‘Tres liez ensemble’: Sarah Harriet Burney and her Publishing Liaisons

Gillian Dow, University of Southampton

The business of books, in the Romantic Period in Britain, was a pan-European affair. A new kind of publisher began marketing fiction on both sides of the Channel. The resulting competition to publish novels – and series of ‘classic’, ‘popular’ and ‘modern’ works for eager readers – involved multiple agents. In this article, I look at Sarah Harriet Burney’s relationships with London-based publishers and booksellers the Robinsons, Henry Colburn, Dulau and Thomas Tegg. I argue that she is an author whose career should be read in the context of work on women writers’ understanding of themselves as ‘professionals’. In examining some intriguing passages from Sarah Harriet’s correspondence as well uncovering evidence provided by rare books, and publishers’ archival material, I reveal her talents as an accomplished networker, and as one who played a mediatory role for publishers on the make. Sarah Harriet is revealed, too, as an editor and translator of fiction, and as a writer who contributes to the extensive cross-Channel exchange in the post-Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods.

In 1975, in a study of translations of French sentimental prose fiction in the latter half of the eighteenth century, Josephine Grieder wrote that almost every woman writer in the period ‘tried her hand at translation, often as she was pursuing her own work independently, with the exception of Fanny Burney’ (40). More recent research on women writers before 1750, and after 1800, has demonstrated that they seem to have been just as engaged with translation activity. The cases of Aphra Behn, Elizabeths Carter, Montagu and Inchbald, and Helen Maria Williams are now reasonably well-known in this context. Nor is Frances Burney

an exception, as Grieder believed: Burney – like Maria Edgeworth – carried out a translation from the French that remained in manuscript.[1]

The entire extended Burney family seem to have been involved in Continental 'transactions', broadly defined. Simon Macdonald's 2013 article connecting Elizabeth Meeke to the Burney family (identifying her as the daughter of Elizabeth Allen, Charles Burney's second wife) sees Meeke as invested on both sides of the English Channel, through both her novel writing, and her extensive activities as a translator. Sarah Harriet Burney's activities can be usefully compared to Meeke's, her half-sister on her mother's side. In a letter written to her niece Charlotte (Francis) Barrett (1786-1870), the correspondent to whom the bulk of Sarah Harriet's extant letters are addressed (and to whom I shall return later in this essay), she writes:

> It was a real and a rich regale to me to hear that sweet Madame de Beaurepaire gained ground in all your good graces. I quite love her. A little friend of hers, who is now in town, Madame Herbster, whom she always calls la petite follette, and I are tres liez ensemble. I am never happy without some dear little French liaison. A few nights ago, at Wolfl's Concert, I had a party of amis François about me, consisting of seven Gallic individuals. The more the merrier, say I. (Clark *Letters* 71)

This is not the only one of her surviving letters to attest to Sarah Harriet's appreciation of the French nationals she met and befriended in London and elsewhere. Indeed the entire Burney family seem to have been engaged in making continental connections and cultivating networks abroad. Her father Charles Burney was, famously, a continental agent for the Pantheon, recruiting singers from France and Italy, and Thomas Irvine has recently argued that his long and extensive engagement with China and Chinese music started in Paris in 1770-71, via the Suard circle (Irvine). Her half-sister Susanna's relationships with foreign musicians in London are evident from her correspondence. Sarah Harriet herself was

predisposed to a lifetime of devotion to French literature. This made her an extremely useful mediator for the various publishers she worked with.

'I might, in such a case, assist you': Reading, Editing, and Rethinking 'Feminine' Pursuits

It was typical for young English women of Sarah Harriet's class to have some instruction in the French language. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, anxieties about frivolous accomplishments in both schools and in particular the domestic education for girls dominate in women writers' depiction of the education of young women. Edgeworth's short story 'Mademoiselle Panache' (published in *The Parent's Assistant,* 1796) and many of the novels published by women in this period demonstrate anxieties around a superficial learning of the French language – and the dangers of reading French – neatly. This, however, may have led to a false sense of the inferiority of a women's education in the period, and, in particular, to a misunderstanding of the opportunities that a solid knowledge of French might provide women. As Christina de Bellaigue has pointed out, many early nineteenth-century British girls schools emphasised instruction in French, and although teaching may not to have been uniformly excellent, to dismiss the study of French as mere accomplishment, is to 'fail to recognise the care with which it was often taught' (175). For the largely self-taught, in terms of knowledge of French and extensive reading of the memoirs, history and literature published in the language, looking at the lives and works of many of Sarah Harriet's contemporaries demonstrates that their education provided them with true instruction.

Sarah Harriet's own knowledge of the French language certainly ran much deeper than a superficial accomplishment. Her formal education seems to have commenced in earnest in 1781, when she was nine years old and was sent abroad, to Vevey, Switzerland, under the care of a Marie-Anne-Louise Cuénod.[2] Lorna J. Clark calls this time in Switzerland a 'formative experience' for Sarah Harriet, while pointing out that Frances Burney's

comments on her sister having spent ‘so much of her time abroad that she forgot her English, and has not yet recovered it sufficiently’ was ‘surely hyperbole’ (Clark *Letters* xxxiv). Frances may indeed have been exaggerating Sarah Harriet’s fluency in French for reasons of her own, although it would not be uncommon for a child to adopt the language of the country they lived in with ease. In terms of modern theories of language acquisition, learning a second language by total immersion before age ten is felt to be crucial to near-native fluency or true bilingualism. Sarah Harriet remained firmly attached to both the French language, and to Francophone literature and culture, throughout her life. She was the Burney daughter who remained largely at home with her parents: her father valued Sarah Harriet as his amanuensis, not least because she had the capacity to read and write French as well as English.

