral, the theatre of Seguntium in Spain and Trajan's column, display her educational credentials and exhibit her preoccupation with, and knowledge of, antiquity. At the same time, as we have seen, she takes note of what we might describe as monuments of modernity – that is, the urban environments and institutions that dominated contemporary cultural life in European capitals such as Paris, Vienna and Rome. Crowded with graphic materials published abroad, her collection offers a virtual, paper-based Grand Tour that takes in the people and places of late-eighteenth century Europe just as much as it dwelt on the fragments of older cultures. Sarah Sophia's collection thus permitted her to indulge in chronological as well as spatial travel. It also reflected her antiquarian perspectives. Both her father and her brother were members of antiquarian societies, so this was a practice of which she was familiar. Her massive collection of books, ephemera and coins defines her as historian within an antiquarian pursuit of cultural self-definition. In its organization and contents, her collection places importance on lineage and on studying and

⁴⁷³ Black, 2003: 174-202.

recording events and monuments of the past.⁴⁷⁴ Her attention to illustration, small details, her delight in deciphering descriptions and the excerpts she sometimes included alongside certain cards, reveals her characteristically antiquarian interest in both visual and textual evidence. In its interdisciplinary contents, the collection reveals how antiquarian study permeated all areas of elite culture; it also demonstrates how an antiquarian perspective could be brought to bear on the dynamic developments in commerce, entertainment and social ritual that she saw taking place across the metropolitan society in which she lived.

In its organization, Sarah Sophia's collection also conveys a fundamental Enlightenment mentality that seeks to explain the universe through notions of empirical classification. It remains loyal to the encyclopaedic idea that all forms of knowledge could be brought into a methodically arranged synthesis. Her collection becomes a map of knowledge about the wider world and about the people who inhabit it. As John Gascoigne highlights, Sir Joseph Banks was concerned with mapping and natural knowledge, and the metaphor of the map of knowledge, which had its roots in Francis Bacon's assertion that conquests of geographical space run parallel with the conquest of knowledge was common in eighteenth century thought.⁴⁷⁵ Sarah Sophia would have been well aware of this metaphor. However, her collection also brings to light the problematic nature of classification. It also reveals the uncertainty of categorisation and the

⁴⁷⁴ She also had an interest in Lincolnshire dialects.

⁴⁷⁵ Ogborn & Withers, 2004: 152.

difficulties of imposing order on objects that so often seem to talk to different issues at once.

Haug claims that 'collecting printed ephemera and making scrapbooks was only meaningful within the home or private space, so it was virtually invisible as a cultural pursuit'.⁴⁷⁶ Although never displayed within an exhibition arena, Sarah Sophia's collection of cards still holds considerable art-historical value. As the Banks's home was open to the public, certain areas would have been considered semi-private spaces. As Anne Birmingham argues, 'it was only through the collection that one could display one's attachment to learning and do so in a social and performative space designated for this purpose'.⁴⁷⁷ The domestic area of 32 Soho square was a space where performances were played out. Tom Dolins, when describing women's Victorian era collections of albums and scrapbooks, argues that women's collections, 'contributed nothing to public knowledge'.⁴⁷⁸ However, while the portfolio approach that Sarah Sophia employed for systematizing her collection makes it seem a particularly personal enterprise, it was a system that was also employed by her male counterparts when systematizing their collections. John Granger, when discussing seventeenth and eighteenth century collections of engraved portrait heads, which were systematized into albums, said, 'such a collection will delight the eye, recreate the mind, and impress the imagination'.⁴⁷⁹ The process of collecting print culture was just as important to as how it was displayed. Furthermore, we can be certain that her collection – even before its donation to the British museum – would have been appreciated by a wider,

⁴⁷⁶ Haug, 1995; 66.

⁴⁷⁷ Birmingham, 2000: 52.

⁴⁷⁸ Dolins, T. 1993: 186-89.

