CHAPTER 11

A Changing Industry
Women Publishing and Selling Prints in London, 1740–1800

Amy Torbert

A month before her death, the prolific British print publisher Hannah Humphrey took stock of her long life and successful career. On 12 January 1818, she hired an attorney to help write her will, a document that stretched to nine pages and left generous bequests to her many nieces and nephews.[1] The attorney, or his clerk, made an error, however. In the second line of the document, he incorrectly identified Humphrey as a 'widow'. Realising his mistake, the clerk changed this description to 'Print Seller', and Humphrey inscribed her initials purposefully beside the correction, preserving for posterity her professional identity.

In modern histories of print publishing in eighteenth-century London, two women – Mary Darly and Hannah Humphrey – are routinely recognised for their achievements in graphic culture.[2] While these two publishers made significant contributions to the development of eighteenth-century British prints, they were not the only women to do so. Between 1740 and 1800, no fewer than twelve women in London independently managed businesses that published or retailed prints: Elizabeth Bartlet Bakewell (c. 1710–1770), Ann Harper Bryer (c. 1745–c. 1795), Elizabeth Lyfe d'Achery (1754–after 1783), Mary Salmon Darly (1736–1791), Elizabeth Griffin (c. 1706–1752), Hannah Humphrey (1750–1818), Dorothy Clapham Mercier (before 1720–after 1768), Hester Griffin Jackson Pulley (1727–1784), Mary Brown Ryland

[1] Hannah Humphrey, will dated 12 January 1818, proved on 4 March 1818. PROB 11/1602/45, The National Archives, United Kingdom (hereafter TNA-UK). With thanks to Cristina S. Martinez for sharing her notes and analysis of Humphrey's will.

[2] T. Clayton, *The English Print, 1688–1802* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 215–216, 245–246; D. Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 12–14; A. Rauser, *Caricature Unmasked: Irony, Authenticity, and Individualism in Eighteenth-Century English Prints* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 47, 50, 62; J. Monteyne, *From Still Life to Screen* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 75–78, 88–97.

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(c. 1737–c. 1814), Mary Baker Overton Sayer (1713–1752), Susanna Sledge (c. 1726–after 1790), and Susanna Parker Vivares (1734–1792).

Women's labour and contributions to the print publishing industry, however, are all too frequently hidden in plain sight beneath the names of their male relatives. This chapter contributes to the volume's recovery efforts by surveying aspects of the lives and careers of these twelve women, who stand as a representative sample of a much larger total number.[3] Some acted as publishers of prints, working directly with designers, engravers, and printers to coordinate all aspects of the production and wholesale of new prints. Others worked solely as printsellers and focused their businesses strictly retailing new and old prints alike. Spread across two generations, they form a disparate group in terms of their origins, means of entry into the field, aesthetic interests, political beliefs, duration and scale of their firms, and widely varying levels of success. When viewed together, their biographical details offer general conclusions about the experience of working within the print industry while female in eighteenth-century London.

Entering the Industry

As a group, the twelve print publishers and retailers surveyed here participated in broad trends that occurred within the print publishing industry between the 1740s and 1790s. One of these concerns location. The earliest publishers and retailers within the sample – Bakewell, Sayer, Griffin, and Pulley – inherited firms that their families had established prior to the 1750s within the boundaries of the City of London. Beginning in the 1760s, print publishers located their new firms in the borough of Westminster, to the west of the city, rather than in London proper, the so-called Square Mile. Westminster was viewed as safer and healthier, with newly built housing stock. It also enjoyed a reputation for being more modern and fashionable, as the site of the Royal Academy, theatres, and many artists' studios. But women who worked as print publishers – as well as those in other professions – had an additional reason for moving out of

[3] Further research is still needed to establish a definitive total number of women working as print publishers and sellers in London from 1740 to 1800. The twelve women whose careers this chapter traces represent only, at minimum, approximately half of all known female print publishers and printsellers. With thanks to Cristina S. Martinez and Timothy Clayton, the following names can be added to this group: Mary Cooper, Mrs. M. Dickinson, Mrs. Diemar, Jemima Hedges, Jane Hogarth, Elizabeth Jackson, Celeste Regnier, Sarah Spilsbury, Jane White, Elizabeth Woollett, and more.