While many women writers had plentiful access to French works – in the original, or in translation – via circulating or subscription libraries, Sarah Harriet owned some French books herself: Charles Burney left a bookcase full to be shared between his youngest daughter and his granddaughter Frances Raper, although he left out the works of Voltaire, which he felt were unsuitable for the woman reader. Throughout her correspondence, Sarah Harriet demonstrates an excellent knowledge of classics of French literature, both fiction, and historical memoirs, gained through what appears to have been a concerted and ambitious programme of reading. Where some of these works seem to have been standard fare, appearing in subscription and circulating library catalogues, as well as in private collections, there is no way of knowing if British readers actually read them. In Sarah Harriet’s case, however, she certainly did. Her letters contain a great deal of direct references to her reading, and allusions to a wide variety of French texts, from seventeenth-century classics like La Fontaine’s *Fables*, to the more recent Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian’s *Gonzalve de Cordue, ou Grenade reconquise* (1791), translated into English in 1793. Knowledge of the French Court of the seventeenth century clearly comes directly from her attentive reading of French

histories, letters and memoirs. She has an in-depth knowledge of Madame de Sévigné's correspondence with her daughter Madame de Grignan: she reads the whole nine volumes thoroughly through at least twice in her life. Indeed, French memoirs and what we would now call life-writing more generally seem to have been something of a favourite with Sarah Harriet. She reads Madame de Maintenon's memoirs in French in late 1792, and professes them 'very entertaining' (Clark *Letters* 8). Writing from Chelsea College on 1 August 1811, she says that since she has 'read a good many French Memoirs of that time' she enjoys 'the court details, and the scandal and gossip as much as Mde de Grignan could' (Clark *Letters* 132). In January 1812, she expresses an intention to read 'Dirty Deffand' (Clark *Letters* 149) – that is, the infamous French salonnière Marie Anne de Vichy-Chamrond (1697-1780) – whose letters she knows only from their reviews: she is presumably referring to Mary Berry's edition of the *Letters of the Marquise du Deffand to the Hon. Horace Walpole*, first published in 1810, and widely reviewed in journals and periodicals on publication, although she may also have been aware of Elizabeth Meeke's translation. She read, in 1833, Thiers's history of the French Revolution (1823-27), and the memoirs of l'Abbe Morellet (1821), focusing on the French Revolution and the eighteenth century more generally: she finds them 'very entertaining' (Clark *Letters* 383). Sarah Harriet read, too, the 'very naughty, but very amusing' memoirs of Madame du Barry's life and times at the court of Louis XV's mistress (Clark *Letters* 383). Two years later, in 1835, she is reading Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourienne on Napoleon, although in English, not in the original French. She describes the book as catching fast hold of her, and her sorrow when it was over, and although one senses she would rather have read it in French she remarks that 'the translation is not very bad' (Clark *Letters* 403). Since she has not seen Bourienne's original French, she must, here, be commenting rather on the fluency of the English. She makes no comment, on the other hand, on the quality of the translation of Genlis's memoirs, which she notes she has read in

November 1825. Rather, she reflects more generally on the content: 'What paltry stuff the Memoirs of poor vain Genlis are' (Clark *Letters* 263). It is possible that Sarah Harriet was reading – or had read – the original French, which seems always to have been her preference, where it could be managed. And it is also possible that she was reading as a favour to the publisher who was about to publish the English translation of Genlis's memoirs. That publisher was Henry Colburn: Sarah Harriet's own publisher, and the publisher of several of Genlis's novels of the 1800s. Sarah Harriet's few extant letters to Colburn on matters literary are revealing of the business of books in the early nineteenth century, and suggestive of significantly more involvement by her in matters of selecting and evaluating foreign texts than has hitherto been recognised.

Sarah Harriet had published *Clarentine. A Novel* (1796) and *Geraldine Fauconberg* (1808) with G.G. and J. Robinson and G. Wilkie and J. Robinson respectively. The Robinsons were publishers with an established reputation in Romantic-period literary London. George Robinson senior (1736-1801) was, as Jennie Batchelor has pointed out, a leading figure amongst the booksellers of Paternoster Row when he took up the *Lady's Magazine* in the early 1770s: he was known both for his 'enduring friendships with many of the leading writers of the day', and his 'financial generosity' (Batchelor, 46). But Sarah Harriet seems to have found the next generation, that is J. Robinson, remiss in promoting her second novel. She refers somewhat tongue in cheek in a letter to Charles Burney junior to 'worthy friends … the dear Messrs Robinsons' and wondering if she 'might take the liberty of requesting them to begin advertising' (Clark *Letters* 93). Sarah Harriet needed a publisher who was hungrier for both her name and her productivity, a publisher who would actively promote her work. She found such a publisher in Henry Colburn, moving to him for the second edition of *Geraldine Fauconberg* and for her five-volume *Traits of Nature*, both published in 1812. She was to go on to publish her final major works with Colburn: *Tales of*

Fancy appeared between 1816 and 1820, and *The Romance of Private Life* in 1839. This, then, was a relationship that was to span several decades, and it was one that, as Lorna J. Clark has pointed out, depended at first on Colburn's ability to reveal authorial identity on the title page of her publications. Sarah Harriet was to be advertised as a *real* Burney, and not an inferior Burney, such as the unrelated Caroline Burney, the author of *Seraphina: or, a Winter in Town* (1809) (Clark "Literary Legacy" 115-6). For Colburn, this was entirely typical: he traded – and built his reputation – on 'names': having a member of the Burney family on his list was a one more feather in his cap.