⁴⁷⁹ Granger, 1769: xvii.

elite circle than that made up by the Banks family itself. Rather than seeing it as one confined by its domestic compass, we should view her collection as a mechanism that brought the public domain into the domestic sphere, and rendered the graphic traces of modern public life newly visible in creative ways. The fact that Lady Banks bestowed Sarah Sophia's collections to the British Museum, rather than allowing it to be dispersed by auction, confirms that she was fully aware of its value for a wider public, and for the study of social history and the arts in late Georgian England.

Sarah Sophia's collection is also eloquent of certain patterns of elite sociability. Collecting was an important way of gaining, display and sharing cultural capital. This process was not necessarily a self-consciously scholarly one. One important characteristic of Sarah Sophia's annotations to the objects she collected is that, while they are informative and convey her love of knowledge they are in no way pedantic. Forms of scholarship that were too dry or self-absorbed would have been considered unsocial in the kinds of spaces Sarah Sophia occupied. The Banks's home was a site that enabled social interaction, oriented toward positive goals of scientific exchange, companionship and professional identity. Sarah Sophia's collection was a mechanism that helped conjure sociable interchange.

Collections are also forms of individual and collective self-portraiture. That of Sarah Sophia served to exhibit her intellectual and cultural status and to record the interrelationships of an elite, social circle. In a society preoccupied with status, Sarah Sophia's collection suggests and perhaps even exaggerates these social connections, and her own role in fostering them; this feature adds an air of self-conscious display to her assemblage.

Her collection memorializes her and her family's participation in a celebrated, international community of peers and peeresses, diplomats, scientists, doctors and artists. Sarah Sophia's collection constructed and elevated new forms of identity and positions of status, including that of her brother. It served as a mechanism for the display of the knowledge she had accumulated in her leisure time. By collecting, Sarah Sophia, like her brother, gained admission to and asserted her authority within elite cultural circles. Sarah Sophia's portfolios of graphic materials acted as cabinets geared to a refined, cosmopolitan public. They also asserted the ability of elite eighteenth-century women to exploit opportunities for participation in the cultural and intellectual spheres. Her collection was also, finally, an attempt to inspire a sense of wonder regarding the richness, diversity and influence of what we would describe as graphic culture, and to manage the chaotic diversity of this culture. Unsurprisingly, such ambitions opened her up to ridicule, and to being caricatured by satirists such as Gillray as a figure who had taken the habit of collecting to an obsessive extreme (fig. 183) Ironically enough, in Gillray's caricature *A Lady on A Journey* she herself becomes a print, like the thousands pasted into her meticulously organized folios. By becoming the subject of a collectible work of graphic art, Sarah Sophia was transformed into yet another printed object destined for consumption, display, and preservation.

A Shifting Archive

Although Sarah Sophia collected ephemera, that is, paper products intended to last temporarily, the continuing survival of her assemblage

challenges the notion of impermanence that this term suggests. At the same time, the current state of her collection demonstrates how shifting ideals and technologies of knowledge continually alter the shapes and meanings of such an archive.

The gift of the Sarah Sophia collection to the British Museum was the largest and most varied collection of printed ephemera the museum had ever accepted.⁴⁸⁰ Furthermore, it was a woman's collection. Collections built up by women rarely entered the public realm; they were usually bequeathed to family members as personal heirlooms. That Sarah Sophia's collection was accepted by the museum can partly be explained by the eminence of her brother and by the fact that he had been a British Museum Trustee for many years. Whatever the circumstances surrounding the collection's acceptance, however, the bestowal of this enormous body of graphic material to this particular institution not only secured its permanence; it meant that the items collected by Sarah Sophia were made available to a far wider public than had been the case during her lifetime.

It is sometimes unclear if the seemingly haphazard arrangement of items placed in folders at the British Museum was entirely the way Sarah Sophia intended or if parts of the collection had been shuffled during the move to the museum. Besides Sarah Sophia's personal inventory, another inventory in the British Museum exists listing the contents of her collection from the time of its arrival in 1818.⁴⁸¹ Comparing Sarah Sophia's handwritten inventory to the one produced by the Museum shows that although some of her albums have

⁴⁸⁰ Sloane, 2003: 20.