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the Square Mile. They were not required to join a livery company or guild to run their businesses in the borough of Westminster, as the statutes of the City of London specified. Women were not prohibited from joining companies or serving seven-year apprenticeships under the tutelage of a master craftsperson.[4] In practice, however, their presence was vanishingly small during the first half of the eighteenth century: as Amy Louise Erickson has calculated, only one per cent of all apprentices were female.[5]

The group of women print publishers and retailers follows this estimate. None of them is known to have undertaken a formal apprenticeship within a livery company. Instead, Bakewell, Bryer, Darly, Griffin, Mercier, Pulley, Ryland, Sayer, and Vivares – or seventy-five per cent of the group – followed the most common path for both men and women seeking to begin a trade in eighteenth-century London and entered the profession through family connections. Nearly all inherited their husbands' publishing firms upon becoming widows. They were then faced with a decision among several courses of action: would they sell, employ someone else to run the business for them, or run it themselves? As their biographies demonstrate, the last choice remained popular across two generations. The ease with which these women carried on or expanded their families' businesses suggests that their involvement in the operation of the firms had not begun with their widowhood.[6] Instead, they most likely had participated substantially in aspects of the creation, production, and distribution of their publications, even before their names appeared in copyright lines on their prints. They commissioned designs from artists, hired engravers to produce copperplates, determined the number of prints per edition, decided when to print new editions and when to retire worn-out copperplates, and coordinated the advertising, sales, and shipping of the prints.

The two earliest publishers among the sample exemplify this trajectory. Elizabeth Bartlet (c. 1710–1770) had arrived in London from Buckinghamshire by 1732, when she married the print publisher

[4] Widows of livery company members were allowed to become members. As Hannah Barker notes, around 10 per cent of the masters in the Stationers' Company were women during the eighteenth century, meaning that they had the right to hold shares of the Company's stock and take on apprentices. H. Barker, 'Women, Work, and the Industrial Revolution: Female Involvement in the English Printing Trades, c.1700–1840', in H. Barker and E. Chalus, eds., *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations, and Responsibilities* (London: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997), 99.

[5] A. L. Erickson, 'Eleanor Mosley and Other Milliners in the City of London Companies 1700–1750', *History Workshop Journal*, 71 (Spring 2011): 150–154. Erickson notes that this estimate is based on nearly 60,000 apprentices in 56 London companies.

[6] Barker, 'Women, Work, and the Industrial Revolution', 91.

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Thomas Bakewell (1704–1749).[7] Two years later, in 1734, Mary Baker (1713–1752) moved to London from the English Midlands to join her two older sisters. At age twenty-one, she married 53-year-old Philip Overton (c. 1681–1745), a widower who ran a large print publishing firm and who also happened to be her brother-in-law.[8] Professional networks linked the Bakewells and Overtons. The two print-publishing families had been neighbours on Fleet Street in the 1730s, and they carried a similarly diverse stock of printed materials, with maps, landscapes, and mezzotint portraits of royalty and nobility forming the core of their output.

Both Mary Overton and Elizabeth Bakewell assisted their husbands in the management of their print shops for a decade, learning the principles of publishing and selling prints through direct experience. When their husbands died within a few years of each other in the 1740s, their widows assumed control of the respective families' firms. Though the women's time at the helms of their businesses ultimately proved to be short-lived, they achieved success publishing under their own names. Five months after her husband's death, Elizabeth Bakewell advertised that catalogues could 'be had at Mrs. Bakewell's Print Shop in Cornhill . . .'[9] She also replaced his name with her own on their trade card and continued selling prints at a rapid clip on her own from 1749 until 1758.[10] In late May 1758, she placed the first advertisement in partnership with Henry Parker.[11] The pair continued running their business jointly until 1763, when she sold the firm to Parker and retired.[12] When she wrote her will on 4 August 1766, she was living on Gracechurch Street, in the parish of St Benet, London. She died on 9 September 1770, at 'her house on Royal Hill, Greenwich'.[13]

Arguably the most significant print that Bakewell published under her own name was the portrait of Hendrick Theyanoguin (1692–1755), titled *The Brave Old Hendrick, the Great Sachem or Chief of the Mohawk*

