

Editor's Note

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SOPHIE COULOMBEAU

The three research articles contained in Volume 20 of the *The Burnley Journal* address, cumulatively, the editorial activity of James Burney, visual art and material objects relating to Alexandre d'Arblay, and the fiction of Frances Burney. Both the range of Burney subjects addressed and the range of disciplinary approaches showcased in these articles provide ample testament to the expanding and evolving nature of Burney studies. In addition, the volume contains a bibliography of Burney-related publications dating between 2022 and 2024, which suggests that Burney scholarship continues to thrive, in many formats, beyond the pages of this journal. The Volume also contains a new form of contribution: the longform book review. The choice of a trade book for review in this Volume enables a series of reflections on recent influential representations of Frances Burney's life and writing outside academia.

In "Grateful acknowledgements to Captain Burney': Poetry and History in Mary Russell Mitford's *Christina, the Maid of the South Seas*," Geoffrey Sill examines a literary-historical collaboration between Mary Russell Mitford and James Burney, published in 1811. Between them, Mitford and Burney drafted forty-seven notes of varying lengths which were appended to Mitford's four-canto poem in the published version. Sill's analysis of selected notes reveals the tensions between the sensibilities of the poet and the historian; raises questions about gender, generational, educational, and philosophical differences in the collaboration; and argues that such differences helped to shape the balance between romance

and history in the emerging literature of the South Pacific. His article encourages the reader to attend to forms of literary activity carried out by members of the Burney family who have not conventionally been understood as professional writers, especially where such activity enables us to bridge the gap between Burney writing and the Romantics.

In “General d’Arblay’s Mementoes of a Military Life,” Miriam Al Jamil examines several little-known material objects relating to General Alexandre d’Arblay, Frances Burney’s husband. Attempting to draw d’Arblay’s biography out from the prism of his wife’s writing, Al Jamil offers close readings of his portrait items of his military uniform displayed at Parham House in Sussex, and a panoramic map of Waterloo in his hand that is currently held in the National Portrait Gallery. The production and curation of these military mementoes, she argues, were originally intended by d’Arblay to fashion a legacy of his achievements, independent of his wife’s literary fame, for the benefit of his son, Alex. Al Jamil’s article encourages us to think about the extent to which our knowledge of Burney lives and writings tends to be mediated through Frances Burney’s own words and to consider what happens when we amplify other voices.

In “*Cecilia* and the Eighteenth-Century Breakfast,” Madeline Maya explores the tonal, structural and conceptual importance of the breakfast table scene within Frances Burney’s second novel, *Cecilia: or, Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782). Building on Sarah Moss’s work exploring ambivalent attitudes to food within Burney’s life writing, Maya shows that within Burney’s fiction the breakfast scene often operates as a site of discomfort, anxiety and entrapment. Moreover, she suggests, in dialogue with recent scholarship by Chloe Wigston Smith and Elizabeth

Porter exploring the structural significance of key scenes within *Cecilia*, that the breakfast scene acts as a “hinge” that opens the door on a new character, development, or section of the plot; a narrative signal that an important shift is about to take place. Maya’s parallel reading of breakfast scenes based at the Monkton and Delville homes offers some striking similarities, which invite us to consider how Burney offered her contemporary readers clues about character that depended on their understanding of diurnal structure and etiquette.

In the “Year in Burney Studies 2022-24” Deborah Barnum contributes a heroic three-year bibliography of monographs, articles, chapters, radio programs, theses, and dissertations published since 2021. Featuring 122 entries in total, the bibliography brings us fully up to date and continues the Journal’s valuable record of scholarly and creative activity relating to Frances Burney and her family. At a time when many institutional libraries (including my own) are facing budget reductions and making cuts to resources such as the MLA International Bibliography, and when many other search engines are presenting results skewed and corrupted by experiments in Artificial Intelligence, the “Year In Burney Studies” is a more valuable resource than ever.

The final contribution to this issue of the Burney Journal is my own longform book review of *Jane Austen’s Bookshelf: A Rare Book Collector’s Quest to Find the Women Writers Who Shaped a Legend*, by Rebecca Romney. In “Brushes With Burney” I take Romney’s book as a departure point to reflect on the importance of first encounters with Frances Burney and her writing, on Burney’s “value” within the rare book marketplace, and on the benefits of high-quality trade writing for Burney scholarship. The book review is a new format for the *Journal*:

I welcome suggestions for books to review in future years and encourage readers to put themselves forward as reviewers.

Since its inauguration in 1998, the Burney Journal has flourished under the successive General Editorships of Victoria Kortés-Papp, Marilyn Francus, Stewart Cooke, Hilary Havens, and Cassandra Ulph. It has been an enormous honor to take the editorial reins for this vigentennial volume, and a great pleasure to work alongside my Managing Editor Ashley Schoppe and Associate Editor Alicia Kerfoot to bring it to press. The editorial team is excited about the future of the Journal, especially now that it has a new online home via McGill University's Open Journal Systems platform (<https://theburneyjournal.library.mcgill.ca/>). For their invaluable guidance, assistance and support during the transition from the Burney Centre webpage, we would like to thank Svetlana Kochkina, Robin Desmeules, Jennifer Innes, Alexandra Kohn, Taylor Rousselle, and Hilary Havens.