⁴⁸¹ BM, 234. C. 29, 1865.

been rebound by the Museum, such as three albums of political prints, they continue to adhere to her precise ordering. As the first inventory was recorded in 1846, twenty-eight years after the collections arrival, it is possible that some items had already been reorganized by the museum during that time span, such as the pocket books mentioned in chapter one.

A year after the bequest had been made, the Museum's Trustee's Report notes on 12 Feb. 1819 that 'Mr. Smith (John Thomas Smith, then keeper of prints and drawings) is making a catalogue of Miss Banks's truly interesting collection of visiting cards and Co'.⁴⁸² The next mention of her collection is dated 8 Jan. 1820, when it is recorded that 'Mr. Smith has removed several portfolios containing old drawings from the shelves under the windows to the book cases lettered D, E and F in order to make room for Miss Banks and Dr. Burney's large portfolios, which will be placed in the above mentioned'.⁴⁸³ Clearly, the sheer size of her collection has always been problematic for the museum, and its systematization within a broader institutional organization of knowledge has always been of some concern, and integrating it with other collections begins almost immediately.

Within the museum environment, many items in Sarah Sophia's collection reveal the problems that arise when trying to recover the way in which the collection was first created and used. The previously mentioned Trustees Report confirms that within two years of obtaining the collection, the museum was already obliged to combine it with others due to the museum's

⁴⁸² BM, London, Trustees Reports 1811-1840, vol. 1.

⁴⁸³ BM, London, Trustees Reports 1811-1840, vol. 1.

spatial constraints.⁴⁸⁴ Furthermore, as part of an on-going process of redistribution, the museum has disassembled Sarah Sophia's broad collection of single sheet engravings.⁴⁸⁵ Interspersed throughout the Museum's Collections according to their genre, satires with satire, maps with maps, portraits with portraits and so forth. The origin of these items in Sarah Sophia's collection is no longer perceptible through their presentation at the museum. For example, her collection of books, together with nine albums containing mostly textually based ephemera (playbills, ballads, and newspaper clippings) were at some point sent to the Department of Printed Books, which in the 1970s became part of the new British Library, subsequently moving to St. Pancras.⁴⁸⁶ The pictorially illustrated ephemera remained in the British Museum's Prints and Drawings room. Needless to say, the text vs. image distinction was often somewhat arbitrary since many items in the collection featured both text and images. Books now in the British Library were stamped in yellow ink on the verso of the title pages, with a stamp confirming that the items had been presented by Lady Banks.⁴⁸⁷ Her 'Collection of Broadsides, Newspaper Cuttings and Playbills, etc.' were stamped in the later 19th century with a royal arms stamp.⁴⁸⁸ The stamp declared that Sarah Sophia's contribution was acknowledged and it also

⁴⁸⁴ Griffiths and Williams, 1987: 2. During Thomas Smith's time, he reports to the Museum's Trustees that 'the inconveniences of the present print room are numerous; it is too narrow, the side lights strike upon the visitors eye, the floor is stone and ever damp in wet seasons'.

⁴⁸⁵ For more about some of the problems surrounding the transfer of Sir Joseph's collections from private to public places see Chambers, 2007: 24, 33.

⁴⁸⁶ 460.d.13 On the first page of her handwritten inventory it is written 'transferred from the dept. of private books 1818, retransferred to printed books dept. 1935'.

⁴⁸⁷ Harris, 2009: 422. On the stamp is written, 'Presented by Lady Banks Museum Britanic'. The use of yellow ink signified that the collection was a donation.

⁴⁸⁸ Harris, 2009: 400-401.

asserted the Museum's authority over the stamped object and its ability to organize it in keeping with its own aims. As some of the annotations in the albums at the British Library do not appear to be in Sarah Sophia's hand, it is difficult to confirm if any or all of the nine albums were assembled by Sarah Sophia herself or if they were reorganized upon receipt by the British Museum. Donating collections to museums assures the preservation of items but their separation is hardly in keeping with the lifetime management Sarah Sophia invested in building and organising her collection.