[7] Westminster Marriages data sets, www.findmypast.com (accessed 12 October 2016).
[8] Marriage licence, issued 26 November 1734, 'St. Dunstan's-in-the-West Marriage Bonds and Allegations, London, England', wwww.ancestry.com (accessed 10 January 2021). Mary's sister, Sarah, had married Philip's brother Henry, who was also a print publisher.
[9] *General Advertiser*, 2 December 1749.
[10] Elizabeth Bakewell's trade card is held by the British Museum (Heal,100.11), along with earlier versions by her husband (Heal,100.10).
[11] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 27 May 1758. On 17 March 1758, Bakewell had placed an advertisement in the same paper under her name alone.
[12] Their final advertisement as partners appeared on 7–10 May 1763 in the *London Chronicle*.
[13] *Middlesex Journal*, 15–18 September 1770. Her will was proved on 20 September 1770. PROB 11/960/260, TNA-UK.

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Indians.[14] The only known depiction of the Haudenosaunee leader, this etching was most likely published between 1754, when Theyanoguin played a critical role in maintaining balance of power in North America at the start of the Seven Years' War, and 1756, shortly after his death at the Battle of Lake George. The specificity of the tattoos and scarring on the sitter's face suggests this print might have been an accurate, factual portrait and not simply an invented compilation of Native and European clothing and accessories befitting a British ally. However unlikely this claim to veracity might appear, if the portrait was either taken from life or based on first-hand descriptions, it would reveal Elizabeth Bakewell's position within a network of sources of information, which was aided by the location of her print shop near the Royal Exchange, a hub of North American colonial trade. And even if the portrait was entirely spurious, its publication nonetheless demonstrates Bakewell's ongoing engagement with imperial politics.

Mary Overton also kept up a rapid pace of business following her husband's death in February 1745.[15] She made frequent purchases from the art dealer Arthur Pond and placed no fewer than 85 newspaper advertisements for publications within a span of three years.[16] She also issued new prints and maps under her own name that responded to current events. For instance, Overton became the sole publisher of a portrait of William IV, Prince of Orange (1711–1751), just weeks after he was named Stadtholder of the United Provinces of the Netherlands.[17] Overton's mezzotint bore the prince's new title and was described, in newspaper advertisements she placed, as being 'done from an original, painted at the Hague and just brought' to London.[18] William IV had married into the

[14] Impressions are held by many collections, including Albany Institute of History & Art, British Museum, Colonial Williamsburg, Detroit Institute of Art, Gilcrease Museum, John Carter Brown Library, Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University, Library of Congress, and New York Public Library. In recent years, Theyanoguin's identity has been a matter of some debate, with this print playing an important role in distinguishing the later leader from the earlier Haudenosaunee leader Tejonihokarawa, or Hendrick Peters (1660–c. 1735). For more, see D. R. Snow, 'Searching for Hendrick: Correction of a Historic Conflation', *New York History*, 88(3) (Summer 2007): 229–253.

[15] Philip Overton died on 13 February 1745. *Daily Advertiser*, 15 February 1745. Mary paid the land tax on her property in Fleet Street in 1745 and 1746. London Land Tax Commissioners' Assessment Books, London Metropolitan Archives, www.ancestry.com (accessed 4 March 2021).

[16] For mentions of 'Mrs. Overton', and then 'Mrs. Sayer', in Pond's journals, see L. Lippincott, 'The Journals of Arthur Pond', *Journal of the Walpole Society* (1988): passim. The first newspaper ad she placed read: 'This Day is publish'd, and sold by Mary Overton, widow of the late Phil. Overton, over-against Fetter-Lane End in Fleet Street . . .' *London Evening Post*, 9 March 1745.

[17] British Museum (hereafter BM) 1902,1011.4813.

[18] *General Advertiser* (London), 14 May 1747. William IV was officially named Stadtholder of the United Provinces on 4 May 1747.

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British royal family fourteen years earlier. He was, however, of particular interest to Overton's clientele in 1747 for being named the leader of one of Britain's closest allies during the War of the Austrian Succession.[19]

In 1747, Mary Overton remarried.[20] Her second husband, the attorney James Sayer, had a younger brother in search of a career. Mary Baker Overton Sayer introduced Robert Sayer (1726–1794) to the business as they worked alongside each other in her print shop on Fleet Street. But within a year, Mary's name ceased to be included in any advertisements for what had now fully become Robert's shop.[21] Had Mary grown tired of the daily demands and the pressure to make a profit? Or did her husband believe his wife should not be involved directly in a trade? Whatever the reason, Mary ceded her business to her new brother-in-law, under whose management it grew into one of London's largest publishing firms for the next five decades.