John Sutherland has noted that Henry Colburn was the 'ubiquitous publishing rogue' of the early nineteenth century (89). If he was indeed a rogue, he was to become a very fashionable one. He seems to have started out as an assistant to William Earle, a bookseller on Albemarle Street, before becoming assistant to Morgan, the principal of a large circulating library in Conduit Street, where, H. Curwen tells us, he had 'ample opportunity of gauging the reading taste of the general public' (279). In 1816, he took ownership of Morgan's, and managed the business with great success, before moving to new premises in New Burlington Street. James Raven tells us that these premises signified a new and fashionable bookshop-rendezvous, pointing out that in the 1820s, Colburn was responsible for as much as 12.6 per cent of new fiction imprints, challenging the dominance of Lane's Minerva Press (298).[3] His bookshop included a circulating library, and it was Colburn's aggressive marketing strategy that standardised the new form of fiction: three volumes, post-octavo, for the price of 31s. 6d (K. Sutherland 679). Colburn was also largely responsible for the vogue of the silver-fork novel in the 1820s, promoting these novels as 'aristocratic *romans à clef* written by authors who were themselves members of fashionable society', as Edward Copeland has observed (434). And he speculated on at least six periodicals, including the *New Monthly Magazine*, which I discuss below (Mumby 261).

Michael Sadleir's 1951 description of Henry Colburn is worth quoting at length:

> [He was] a small, bustling bundle of energy, with needle-sharp business acumen and no scruples whatsoever. The first of the gambling publishers, he regarded every author as having his price and the public as gullible fools. He cared nothing about book-design, nothing about craftmanship. Cheapest was best, so long as the leaves held together… He had no literary taste of his own, merely an instinctive sense of the taste of the moment… Impervious to snubs; cheerful under vilification, so long as insults meant more business; thinking in hundreds where others thought in tens, Colburn revolutionised publishing in its every aspect. He would invent a book which he thought likely to be popular, choose his author and offer a sudden dazzling fee for the copyright. His servility was as calculated as his generosity. … He developed advertising, both direct and indirect, to a degree hitherto undreamt of. He had his diners-out who talked up his books at dinner-tables and soirées; he debauched the critics and put them on his pay-sheet. Altogether a brilliant, disturbing, meanly admirable little man, who died in 1855 leaving £35,000 and, perhaps, four copyrights of lasting value. He was a book-manufacturer, not a publisher; and his kind are with us to this day. (113)

Not so much damning with faint praise, here, as downright damning. One picks up a disdain for the popular and the fashionable, as well as a sense that Colburn's attention to matters financial was not quite gentlemanly. Sadleir's account of the 'perhaps four copyrights of lasting value' published by Colburn deserves some comment, not least for its mid-twentieth-century gender bias. Colburn published Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of Female Philosophers* (1808), and Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon* (1816). He gave Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) £1000 for *France* (1817), and paid all her expenses, reminding her that 'no other publisher took one-tenth the pains with advertising than he did', and he went on to

publish *Italy* in 1818 (Gettman, 17). He published Frances Gore and Frances Trollope, and he tried – although he ultimately failed – to publish Harriet Martineau's *Society in America* (1837). He published Sarah Harriet Burney. And, as Lorna J. Clark points out, he was approached by Charlotte Barrett after Frances Burney's death, helping her to 'select and edit the 'killing mass' of manuscripts left behind' and publishing 'the first multivolume edition of journals and letters, 1842-47' (Clark "Two Burneys" 7). In short, Henry Colburn was responsible for publishing, promoting, and establishing the posthumous legacy of the women writers of the first decades of the nineteenth century rediscovered by the feminist recovery project, whose works are now certainly considered as of lasting value.

Colburn's publications had another emphasis. Volume III of his edition of Sydney Owenson's *O'Donnel* (1814) gives his full developing list, and it contains a great many works both printed and published in French in London. These included works by Pigault le Brun, and, notably, several key French women writers active in the period: Germaine de Staël, Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, Sophie Cottin (to whom I shall return later in this essay), and Isabelle de Montolieu. The year 1814 saw a temporary peace in the Napoleonic wars: Napoleon was defeated at Leipzig, and Frances Burney returned to France herself after the signing of the Treaty of Paris in May of that year. Colburn clearly stood ready to mobilise his continental networks at this moment of reopening of communications.

Little is known about Colburn's background and early years. In the most recent reappraisal of him, *Rogue Publisher: The* 'Prince of Puffers' *The Life and Works of the Publisher Henry Colburn* (2018), John Sutherland and Veronica Melnyk quote an unpublished theory from Michael Sadleir's papers:

> My guess is that he was the illegitimate son of an Englishman by a French mother, that his name was fictitious, and that he grew up in France. This is admittedly pure

> conjecture. But the mystery of Colburn's origin is so marked that there must have been something to hide. His French affiliations, his familiarity with the French language and his knowledge of Paris indicate that he lived in France for some years, and these can only have been the years of boyhood and adolescence, for once in evidence in London he remained there. If he were a love-child, he would naturally have been cared for by his mother or her relatives, and, assuming that he was born early in the 1780s and came to England in his late 'teens, the change of residence may well have been connected with an émigré flight from the Revolution. This suggests on his mother's side an aristocratic or at any rate an anti-Jacobin origin – a theory supported by his later activity in publishing Bonapartist literature. It may be added that the suddenness with which he set up as a publisher implies that funds were available, and these would most likely have been supplied by an English father of rank or of substance.

Sutherland and Melnyk add that this may have been 'pure conjecture', while pointing out that 'his theory manages to knit together seamlessly all the known facts without resorting to wholly improbable explanations'. They conclude that Sadleir's version of Colburn's personal history is 'the leading contender to be the accepted version' (17-18). I concur. These exact French connections may well have been what drew Sarah Harriet and Colburn to each other.