The ambiguities of the collection invite the production of multiple narratives about the objects and their circulation. However, the apparent lack of documentation surrounding the collection's history at the British Library challenges the notion of preservation that the library advocates. Its efforts to preserve the collection not only conceal the original meanings of individual items in relation to the collection as a cohesive whole, but also often go unrecorded. The library thus is unable to provide some of the pertinent information about how the collection has changed during its life in the museum and library.

Today, her collection at the British Museum is kept in different ways that reflect the Museum's conservation measures at different times. For example, from the late nineteenth-century until the mid-twentieth, a few of the items, such as the pocket-book imagery and some political prints, were rebound into new albums. More recently, are her collections of admission tickets and visitor tickets, which remain pasted onto their original mounts. Each individual mount has been placed within a white folder. The folders are

then stored in standard, acid-free, conservation drop spine boxes, which protect the collection and make for easy storage on shelves.⁴⁸⁹

At the British Museum, the example of trade cards usefully illustrates the issues at stake when considering working with an archive. In the mid twentieth century Sarah Sophia's trade cards were rearranged according to trades corresponding with the arrangement of another collection of eighteenth-century trade cards bequeathed to the Museum in 1959 by Ambrose Heal, founder one time chairman of Heal and Son's department store and author of a number of respected publications on historical trades, shop signs and so on. The two collections now provide the foundation of the museum's broader collection of eighteenth-century trade cards. It seems that the reason these objects were chosen over others in her collection for redistribution was because of their perceived research value of Heal's classification.⁴⁹⁰ Together with her prints, trade cards were, no doubt, expected to be frequently requested by researchers; in consequence, the Museum curators evidently decided that they needed not only to be easily accessible, but protected. As mentioned in chapter four, the Museum removed the cards from the original sheets of paper on which Sarah Sophia had pasted them and remounted them onto heavy pieces of acid-free, archival-grade stockboard. In 2008-2009 the cards were placed in melinex sleeves, to protect them from dust and other surface dirt and to preserve their arrangement according to Heal's classification. The supposed original arrangement by Sarah Sophia can be reconstructed from the D2 numbers

⁴⁸⁹ Thanks to Angela Roche for explaining some of the museums conservation storage methods to me.

⁴⁹⁰ Thanks to Sheila O'Connell for clarifying information about the reorganization of trade cards with me.

written directly on the card (see appendices A and B). This arrangement can be questioned however as no written proof exists of how she actually arranged them and the D2 numbers were added by the person cataloguing the collection at the time. It's possible that between the time they were moved from her house and catalogued at the museum their arrangement changed. Covered in clear plastic and placed in albums, this mode of preservation also erases any signs of the card's original organization, and all the valuable annotations written by Sarah Sophia and contributors to her collection, which provided further insights into eighteenth-century collecting practice and an enormous variety of other snippets of information, may have been cut out and pasted under the card or gone. By taking these types of conservation measures, the Museum acknowledges Sarah Sophia's collection of trade cards as a pertinent record of historical documentation and preserves them for future generations. At the same time, however, it also restricts the way one engages with her collection. Some of the context is lost, and is now impossible to retrace. In their new arrangement, Sarah Sophia's collection of trade cards are deprived of their original context. However, they can be understood to carry with them new archival histories, such as stamps and numbers, which reveal the different methods of cataloguing that have been utilized by the Museum at different times. The cards have been re-contextualized into the Museum's collection and history.

Interestingly, Sarah Sophia's trade cards are easily distinguishable from those that belonged to Heal by small reference numbers written in pen and ink. These numbers, written by the museum, correspond to the way in which Sarah Sophia's cards were initially organized within the museum space.

They refer to the cabinets and cases in which her collection was first stored within the Museum area. However, since then the collection has moved to other areas of the Museum, and her cards have been completely re-catalogued and rearranged according to trades. The items kept in the Prints and Drawings room feature a black museum logo stamped across the card, confirming the museum's ownership and its right to re-contextualisation.