Surviving the Industry

The twelve publishers and retailers surveyed here span two generations, or roughly 100 years. When compared with the numbers of known male print publishers and retailers who worked in London during the same time, this sample represents approximately ten per cent of the total industry. That figure is undoubtedly too low since, as economic historian Amy Louise Erickson argues, 'the great majority of wives in eighteenth-century London continued to work in the labour force after marriage'.[22] It also does not take into consideration the very real roles that working-class women played in many aspects of the print publishing and selling industry. For example, the publisher Charles Mosley described in the 1740s that his 'business of print selling was carried on by his servant maid & that he does not concern himself therein'.[23] Instead, it prioritizes women of greater economic means. Most of the publishers and retailers discussed

[19] Overton's mezzotint seems to have traveled as far as Dublin, where the engraver Andrew Miller fashioned a close copy, now held by the British Museum (1887,0406.93).

[20] England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973 database, www.ancestry.com (accessed 4 March 2021).

[21] On 19 November 1748, the partners took out their first joint advertisement, announcing in the *General Evening Post* that the *Oxford Almanack for the Year 1749* would be sold by 'M. Overton and R. Sayer, Map and Print Sellers, facing Fetter Lane, Fleet Street'. Only a month later, however, Robert placed a series of announcements alerting buyers that items could be purchased at 'Mr. Sayer's Picture-Shop in Fleet Street'. *London Evening Post*, 15–17 December 1748.

[22] A. L. Erickson, 'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth-century London', *Continuity and Change* , 23(2) (2008): 269.

[23] State Papers, George II, General (Bundle 111), National Archives, SP 36/111, part 2, ff. 32–33 (microfilm).

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here either came from the middling class or above or achieved that status through marriage. Simply put, it required a significant amount of capital to manage a successful publishing firm. At least three women in the group – Sledge, d'Achery, and Humphrey – opened their own firms following the receipt of bequests from deceased relatives. While specific details about the education of these women publishers are not yet known, they were most likely all literate, given the demands of their businesses and the skills required for their management.

Becoming a publisher of prints demanded a large outlay of capital upfront in order to undertake the production of prints. Working as a retailer of prints, however, required a significantly smaller investment. The tragic fate of the Griffin family of publishers underscores the financial uncertainty inherent in running a printselling business at a small scale. Peter Griffin (1726–1749) commissioned a trade card to celebrate the establishment of his own publishing firm on Fleet Street, issuing prints, maps, and books of designs, following the completion of his apprenticeship to Philip Overton.[24] When Peter died three year later, his mother Elizabeth Griffin (c. 1706–1752) replaced his name with her own on the trade card as she continued to run the business until 1752.[25] Her daughter Hester Griffin (1727–1784) married the engraver Michael Jackson in 1750; his was the next name to appear on the trade card's plate as he issued prints of his own design from the Griffin print shop.[26] He probably died by 1763, when Hester Griffin Jackson placed an advertisement, in which she described herself as a 'printseller'.[27] Finally, Hester remarried in 1763 to George Pulley, who then replaced Jackson's name with his own on the trade card.[28] The story of its plate ends here – Hester and George Pulley seem to have stopped selling prints after 1766. While no prints

[24] The trade card is held by the British Museum (Heal,100.32) and dates from 1746 to 1749. Peter Griffin was baptized on 24 March 1726 at Wokingham, Berkshire, to Jacob and Elizabeth Griffin. Hester was baptized on 4 October 1727 at Wokingham, Berkshire, to the same parents. A legal case helps fill out the genealogy of the family. Pleadings for *Griffin v. Griffin*, 1739, Court of Chancery: Six Clerks Office, National Archives, C11/1555/23. Peter Griffin's first known advertisement appeared in the *Whitehall Evening Post*, 22–24 December 1748.

[25] The trade card is held by the British Museum (D,2.3384) and dates from 1749 to 1752. Peter Griffin obituary: *Whitehall Evening Post*, 3–5 August 1749; Elizabeth Griffin advertisement: *London Evening Post*, 18–20 January 1750.

