

Chair Report on Panel B 'Research Projects' by Prof Francesca Saggini

The second panel of the afternoon, chaired by Francesca Saggini, was devoted to the presentation of three Research Projects, demonstrating the vibrancy of Burney Studies across various research levels. The three speakers on the panel were Catherine Pocock, who presented on 'Frances Burney D'Arblay: A case study of women's publishing experience in eighteenth-century Britain', Sophie Coulombeau, who illustrated the project of which she is PI, 'Collecting Charles Burney: Progress So Far', and Catherine Bussell, who presented her current Master's work on 'Reporting the French Revolution: A case study from the Burney Newspaper Collection'.

Catherine Pocock is a copyright law and literature Doctoral Researcher at the University of Sheffield. She presented a very engaging paper on how Frances Burney navigated the publishing process, and its legal intricacies. The background of Catherine's restorative history approach may be found in the gauntlet she threw down when she reminded the audience that "women actively participated in the publishing economy and literary marketplace during the eighteenth century and beyond: they worked in publishing houses, they wrote literary works and they had active roles in negotiating their contracts." Catherine explained how women negotiated the legal barriers around publishing and she took Burney's publishing agreements as a case study. As Catherine concluded, we have plenty of evidence to suppose that Burney became the increasingly active agent of these negotiations and managed to secure high financial returns despite having sold the copyright.

'Collecting Charles Burney' is a research project funded by the University of York that aims to compile the first catalogue of all existing and known correspondence written by or for the Rev. Charles Burney, Dr Charles Burney's third child. Many Burney Society members will associate Charles's name with a notorious youthful escapade of his, when he was blamed for stealing some books from Cambridge University Library. In fact, this juvenile jaunt must be contextualised within the more complex, lifelong interactions existing between Charles and books. Indeed, Charles Burney jr. must be reappraised as one of the most important book collectors of the Romantic period, as testified by his unique collection of newspapers, books, pamphlets, and manuscripts, one of the most important archives in the British Library. This extraordinary compilation of documents is well known to scholars in its digitized form through Gale Primary Sources (accessible here <https://www.gale.com/intl/c/17th-and-18th-century-burney-newspapers-collection>). Although its being touted as helping "researchers trace the development of the journal as we now know it," Sophie recalled how this extraordinary archive faithfully reflects its owner's idiosyncratic tastes and the strategies of social advancement and cultural networking that the possession and lending of these materials conferred upon him. Crucially, such bibliomaniac practices are also reflected in Charles Burney jr.'s vast correspondence, to date uncatalogued and unpublished, involving the likes of Thomas Lawrence, William Godwin, Elizabeth Inchbald, Joseph Banks, and even the Prince of Wales.

The Burney Newspaper Collection represents a precious historical archive, of essential value to the historian, as further demonstrated in her talk by Cat Bussell, a Master's student at University College London, engaged in the History of Political Thought. In her talk, the last of this afternoon triptych, Cat focused on how the French Revolution was transmitted to the British public and the emerging figure of foreign correspondents. Cat examined whether French news was really reported directly from Paris or whether, as she wondered, "the recitation of foreign news was primarily [...] an exercise in copying imported gazettes in the French language?" Cat connected this question to the Burney Newspaper Collection, with a focus on the Paris reportage published in *St. James's Chronicle*. She concluded that how the Revolution would be understood and represented by contemporary commentators, including members of the Burney family and their circle of acquaintances, largely depended on the version(s) of history presented by the press.

The important questioning of the discourses of veridiction and verisimilitude in and around the Burney circle the three speakers engaged with opens up to much broader epistemological questions. Catherine, Sophie, and Cat demonstrated how many and how varied the avenues of research can still be in the field of Burney studies. In particular, the role of Charles Burney Jr, bibliophile and bibliomaniac, is yet to be fully understood. The scholarly edition of the Reverend's collection of letters planned by Sophie Coulombeau with the help of Dan Waterfield (Research Associate) will shed essential new light on Romantic material cultures and library practices, well beyond the immediate range of the Burney circle.

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