In recent years, as part of the museum's drive towards public access, all of Sarah Sophia's trade cards have been digitized and added to the Museum's website, a convenient searchable resource for those without access to the museum itself; anyone in the world with internet access can now see these objects. While this feature provides easy access to original sources, the museum's lack of funding means that catalogue records are as yet, incomplete and not easily searchable. Sometimes metadata is lacking, such as the name of the artist who produced the card. This can be frustrating, especially when the name is too small to read on the photographed image. Although the ability to search by a tradesman's name as well as category of trade make it a convenient source, the often larger-than-life sized images raise questions about the objects and the collection more broadly. Furthermore, the two-dimensional screen means that little sense of an item's actual materiality comes across. Finally, while the trade card itself continues to function as a form of historical documentation, it no longer serves as a vehicle for polite sociability or as a source of familial and communal memory. The conservation of cards within new albums and on new sheets of paper, the re-contextualisation of cards by trade, and the enhanced accessibility of the collection through digitization—all enable new types of discourse about the

collection and new forums for the sociable exchange of information. However, they also serve to mask or erase the social function of the cards in their own time and to make a historical, collection-focused approach to the items especially challenging.

The problems one faces working directly with an increasingly fragmented archive are complex. The museum is constantly balancing its often conflicting aims of providing accessibility for a wide range of research needs and ensuring conservation. The ephemera held by the British Museum and Library is available for viewing by anyone with an identity card, but this has placed some of the items at risk of repeated consultation and wear, and in need of conservation. While some albums or folios are still well-preserved, others are in very poor condition—they are literally falling apart. In response to a growing interest in the collection, some of the albums housed at the British Library have now been put on reserve, which provides an obstacle to easy access. A researcher of Sarah Sophia's collection experiences the consequences of these ever-changing conventions of accessibility and cohesiveness in an especially direct way. The archive's changing boundaries make it difficult to define objects and their changing meanings: interpretations are often speculative rather than authoritative.

However, the continuing re-contextualization of the collection is a source of interpretive potential. The archive provides a unique window on the preservation and circulation of knowledge over time. While Sarah Sophia's collection and others like it provide an opportunity to work directly with original sources, they also provide us with a salutary reminder of the role of secondary interventions in shaping our understanding of the past.

Appendix A: A Guide to Locating the Collected Ephemera of Sarah Sophia Banks in the Prints and Drawings Collection of the British Museum as Recorded in the Inventory

Extracted from *The Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum: Users' Guide* (1987)

General Listing Museum Location Record, Museum Number Range Object Type (if given)	Description of Contents
C, 1.1-5346 British Visiting Cards	In six boxes are visiting cards, newspaper paragraphs, views, admission tickets, envelopes, miscellaneous notes, etc.
C, 2. 1-2011 Admission Tickets	Visiting cards, admission tickets, newspaper paragraphs, maps, tradesmen's cards
C, 3. 1-197 Admission Tickets	Admission tickets engraved by Bartolozzi
C, 4. 1-468	Ladies fashions, newspaper paragraphs, being mostly leaves from almanacs, magazines, and pocket books.
D, 1. 1-1482 Foreign Visiting Cards	In two boxes are foreign visiting cards
D, 2. 1-4392	Trade cards, bill heads, bills, prospectus, plans
D, 3. 1-702	Election cards, bankers' cards, lottery tickets, passports, coats of arms, tea certificates, receipts for the delivery of coal, leaves from magazines, paragraphs from newspapers, frontispieces, Handel's commemoration prints, Kings Bench rules, tickets
J, 1. 1-170	Political caricatures
J, 2. 1-147	Political caricatures
J, 3. 1-147	Political caricatures by Gillray
J, 4. 1-368	Political caricatures, ms notes, music, etc.
J, 5. 1-168	Various caricatures
J. 6. 1-112	Caricatures after Bunbury
J. 7. 1-53	Political caricatures
J, 8. 1-388 Admission	Anniversary tickets, admission tickets, letters of thanks,