[26] Jackson's trade card is held by the British Museum (Heal,100.39) and dates from 1753 to 1761. St. Pancras, Old Church: Marriages, www.ancestry.com (accessed 4 March 2021).

[27] Michael Jackson advertisement: *Public Advertiser*, 5 December 1760; Hester Griffin Jackson advertisement: *Public Advertiser*, 26 May 1763.

[28] Pulley's trade card is held by the British Museum (Banks,100.89) and dates from 1764 to 1766. Marriage Bonds and Allegations, www.ancestry.com (accessed 4 March 2021).

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survive that Hester published under her own name, women's labour in family businesses was often subsumed under other names – in this case, first her brother's, then her mother's, and then her two husbands'. The tragic end to this story emphasizes the precarity of selling prints at the low end of the market. How Hester Griffin Jackson Pulley spent her next two decades is currently unknown, but in April 1784, she was interviewed in the St Martin in the Fields Pauper Examinations and sentenced to the workhouse, where she died two days later.[29]

Although Dorothy Clapham Mercier (before 1720–after 1768) did not inherit a business from a family member, her path into the industry was facilitated by her connections within artistic circles. Following the death of her husband, the artist Philippe Mercier (1691–1760), she sought a means of supporting herself and her family. In 1762, she began advertising as a stationer and printseller.[30] Her remarkable trade card (Figure 11.1) offers a glimpse of her profession: Mercier stands in the midst of print connoisseurs, who peer closely at the sheets they hold and gesture to works that adorn the walls and fill the shelves. She confidently oversees a comfortable environment where civilized men and women of taste can gather – a version of Gersaint's shop if Watteau had been transplanted to London. The lower half of the trade card lists Mercier's diverse stock, including 'flower pieces, in water colours, painted by herself from the Life'. In 1761, she exhibited four miniatures and two watercolours at the annual exhibition of the Society of Artists, and in 1764, she became their official stationer.[31] However, after a promising six-year career, she ceased to rent her property in Golden Square, Piccadilly, and disappears from the historical record after 1768.[32]

Specialising in the Industry

The print publishing industry experienced significant shifts between the 1740s and 1790s. By 1752, the field had begun to expand significantly, leading one writer to claim hyperbolically that printselling 'was formerly an

[29] St Martin in the Fields and St Clement Danes Parish Pauper Examinations, 12 and 15 April 1784, London Lives, 1690–1800 database, www.londonlives.org (accessed 24 April 2021).

[30] *Public Advertiser* (London), 9 April 1762.

[31] J. Ingamells, *Philip Mercier 1689–1760: An Exhibition of Paintings and Engravings* (London: Paul Mellon Foundation for British Art, 1969), 53–54.

[32] From 1762 through to 1768, Dorothy Mercier paid £21 in land tax on a property in Little Windmill Street, St James, Piccadilly. She ceased paying for this property in 1769. Westminster Rate Books, 1762–1769, www.findmypast.com (accessed 18 December 2015).

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Figure 11.1 *Trade card of Dorothy Mercier*, c. 1762–1764.
Etching, 25.3 × 149 cm. British Museum, London.

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inconsiderable business, and very few got their bread by it. But some ingenious persons have of late so greatly extended it, that there are at present almost as many print-shops as there are bakers in this metropolis.'[33] As the number of firms grew and diversified, so too did their publishing strategies. Many older businesses, such as those overseen by Bakewell and Sayer, offered many genres of prints, maps, and books at a wide range of price points and relied on the variety of their stock to make a profit. Unlike these larger firms, most newcomers to the industry after the 1770s developed a particular corner of the market in which they specialised. For some, this tactic meant specialising in a particular medium, from mezzotints to etchings or stipple engravings. Others invested in specific designers and engravers – Samuel Hieronymus Grimm, James Gillray, or even themselves – who achieved prominence in innovative genres or styles.

The seven publishers in this final group – Darly, Sledge, Ryland, Bryer, Vivares, d'Achery, and Humphrey – issued their prints between 1750 and 1800 from addresses across Westminster, from the Strand to Soho, Covent Garden, and Piccadilly. As the print publishing field grew in numbers, the strategy of specialising also offered a greater variety of paths for entering the industry. Women wishing to publish prints were certainly aided by having family members already within the field. But entry was gradually becoming slightly more porous and open to those attempting to forge their way on a rare, but not impossible, venture.