Despite Sarah Harriet's initial reservations about the publicity of the Burney brand, the relationship with this second publisher flourished. Colburn provided Sarah Harriet with books from his 'English and Foreign Subscription Library', although the terms of these loans – either free of charge, since she was an author on his list, or by subscription – is unclear (Clark *Letters* 185n). What is certain is that it was Colburn who lent Sarah Harriet copies of Edgeworth's *Patronage* in 1814 (Edgeworth was an author she thought 'the pride of English female writers'). Colburn was not Edgeworth's publisher, but he seems to have been very

happy to provide Sarah Harriet with 'French or English novelties' printed for both himself, and for other publishers.

In 1821, Sarah Harriet writes of leading 'a very secluded life with a sick friend near Parson's Green', and the works she asks Colburn to send her point to a concerted attempt at mental escape: among them, Sydney Owenson's *Italy*, Charlotte Ann Waldie's *Rome in the Nineteenth century*, Maria Graham's *Three Months Passed in the Mountains East of Rome,* Anna Bray's *Letters Written during a Tour through Normandy, Brittany and other Parts of France in 1818*. Sarah Harriet's expatriate period in Italy between 1829 and 1833 was clearly some time in the preparation. She may well have been most grateful to Colburn for sending her the works of Jane Austen: Austen was the author she 'quite, & always did, prefer', *Pride and Prejudice* her 'prime favourite of all modern novels', and one she could 'quite rave' over, and in 1816, Austen's *Emma* 'forced from me a smile, and afforded me much amusement', despite 'langour and depression'.[4] All the books Colburn sent to Sarah Harriet were clearly of great solace and value to her, and she is effusive in her gratitude.

The correspondence between Sarah Harriet and Colburn is, alas, one sided, and, we must assume, incomplete even from her side.[5] Her earliest extant letter to him, however, proves the most suggestive in terms of the extent of their relationship. This letter, written January 24, 1814, begins with a mock-apology for keeping Miss Edgeworth's *Patronage* for quite some length of time, although this is no 'common novel' to be 'skimmed over'. She moves, then, to express her interest in Colburn's 'New Magazine' (Clark *Letters* 179). The first issue of this new venture was to be published just a few days after Sarah Harriet's letter, on the 1 February 1814, as the *New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register*. Established to rival Sir Richard Philips's radical *Monthly*, this was to become a highly successful periodical, running until 1884, and with a distinguished list of contributors, including Disraeli, Catherine Gore, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Mary Shelley, Sydney Owenson, Mary Russell

Mitford, and, on the other side of the Channel, Stendhal. The magazine also served the purpose of allowing Colburn to keep a 'stable' of writers 'warm – and available for his publishing ventures', as Sutherland and Melnyk have pointed out (38).

Sarah Harriet is one of a great many writers that Colburn kept in his 'stable'. She announces in her letter that she intends to keep Colburn's 'plans' for the *New Monthly Magazine* to distribute to interested parties: they 'hold forth the most desirable promises of impartiality combined with amusement and instruction'. As far as contributing original material is concerned, she claims she can 'never scribble but with the aim of gradually developing the intricacies of some long-winded story'. As Sarah Harriet describes herself here, the full-length novel, not the essay, nor the tale, is her forte. But she does have one suggestion for Colburn:

> I have often felt an earnest impulse, after reading a new work, to sit down and analyse or Review it. For my own use, this, indeed, has been a practice I have observed for many years. If, in that branch of the business I could ever be of any use to you, I shall be happy to do my best. Do you ever mean to deal in Reviews of foreign books, French or Italian, before they appear as translations? I might, in such a case, assist you – And, I fear, that is all I can venture to undertake. (Clark *Letters* 179)

In her letter to Colburn, Sarah Harriet indicates her area of expertise: as a modern linguist, who could provide reviews of foreign literature in either French or Italian. She is aware that – with Colburn's interest in the literature of continental Europe – it is likely that he would indeed wish to publish reviews of French and Italian publications. It is unclear whether she acted as a reviewer for Colburn, or as an unofficial sounding-board for potential translation and publication projects. The practice was far from unknown in the period – Maria Graham played a similar role for John Murray II, as her correspondence in the Murray archive at the National Library of Scotland attests. Extensive tangible evidence of this aspect of the

business of books is hard to come by. There are, however, tantalising suggestions throughout Sarah Harriet's correspondence, and indeed through circumstantial evidence, that – in matters of translation activity – she played a mediatory role for other London-based publishers. There is evidence, too, that she helped the younger generation of Burney women get published themselves.

"Fanny and I drove with your MS to Dulau's": The Business of Publishing an English Translation

A letter to her niece Charlotte Barrett, dated 6 January 1810, gives a detailed account of a visit Sarah Harriet made to bookseller Dulau, in Soho Square (Clark *Letters* 110-111).[6] A. Dulau and partners had set up their business in the mid-1790s, and specialised almost exclusively in foreign-language publications. Jenny Mander has suggested that the business aimed at 'the native-speaking French population in London, recently augmented by a new wave of Revolutionary exiles', but there was clearly a market well into the nineteenth century that did not depend on immigration, that is, a domestic market of readers whose mother tongue was English (597). Although the Dulau archive is not complete, the 'Letters and Papers of Dulau and Co' in the Bodleian library give an insight into the workings of the library in the period from 1815 to 1823.[7] Examining them suggests that as well as servicing native-speaking French readers, Dulau was explicitly targeting the accomplished – and aspirational – British woman with foreign-language reading material. The accounts reveal that Dulau was receiving huge volumes of French material from publishers in Paris, Lyon and St Germain des Près.