tickets	invitations, prospectus, playbills, etc.
J, 9. 1-655 Admissions tickets	Anniversary tickets, advertisements, admission tickets, newspaper paragraphs, invitations
J, 10. 1-425	Prints and newspaper paragraphs relating to the Jubilee, visiting cards
J, 11. 1-193	Maps, views, portraits
Y, 5. 1-329	Various, mostly portraits, engravings on wood, labels
Y, 7. 1-125	Funerals
Y, 8. 1-191	Public ceremonies
Y, 9. 1-157	Funeral of Charles, Duke of Lorraine, 1608.
Y, 10. 1-247	Political caricatures by Sayer
Mm1 1-190	Portraits, costume prints by Hollar
Mm2 1-245	Public festivals, Danish costume
Mm3 1-116	Miscellaneous
Mm15 1-205	Portraits, topography

Appendix B: List of Items Still Kept Together in the British Museum as Mounted by Sarah Sophia Banks

Extracted from *The Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum: Users' Guide* (1987)

Object Type Number of Boxes Museum Location Record and Museum Number Range	Itemization (Museum Number and Description)
British Visiting Cards In six boxes C, 1. 1-5345	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1-673 Cards of Duke down to Barons, by order of precedence 2. 674-1675 British Alphabetical A to O 3. 1676-2469 British Alphabetical P to Z 4. 2470-3419 By types of border, both British and foreign 5. 3420-4383 By types of border, both British and foreign 6. 4384-5345 By types of border, invitation cards, cards of thanks, plus appendix to foreign visiting cards
Admission Tickets In six boxes and one volume C, 2. 1-1804 C, 3. 2-195 J, 8. 1-388 J, 9. 171-655	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C, 2. 1-428 By function. Apothecaries Co. to Clubs 2. C, 2. 429-944. Commemorations to Fetes 3. C, 2. 945-1384 Fetes (cont.) to Lectures 4. 1385-1804 Opera to Vauxhall 5. J, 8. 1-388 Invitations to Anniversaries 6. J, 9. 171 Various: balls, guilds, concerts, societies <p>Volume C, 3. 2-195 Various admission tickets, mostly engraved by Bartolozzi</p>
Foreign Visiting Cards D, 1. 1-1482 In two boxes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1-949 Miscellaneous; Corps Diplomatique; America to Italy 2. 950-1482 Italy (cont.) to Switzerland; English Ministers abroad; (for appendix see C,1. 5025 to 5343 above)

<p>Miscellaneous In four boxes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. D, 3. 1-432 Book tickets, bankers' cards and bank notes, election prints, E&O notes, frontispieces, Handel, commemoration, lottery tickets, Montem tickets 2. D, 3. 433 -700 Passes, post office, raffles, receipts, documents on the Royal Society, turnpike tickets, vignettes and title-pages 3. C,2. 1805 to 2011. Maps, funeral tickets, trade cards, invitations to balls; J,5. 160-162 Various; J, 9. 1-170. Tickets for the trials of Warren Hastings and Lord Neville; J,11. 119-127 Puzzle portrait cards; Y,5. 255-265 Turnbridge love letter exhibition tickets; Y, 7. 24-29, 95-100, 104-120 Funeral tickets 4. J, 10. 1-425. Prints and visiting cards relating to the Congresses of 1814 and 1815
<p>Trade Cards The original arrangement of Miss Banks was lost when the cards were lifted and remounted on individual cards in the 1950's.</p>	<p>D, 2. 1-4392</p>

Appendix C: A Key to Sarah Sophia Banks's Abbreviations

Adapted from *A Manuscript Catalogue of the Library and Collection of Prints Belonging to Sir Joseph Banks*. The portion of the manuscript from which this information was taken is written in Sarah Sophia's hand.