Though Mary Salmon Darly (1736–1791) managed her print publishing business for a decade after her husband's death, her entry into the field did not resemble the established pattern for widows. Instead, she entered as an artist herself. The daughter of a silk weaver, Salmon was born in Southwark, London in 1736.[34] The etching *Caesar at New-Market* may contain a clue about how she met the engraver and publisher Matthias Darly (1721–1780).[35] He had started his career as an engraver and print publisher in the 1750s, engraving nearly 100 plates for Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman's and Cabinet Maker's Director*. In 1757, he turned to publishing single sheet prints, issuing a series of etchings critiquing the actions of British politicians during the Seven Years' War. These prints represent a landmark in the history of caricature in England, for they were the first time that the exaggeration of facial features was fused

[33] *Covent-Garden Journal*, 27 June 1752.
[34] St Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey, Register of baptisms, 1740–1763, www.ancestry.com (accessed 24 April 2021).
[35] BM 1868,0808.13278.

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with political satire. The engraver of *Caesar at New-Market* – probably Mary Salmon herself – signed the design: 'M. Salmon Invt et Sculp'. Whether this caricature came before or after Mary's and Matthias's initial meeting, the two printmakers married in 1759 and worked fully as partners as their innovations catalysed the rapid growth of eighteenth-century British caricature.[36] In 1762, Mary produced a guide for leisured women who wished to produce caricatures; a decade later, the Darlys published multiple sets of so-called Macaroni prints, which inspired a new, lasting genre of social caricature.[37]

A connection with an artist paved the way for Susanna Sledge (c. 1726–after 1790) to take up print publishing. She was born in Piccadilly in c. 1726 to Susanna and Thomas Sledge, who described himself as a gentleman.[38] Little currently is known about the details of Sledge's life prior to 1768. In that year, the Swiss watercolour painter Samuel Hieronymus Grimm (1733–1794) immigrated to London and began to rent a room from Sledge.[39] Working in collaboration with the artist, she started publishing prints after Grimm's caricatures, quickly becoming known for these so-called mezzotint drolls. Together, between 1771 and 1774, artist and publisher issued at least six drolls, comic mezzotints ridiculing men and women's pretensions to fashion, that established Grimm as one of the genre's greatest practitioners.

Though Sledge's entry into the business of print publishing might have been facilitated by her connection to Grimm, her impact on the field was not limited to their collaborations. When the fad for drolls began to wane in the mid-1770s, Sledge turned her attention to another popular subject: prints after recent portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds and George Romney. This corner of the print publishing industry was significantly more competitive, but Sledge succeeded, perhaps due at least in part to her connections within artistic circles. From 1775 to 1779, she worked with British engraver William Dickinson and Austrian printmaker Johann Jacobé to issue seven mezzotints after recent portraits. Most significant among this number was the first print taken after Reynolds's portrait *Omai*, scraped by

[36] St Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey, Register of marriages, www.ancestry.com (accessed 21 May 2021).

[37] For more on Darly, see Chapter 10 by Sheila O'Connell in this volume.

[38] Westminster Marriages data set, www.findmypast.com (accessed 18 December 2015). There has been some confusion over Sledge's first name, which is given in some secondary sources as 'Sarah'. She is, however, recorded in Westminster rate books for her payment of taxes on Henrietta Street as 'Susanna Sledge'.

[39] W. Hauptman, *Samuel Hieronymus Grimm (1733–1794): A Very English Swiss* (Milan: 5 Continents Edition; Kunstmuseum Bern, 2014).