There is some circumstantial evidence that another woman writer – and her family – may have shopped at Dulau. In late November 1814, Jane Austen was in London, staying with brother Henry at 23 Hans Place. Among other activities she visited her publisher

Egerton in Whitehall to discuss a second edition of Mansfield Park, and to Keppel Street to see her brother Charles. Both locations were within easy walking distance of Dulau's premises on Soho Square. There is no concrete proof that Austen visited the shop. In January 1815, however, Cassandra Austen gifted her goddaughter Cassandra, an 1813 edition three-volume set of Genlis's *Théatre à l'usage des jeunes personnes*. Genlis was something of a specialism of Dulau: a receipt to one of her French publishers, Maradan, dated 8 September 1819 acknowledges receipt of a large quantity of Genlis's publications, from copies of her educational treaty *Adèle et Théodore* (first published 1782) to her historical novels *Les Petits Émigres* (1798), *La Duchesse de la Valliere* (1802) and *La Siège de la Rochelle* (1816), and her works for children, *Les Veillées du Chateau* (1782/83) and *Le Théatre de l'Education* (1779) (Dulau 36). Nor did Dulau eschew the more rarefied works: undated documents from the Dulau papers show that, at various times, Dulau stocked a bilingual French/Spanish edition of Fénelon's *Télémaque* – another work considered suitable for young readers – and an edition of 'Lesage, Gil Blas, trad. en Portug. par Fernandez 1808, Londres', that is, a Portuguese translation of the popular French novel published between 1715 and 1735 (Dulau 147). Where better for a loving aunt to select a suitable foreign work for her niece?

Sarah Harriet's visit to Dulau's premises – accompanied by *her* niece Fanny Raper, her half-sister Susan (Philips)'s daughter – adds to the evidence that Dulau had a more general reputation among women writers and readers for expertise in the market for translations. The translation that took Sarah Harriet to Dulau was one that Charlotte Barrett herself had undertaken – of a writer referred to as 'Feijoo', identified by Sarah Harriet as Spanish (Clark *Letters* 107). This can only be the Benedictine monk Benito Jeronimo Feijoo (1676-1764), the author of several multi-volume collections of essays that were popular Europe-wide throughout the eighteenth century. Sarah Harriet tries to persuade Dulau to publish this manuscript, but 'he positively declined having any concern in the publication of

an English translation' (Clark *Letters* 111). A true sense of the close and collaborative publishing network is suggested by Sarah Harriet's account of the unsuccessful transaction. Dulau recommends that the women approach Hatchard's in Piccadilly, 'authorized us to say we were sent and recommended by him', promising that if Hatchard accepted and published the translation, he would take twelve copies, and 'befriend its sale to the utmost of his power', and, if Hatchard declined, to send the manuscript back to him and 'he would consider some method of becoming serviceable to us'. Sarah Harriet relates the encounter to her niece:

> Believe us, my Charlotte, we were not slack in our endeavours – But beastly fashion determines or influences everything; and since the Spanish Patriots have all turned out fools, knaves, or cowards, Spanish is gone considerably out of fashion, & therefore the sale of books in that language is become precarious. I read your MS with great and sincere admiration of its excellent style, which runs on as flowingly, & with as much spirit as an original work. Ah, would you had trusted to your abilities, & composed an original production, warm from the brain! (Clark *Letters* 111)

There is much to intrigue in this passage, and a great deal to unpick. Certainly, 'beastly fashion' in the early nineteenth century did indeed mean that very little Spanish material was being translated for British readers. The French romance had overtaken the popularity of the Spanish picaresque in Britain by the 1750s, despite the early popularity of Garcia Ordonez de Montalvo's *Amadis de Gaula* (c. 1508).[8] Cervantes's *Don Quijote*, of course, remained a popular work throughout the eighteenth century, with Smollett's 1755 translation running to nineteen editions by 1799, and original works like Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) assuming a detailed knowledge of the plot and themes (Chilton 106). Other Spanish-authored works – fiction and non-fiction – were neglected, even where 'Spanish' themed-work – such as LeSage's *Gil Blas* – remained popular. Indeed, document 147 in the Letters and Papers of Dulau and Co. is an undated 'Note de Livres à Vendre ou échanger', which

includes Bartoleme de Las Casas *Brevisima Relacion de la Destruccion de las Indias* (1542), and other works of history published in Madrid in the early years of the nineteenth century (Dulau 147). Sarah Harriet gives this neglect of Spanish works a political slant – one of very few similar references in her letters. She is clearly alluding to the Peninsula war, still ongoing, and perhaps even to the death of Sir John Moore in the battle of Corunna, which had happened the previous January. Her comments on Charlotte Barrett's translation are revealing, too, of prevailing views of what translation should be in the period, as we have seen. Since Charlotte Barrett has achieved an 'excellent style', Sarah Harriet wishes she had applied herself to an 'original production'. The superiority of the 'original' over the 'version' is evident here.

In the absence of evidence outside of Sarah Harriet's letter, it is impossible to determine which of Feijoo's essays Charlotte Barrett had translated. One last reference, however, gives a tantalising hint. Sarah Harriet has been advised, by publisher Dulau, of the necessity of changing the title: she has been told that 'as it now stands, it might lead to bold misconstructions'. What could this essay's controversial title have been? And why might it have led to 'bold misconstructions'? Feijoo was, after all, an extremely popular writer throughout Spain and indeed beyond in the eighteenth century: Mónica Bolufer sees him as an 'energetic advocate of Enlightenment principles' (725-7) who admired all writers who defended gender equality. His most important works were two collections of essays: *Critical Theatre of Common Errors and Prejudices (Teatro Critico de Errores Comunes*, 1726-39*)* and *Erudite Letters (Cartas Eruditas* 1742-60*)*. These two works saw, respectively, twenty and eleven full or partial editions between 1725 and 1787, and dozens of reprints, and there were translations into French, Italian, Portuguese, German and English. One of the most popular of Feijoo's essays was his *Defence of Women* (the sixteenth essay in his *Critical Theatre*). Feijoo's essay was steeped in the Spanish and European tradition of the *Querelle*

des femmes. In his *Defence*, he presents a line-up of learned woman across Europe to demonstrate that only education and training were responsible for the difference between the sexes. In 1810, when Sarah Harriet visited Dulau – nineteen years after Olympe de Gouges's *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne*, eighteen years after Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* – a very different rhetoric surrounded the Rights, Defences, and Declarations of women. Clearly, the publishing climate for many was not the same as it had been when Feijoo's work was first written. As an astute publisher with an eye to the market and to what would sell, Dulau clearly felt that a translator should rethink how she translated Feijoo's title, and how she positioned her work as a result.