Abbreviation	Room (In Bold) / Location within the Room
A.R.L.	Ante Room L(ittle)
Up: c	Upper Cube
mid: c	middlemost Cube
Lc	lowermost Cube
BB	behind books
Fr. Dr. R. P. F. C	Front Drawing Room Piano Forte Case
r.c.	right cupboard
l. c.	left cupboard
S. R. W.	South Room Wardrobe
l.d.B	Large drawer at the bottom
s.d.B.	Small drawer at the bottom
Drs.	Drawers
Be.	Bookcases
Where court hoop is	Where court hoop is
Mrs. Bsk. R. Be.	Mrs. Banks's room Bookcase
w.d.	wire drawers
on Gr.	on the Ground
w.	Wardrobe
R. 3 pr. St. W.	Room up 3 pr. [pairs] of stairs. Wardrobe.
Dr. R. C.	Dressing Room Closet

Appendix D: Inventory of Sarah Sophia's Collection at 32 Soho Square

Adapted from *A Manuscript Catalogue of the Library and Collection of Prints Belonging to Sir Joseph Banks*. The portion of the manuscript from which this information was taken is written in Sarah Sophia's hand. For a key to the abbreviations, see Appendix C.

Object Type	Room	Location within the Room	More Specific Location
Visiting tickets. Royal family	A.R.L.	Lc	s. 2
Visiting Tickets. Vol. 1 Nobility & c.	A.R.L.	Lc	s. 2
Visiting Tickets. Vol. 2 some taken from Vol. 1 (not so amusing, some Prints of the Royal family in Vol. 2)	A.R.L.	Lc	s. 2
Visiting Tickets. Vol. 3 Paper with ornamental edges	A.R.L.	Lc	s. 2
Visiting Tickets. Vol. 4 Foreign Visiting Tickets	A.R.L.	Lc	s. 2
Visiting Tickets. Vol. 1 Visiting Tickets Blanks	A.R.L.	Lc	s. 2
Visiting Tickets. Visiting Tickets Blanks Vol. 2.	Mrs. Bsk. R. Be	w.d.	--
Visiting tickets. Vol 5 K.B. duplicate ceremonials, tickets & C.	S.R.W.	l.d.B.	
Visiting Tickets. Vol. 6 French Prints	S.R.W.	l.d.B.	
Visiting tickets. Visiting Tickets not usually seen, green thin portfolio	S.R.W.	--	s. 4
Duplicate Prints on dresses MSS drawings	S.R.W.	l.d.B.	
Admission Tickets Vol. 1	S.R.W.	l.d.B.	
Admission Tickets Vol. 2	S.R.W.	l.d.B.	
Admission Tickets Vol. 3	S.R.W.	l.d.B.	
Admission Tickets Vol. 4	S.R.W.	--	s. 4
Shopbills Vol. 1	Mrs. Bsk. R. Be.	w.d.	--
Shopbills Vol. 2	Mrs. Bsk. R. Be.	w.d.	--
Balloon prints	Mrs. Bsk. R.	w.d.	--

	Be.		
Prints	Mrs. Bsk. R. Be.	w.d.	--
Miscellaneous Prints	Mrs. Bsk. R. Be.	w.d.	--
Bunbury's Prints	S.R.W.	s.d.B	--
Sayers Prints	Mrs. Bsk. R. Be.	w.d.	--
D	Mrs. Bsk. R. Be.	w.d.	--
Titles	Mrs. Bsk. R. Be.	w.d.	--
Various (odd Prints)	S.R.W.	l.d.B.	--
Miscellaneous (in thin portfolio)	S.R.W.	l.d.B.	--
Prints	S.R.W.	s.d.B.	--
Prints & co. on dresses	S.R.W.	s.d.B.	--
French Caricature	S.R.W.	s.d.B.	--
Large Portfolio with duplicates	S.R.W.	l.d.B.	--
Parry's (character) prints	S.R.W.	--	s. 4
Large Portfolio	S.R.W.	Where court hoop is	--
Portfolio in which are Prints Lord Nelson's Funeral & C.	S.R.W.	Where court hoop is	--
Portfolio with old prints and drawings chiefly trash [?]	S.R.W.	Where court hoop is	--
Portfolio of different sizes, cases & c empty. 2 gluing in boxes [?] plenty of Blank musick paper	S.R.W.	--	s. 1

NB: Although Sarah Sophia constructs a rigid classification system, items of different types sometimes intermingle in a single folder.

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