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Jacobé and published in 1777.[40] The previous year at the Royal Academy, Reynolds had exhibited his painting of the Polynesian sitter, who had caused a sensation in London society. By 1780, Sledge (or perhaps Jacobé himself) had sold the mezzotint plate to John Boydell (1720–1804), who had come to dominate the field of reproductive prints after modern paintings.[41]

During the 1770s, and perhaps beyond, Sledge also created profile portraits in pastel and silhouette.[42] By the 1780s, her involvement in actively issuing new prints seems to have faded. Her house and shop at No. 1 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, however, remained a neighbourhood hub. She rented rooms to artists Laurence J. Cossé, T. Goodman, Richard Crosse, and William Wellings, continued to advertise medicinal and hair products for sale, and hosted the harpsichordist Mr. E. Light, who ran an evening academy out of her shop.[43] Sledge's longest tenant was Samuel Hieronymus Grimm, who continued to live with her until at least 1790, when he named her an heir in his will 'as a grateful acknowledgement for the friendly care she always took of me'.[44]

By the 1770s, the novel technique of stipple engraving, introduced in England by William Wynne Ryland (1733–1783), had risen to challenge the popularity of the mezzotint.[45] Within the next two decades, his widow, Mary Brown Ryland (c. 1737–c. 1814), Ann Harper Bryer (c. 1745–c. 1795), and Susanna Parker Vivares (1734–1792) devoted their print-publishing businesses to specialising in this reproductive print medium. Each woman had followed the most traditional means of entering the field. Following the deaths of their husbands – print publisher

[40] Yale Center for British Art, B1977.14.10146. [41] BM 1902,1011.2807.

[42] For examples of her pastels, see N. Jeffares, 'Sledge, Susanna', *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800*, published 16 August 2016, www.pastellists.com/Articles/Sledge.pdf. Her first known advertisement read: 'Mrs. Sledge, Printseller, in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, continues to take the most striking likenesses in profile, of any size that may be required, at the trifling expence [sic] of 1s. 6d. natural size, 2s. 6d. reduced, 3s. 6d. neatly framed and glazed, 4s. 6d. decorated with different ornaments in imitation of carved ivory. Specimens to be seen at the above address. One sitting of five minutes is sufficient.' *Daily Advertiser* (London), 14 May 1774. Versions of it also appeared in *The Morning Chronicle, and London Advertiser* on 4 June 1774, 11 November 1774, 1 April 1775, and 22 July 1775.

[43] M. Hallett et al., eds., *The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition: A Chronicle, 1769–2018* (London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2018), www.chronicle250.com, accessed 20 June 2021; *Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser*, 30 October 1781; *The Morning Chronicle, and London Advertiser*, 9 December 1780.

[44] Samuel Hieronymus Grimm, will dated 20 May 1790, proved 18 July 1794. PROB 11/1247/250, TNA-UK. Sledge's date of death has not yet been discovered. It had to have been after the date when Grimm wrote his will.

[45] C. Wax, *The Mezzotint: History and Technique* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1990), 52–54.

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Henry Bryer and engraver-publishers Ryland and François Vivares – between 1778 and 1783, the three widows started to publish and sell prints under their own names. Their businesses had much in common, including their locations near one another in Soho. Early in their independent management, both Vivares and Ryland published line engravings made by their husbands.[46] But their firms were soon dominated by stipple engravings, primarily by Francesco Bartolozzi, after designs by Angelika Kauffmann and Giovanni Battista Ciprani, among others. Vivares established the largest, most ambitious firm of the three, publishing at least thirty prints between 1781 and 1797. Bryer published about ten known prints between 1779 and 1789, while Ryland achieved a similar output slightly later, from 1786 and 1799.

Though Bryer's and Ryland's endeavours were more modest in scale, their publications frequently were not. Ryland, for instance, published a stipple engraving after Kauffmann's seminal neoclassical painting *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi* in 1788.[47] Painted in Naples in 1785 for Kauffmann's greatest patron, George Bowles, *Cornelia* achieved fame when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy the following year.[48] To this ambitious print by Bartolozzi, Ryland added a dedication to her 'much obliged Friend' Sarah Trimmer (1741–1810), a noted educational reformer, philanthropist, and author and critic of children's literature. This choice was apt in many ways. It reinforced Kauffmann's celebration of a mother's accomplishments as a teacher by linking the painting to Trimmer's name and simultaneously demonstrated Ryland's connections within London society.

Finally, during their short and long careers, respectively, Elizabeth Lyfe d'Achery (1754–after 1783) and Hannah Humphrey (1750–1818) both specialised in wildly inventive, frequently biting satires that addressed current political and social subjects.[49] These etchings came principally, though not exclusively, from the needles of James Gillray and Thomas Rowlandson. D'Achery's career as a print publisher made up for in impact

[46] Within the first year of her management, Susanna Vivares published *The Enchanted Castle*, an engraving by Francis Vivares that William Woollett helped to complete following her husband's death, published on 12 March 1782. The first print that Mary Ryland is known to have issued was *The Interview between Edgar and Elfrida after Her Marriage with Athelwold*, an engraving by William Ryland after Angelica Kauffmann, published on 1 February 1786.