The trail on this translation goes cold, as far as further correspondence between Sarah Harriet and Charlotte Barrett is concerned. There is, however, more evidence about what may have happened next. In November 1810, the *Lady's Magazine* – published by the Robinsons who published Sarah Harriet's first three novels – started a new serialisation. *A Defence of Women: Written A.D. 1726. Translated from the Spanish of Geronymo Feijoo* was to run until August 1811. The very title – a direct translation – provides a rebuke to Dulau's concerns that such work was no longer fashionable. Indeed, it was exactly the kind of agenda-setting contribution for which the *Lady's Magazine* was justifiably celebrated. Jennie Batchelor has pointed out that this serialisation 'was an important contribution to the magazine's ongoing debate about women's education that eloquently challenged philosophical, medical and cultural myths of sex and gender through its careful elaboration of the intellectual, political and artistic achievement of a catalogue of European women' (234).[9] Batchelor goes on to argue convincingly that this very translation of Feijoo's work may well have been a source text for Austen's *Persuasion*. The parallels are plain to see: the *Lady's Magazine* Feijoo reads '*Men* were the writers of these book in which the understanding of women is stigmatised as inferior to ours. If *women* had penned them, we [men] ourselves,

might have been brought low' (Batchelor, 235). The translator's name was given as Elenir Irwin, although that seems to have been a pseudonym – typical for how the *Lady's Magazine* presented its authors, many of whom were unpaid. More importantly, for my purposes here, was whether it was a pseudonym for Charlotte Barrett, if, as it were, the pen was in *her* hand. It is entirely possible that Sarah Harriet had approached the Robinsons (still her publishers in 1810) to publish her niece's translation *gratis*, after revenue-making avenues had been exhausted. If so, it would mean that this English translation of Feijoo would show yet another Burney family member – Charlotte herself – engaging directly with the vibrant European print culture of the period. She would be doing so with the assistance of a family network of women who were as occupied with the polemic nature of the subject matter as she was, and just as determined to see the work published. And Charlotte may – through her translation – have influenced Jane Austen, creating yet another link between Austen and the extended Burney clan. We could, as a result, add 'published translator' to the list of literary activities that Charlotte Barrett – who became Frances Burney's literary executor, and editor of the *Diary and Letters* (1842) on the latter's death in 1840.

In an article on Charlotte Barrett which focuses on her as editor of Frances Burney, Catherine Delafield encourages us to think about the former's work as editor, and to unveil her 'hidden life among the footnotes' (38). Charlotte Barrett's earlier work as a translator from the Spanish – unconnected to her aunt – was clearly another form of literary labour that deserves consideration as part of the extensive networking active with which the entire family was involved. 'Editing' work in this period was, in any case, much more broadly conceived than simply preparing a text for publication, a topic to which I now turn in relation to Sarah Harriet, and yet in relation to yet another publisher.

'Edited by Miss Burney': Thomas Tegg's *Miniature Novelist's Magazine*

Sarah Harriet Burney's involvement with London-based publishers in this opening decade of the nineteenth century extends beyond an offer to help Colburn with reviews of foreign fiction, a meeting with Dulau on behalf of her niece, or indeed acting as her niece's agent with Robinson and the *Lady's Magazine*. We find Sarah Harriet's name appearing in relation to another publisher on the make several months before her discussions with Dulau about the translation of Feijoo's essay. This publisher was Thomas Tegg.

Thomas Tegg is a somewhat obscure player in the London book trade. He gets a footnote in several studies of Romantic-period publishing as the 'best known of the nineteenth-century remainder men'. A 'remainder man' bought up publishers' unsold books, and he sold them on cheaply. In Tegg's case, he profited greatly from the 1826 panic that saw Archibald Constable go bankrupt by buying up Scott's novels for 4.d each (Gettmann 149). Writing of Tegg's career, Michael Sadleir identifies him as a 'professional scavenger' by the 1840s, before pointing out that he 'had not personally realised that he was yapping at the heels of embarrassed publishers so early as the twenties' (94). In fact, the yapping started much earlier, when Tegg attempted to capitalise on the new market for curated 'series' of novels.

Tegg's Miniature Novelist's Magazine; or, Cabinet Library of Select Novels by The Most Celebrated English Authors; Including also Translations from Foreign Writers was advertised in late 1809.[10] The selection was advertised as being 'edited by Miss Burney'. By 1809, when Frances Burney had been married to d'Arblay for sixteen years, and was, in any case, living in France, this can only have been Sarah Harriet (although there is at least one case of Frances Burney's involvement being recorded in a library catalogue).[11] Adverts for Thomas Tegg's series claimed it would be printed 'in a superior stile of Elegance and Correctness', and that the novels would be 'copied from the Original Editions, entered at Stationers' Hall'. Exactly what Sarah Harriet Burney's 'editing' consisted of in this context is