[47] BM 1870,1008.2259.

[48] W. W. Roworth, *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), 92.

[49] For more on Humphrey and d'Achery, see respectively Chapter 13 by Tim Clayton and Chapter 14 by Nicholas JS Knowles in this volume.

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and intensity what it lacked in length. Born in 1754 in Surrey as Elizabeth Lyfe, she had arrived in London by at least 1773.[50] There she encountered Nicholas d'Achery, a French citizen who worked in London as a 'master of languages', with whom she had a daughter in 1774. Though they never married, upon his death in 1777, he named her co-executor of his estate and left a generous bequest in his will to support her and their daughter.[51] Between 1782 and 1784, she published at least fifty political caricatures, including such iconic images as *Britannia's Assassination* (1782) by Gillray and *The Devonshire* (1784) by Rowlandson.[52] She also published many caricatures after anonymous submissions. In a 1783 advertisement, she expressed gratitude 'to the gentleman who sent the drawing of the Wheelbarrow, which was immediately put in the hands of an engraver', and for 'the drawing of the Coalition of Parties, which will be published tomorrow'. She noted with disapproval, however, that 'the design sent on Tuesday is too indecent for the publisher's shop'.[53]

If d'Achery had one of the shortest but most consequential careers as a publisher of prints, Hannah Humphrey had one of the longest and most substantial. She gained her introduction to the print publishing industry through her extended family. She was baptized in 1750 in the parish of St John, Wapping Street in east London, where her father, George Humphrey, listed his profession as a grocer.[54] In 1754, he moved his family to the more affluent parish of St Martin in the Fields. Hannah's older brother William entered the field of print publishing first, establishing his own firm in the early 1770s.[55] In 1778, at age twenty-eight, Hannah established her own independent publishing firm, funded perhaps by a bequest she received in the same year from her recently deceased father.[56] William and Hannah Humphrey ran their businesses simultaneously for nearly a decade, during which time they published prints by a series of artists who ushered in a new era of graphic satire, spearheaded by the contributions of James Gillray (1756–1815). Upon William's

[50] Surrey, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538–1812, www.ancestry.com (accessed 15 June 2021).
[51] Nicholas Claude Amboise d'Achery, will dated 27 January 1777, proved 20 March 1777, PROB 11/1029, TNA-UK.
[52] Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University (782.05.10.01+ Impression 1; 784.04.12.06.2+), and British Museum (1851,0901.78; 1851,0901.213) hold impressions of both prints.
[53] *The Morning Chronicle, and London Advertiser*, 27 February 1783.
[54] Docklands Ancestors Database, www.findmypast.com (accessed 20 July 2014).
[55] For William Humphrey's career, see A. Torbert, 'Dissolving the Bonds: Robert Sayer and John Bennett, Print Publishers in an Age of Revolution', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Delaware (2017), 263–267.
[56] George Humphrey Sr. (1739–1826) will, proved on 11 April 1826, PROB 10/4873, TNA-UK.

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retirement, Gillray began to work exclusively for Hannah. From 1791 to 1815, she issued 650 prints by the artist – or two-thirds of his total output – establishing both of their reputations. By investing in Gillray, as well as Thomas Rowlandson and George Cruikshank, Humphrey built her print publishing firm into one of the most influential tastemakers in London with an international reputation.

In conclusion, between 1740 and 1800, these twelve women print publishers and retailers contributed hundreds of images that circulated throughout London's visual economy. Some were explicitly political or artistically ambitious, leaving a lasting mark on the history of print publishing. Others fought to survive in a crowded, competitive field. As a group, the heterogeneity of their experiences defies any easy or essentializing characterisations. Ranging from the renowned to the completely unknown, these women's experiences reveal changes over time within the print publishing industry across different generations and economic classes, and how they took advantage of the expanded access and opportunities. Reconstructing their histories demonstrates women's ongoing contributions to the business of publishing and selling prints in eighteenth-century London.

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