unclear. But the selection of authors itself was presumably at least in part her own, and, as such, is revealing of the interest in continental fiction I have already discussed. Thirty novelists in total are listed as 'of the most distinguished abilities', and by surname alone. They include twenty-two writers who published in English: Frances Brooke and Frances Burney, Cumberland, Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Oliver Goldsmith, Hawkesworth, Elizabeth Helme, Thomas Holcroft, Samuel Johnson, Matthew Lewis, Henry McKenzie, Moore, Eliza Parsons, Samuel Richardson, Clara Reeve, Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Smith, Tobias Smollet, Lawrence Sterne, Jonathan Swift and Sheridan. One Spaniard (Cervantes) and one German (Kotzebue) sit alongside six French and Franco-Swiss authors: Sophie Cottin, Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, Le Sage, Marmontel, Isabelle de Montolieu, and Bernardin de Saint Pierre. These continental writers represented a significant proportion of the total list, and all were already known in Britain. In its scope and range, Tegg's *Miniature Novelist's Magazine* shared something with the better-known *Novelist's Magazine*, published for James Harrison from 1779, a publication that shaped the canon of the English novel in the closing decades of the eighteenth century (Taylor; Kelly) But where Harrison's series included seventeenth and early eighteenth-century authors (such as Eliza Haywood, Voltaire, François Fénelon, Jonathan Swift and Françoise de Graffigny), Thomas Tegg and 'Miss Burney's' selection included a significant number of very contemporary authors, several of whom were still alive. William St Clair claims that Tegg specialised in what St Clair calls 'the old canon', a statement that simply does not hold up when one looks at the *Miniature Novelist's Magazine*. In the case of Tegg and Miss Burney's selection of French fiction, these were works first published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. And in the case of the women writers Cottin, Genlis, and Montolieu, their place in the canon was by no means assured, in either France or in Britain (St Clair 530).

It is extremely difficult to give a full account of Thomas Tegg's series. Very little is known about it, beyond the 'Advertisement', and very few copies of the novels themselves survive, to the extent that it is impossible to know exactly how many of the suggested authors advertised made it into print. An article published in 2000, 'Reassessing the Reputation of Thomas Tegg, London Publisher, 1776-1846', does not mention the series at all (Barnes and Barnes). In volume two of their bibliography focusing on the novel from 1800-1829, only ten works are noted by Garside, Raven and Schöwerling as being published by Thomas Tegg, and not one of them belongs to *Tegg's Miniature Novelist's Magazine* or represents the titles that were advertised. This is in part due to the editorial decision to include only the *first* English translations in the period of novels published elsewhere in Europe, a decision which is understandable on the grounds of containing an already vast bibliographical project (Garside, Raven and Schöwerling, 3-4). The decision has the unintended consequence of significantly underplaying the importance of new translations for publishers and authors alike in this period: hyper-translated novels are, at the very least, markers of a publication's contemporary popularity. One must resort, therefore, to trawling through library catalogues – the bibliographer's main recourse to finding works long considered unimportant. Doing so identifies that some of the novels in the *Miniature Novelist's Magazine* were indeed printed, and they can subsequently be consulted. They are worth considering, if only for what they might tell us about Sarah Harriet's role in their publication.

William St Clair describes Thomas Tegg as one of a group of publishers and booksellers who were 'known for their ostentatious lifestyle, which contrasted sharply with that of most of their authors, but which helped to maintain the illusion that they were credit-worthy' (171). By 1841, the illusion no longer needed to be maintained: he was said, in that year, to be the richest bookseller in England (Grant 1:29). The financial contrast between Tegg and Sarah Harriet herself must have been less stark in 1809/10 when his *Miniature*

Novelist's Magazine series was conceived and his reputation – and fortune – were still to be made. In fact, Tegg is an interesting example of a new type of London publisher in the Romantic period: towards the end of his life, in 1838, he claimed that he had 'published more books, and sold them at a cheaper rate, than any bookseller in Britain', and his obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* concurred, writing that 'his transactions were as large, perhaps, as those of any single bookseller'(Barnes and Barnes 45). Tegg came to specialise in reprints of standard texts, and in remainders, that is, books that were no longer selling for other booksellers and publishers, and that he would buy in bulk for a significantly reduced cost per volume. He published, for example, the remaining volumes of John Murray's *Family Library* in 1834. Throughout his career, Tegg's versatility, his ability to identify new opportunities in the sometimes difficult market of the opening decades of the 1800s, and his cordial relationship with leading figures in the publishing market such as John Murray and Richard Bentley, meant that where other publishers suffered from the lean years provoked by the slump of 1826, he himself prospered (Raven, 295). Throughout his time in the business, Tegg seems to have published little *original* fiction – making something of an exception for the work of Mary Botham Howitt (1799-1888), whose 1840s novels for both children and adults he published in the 1840s. On the matter of original translations, however, he seems to have been willing to speculate – or rather, he was willing to in 1809.

A new translation of Bernardin de St Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788) was published by Thomas Tegg, in 1809, with 'edited by Miss Burney' on the title page. This is not a reprint of D. Malthus's 1789 translation *Paul and Mary* – a translation Sarah Harriet read, since she mentions it in a letter to Mary Young, dated December 1792 (Clark *Letters* 3). Nor is it Helen Maria Williams's tremendously popular 1795 translation *Paul and Virginia*. From my investigations, it is an entirely new translation, although there is no preface, nor are there notes to allow us to identify a translator. There is no direct proof – other than the existence of

this rare edition – that Sarah Harriet translated Bernardin de St Pierre's novel.[12] *Paul et Virginie* was, however, an important novel in the period: in his 1789 preface to the new edition in French, Saint-Pierre himself drew attention to the success of his work in England, and in particular with women readers (Cook 115-123). It's entirely possible that Sarah Harriet – a reader with a clear attraction to the French language and to the sentimental fiction of the period – felt that she could improve on the previous translations. *Paul et Virginie* was a foundational text for a great many other British women writers, not least Maria Edgeworth, who makes great use of it in one of her earliest novels, *Belinda* (1802) (Kirkley,110-117).

There is also direct evidence from Sarah Harriet's journals that she read another French work that was to be translated for Tegg's series very shortly after its publication in French: Sophie Cottin's *Elisabeth, ou Les Exiles de Siberie* (1806). A letter from Sarah Harriet to Charlotte Francis dated 20 November 1806 sees her referring to the novel as 'a little French story'. Sarah Harriet notes that Cottin's work has been 'much admired and praised', but that she has taken it into her head that 'it is too good' for her palate, since 'Mrs W—the strictest person in the world about Novels' gave it to Sarah Harriet's pupil at the time, Anna Wilbraham, who 'yawned over it—and when I asked her how she liked it, said—'O very much—only there's hardly any love in it!' Whip Novels without love!' (Clark *Letters* 74). In fact, Cottin's *Elizabeth* seems to have gained readers precisely because it *was* a novel without love. A narrative in which the heroine walks from Siberia to St. Petersburg to plead with the Emperor to free her father from exile, it was based on the true story of Praskova Lupolov. With its strong moral emphasising filial duty, it was first translated into English in 1807, and remained popular with British readers and publishers throughout the nineteenth century, in part because of Frederick Reynold's popular melodramatic opera, *The Exile*, with music by Joseph Mazzinghi, which premiered at the King's Theatre, London, in 1808.[13] Thomas Tegg's edition of the translation built on this success and was published in

1810. Once again, it was 'edited by Miss Burney'. The book announces that it is 'newly translated from the French of Madame Cottin', embellished with engravings. The copy I consulted in the Bodleian Library is not a reprint of the earlier, 1807, translation, by Sarah Harriet's half-sister Elizabeth Meeke, published by the Minerva Press.

In 1810, when Thomas Tegg's edition of this new translation of Sophie Cottin's *Elizabeth* was published, Tegg was still at the beginning of his career. He seems to have published, in that year, a variety of material, including the short pamphlet publications, Julia Oulton's *The Solemn Warning, or The Predictions verified. A Romance*, and Francis Lathom's *Fatal Vows, or The False Monk: A Romance*. Translation was not a specialism for Tegg, outside this *Miniature Novelists* series. The logical explanation for Tegg's venturing into this new area is persuasion from his editor, 'Miss Burney' – that is, Sarah Harriet herself. Certainly, Tegg seems to have been keen to use the cultural capital of a celebrated literary name to market his series, just as Henry Colburn was eager to publish Sarah Harriet's original fiction using the Burney brand. For the reading public, expertise in matters of the continental novel may well have been best coming from a lady reader. On the question of whether Sarah Harriet provided her services as a translator for Thomas Tegg, or as someone who oversaw the process, which was carried out by an anonymous translator, the evidence available means that this cannot categorically be determined. I think it very likely that she was translator and editor alike. She was not to benefit from her labour going forward. Thomas Tegg used these two translations for reprints in later years: an edition, marked 'London: printed for Thomas Tegg and Son, Cheapside, by C. Whittingham, Chiswick' appeared in 1834, entitled *Paul and Virginia and Elizabeth or the Exiles of Siberia*. On the title page, 'Miss Burney' had disappeared.

Conclusion

Lorna J. Clark has pointed out that Sarah Harriet's novelistic career deserves reconsideration 'for its longevity, but also for its progression' (Clark "Literary Legacy" 128). In this article, I have explored some of the tantalising avenues that illuminate both Sarah Harriet's networking, and her agency, in the literary marketplace of early nineteenth-century London. In relation to translation, Sarah Harriet's knowledge of the French language, and of the literature of France, made her a valuable contact for the publishers she worked with: she was both aware of, and willing to exploit, her strengths. The Robinsons, who published her first novels, and to whom she may have suggested the publication of her niece Charlotte Barrett's translation of Feijoo's *Rights of Women* in *The Lady's Magazine*, were publishers who worked across a variety of genres, fiction and non-fiction, as well as several periodicals. With Dulau and with Colburn, Sarah Harriet discussed translation activity, and foreign-language reviews. Finally, Sarah Harriet worked with Thomas Tegg, whose series was – at the point of conception, if no further – an ambitious joint venture. Her French and publishing liaisons seem to have sustained Sarah Harriet throughout her career. They place her more firmly in the Literary Channel than has hitherto been recognised, and in ways which enhance and extend our thinking about the Burney family's literary relations more broadly.

[1] Edgeworth's was a translation of Genlis's *Adèle et Théodore*: the manuscript no longer exists. Burney's a translation of Fontenelle, *Entretiens sur la Pluralité des Mondes*, now in the Berg, NYPL.
[2] I take the details of Sarah Harriet Burney's life from Lorna J. Clark's introduction in *Letters*.
[3] See Garside and Schowerling, pp. 83-85.
[4] Sarah Harriet makes these comments in her letters over a period of decades.
[5] Lorna Clark includes details of new letters that have come to light in her 2019 article in *Publishing History*, including an intriguing letter from 1820 showing Sarah Harriet's active engagement with Colburn as an intermediary for her friend Caroline Anne Bowles (1786-1854), whose poetry she tried to encourage Colburn to publish.
[6] I have outlined Sarah Harriet's relationship with Dulau as part of a essay 'Women's Writers' Networks'.
[7] MS.French c. 39, 'Letters and Papers of Dulau and Co.' c. 1815-1823, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
[8] On the reception of Spanish literature in English, see Richard Hitchcock.

[9] I am grateful to Jennie for sharing her work in progress as we exchanged ideas on Feijoo and 'Elenir Irwin'.
[10] The advert can be found bound into a copy of William Enfield, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations; Containing the Elements of Commerce and Political Economy* (London: Printed for Thomas Tegg, 1809), digitised on Google Books.
[11] See, for example, the Bodleian library's copy.
[12] I consulted the copy in the library at Lady Margaret Hall, the only copy at the University of Oxford, and the only one I have located in the UK. My thanks to College Librarian James Fishwick, and to the Principal and Fellows.
[13] For a fascinating account of the history and reception of this opera, see Heller.