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## 'Figured Paper for Hanging Rooms': The manufacture, design and consumption of wallpapers for English domestic interiors, c.1740-c.1800

### Thesis

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**CLARE TAYLOR B.A. (Hons)**

**'Figured Paper for Hanging Rooms': The manufacture, design and consumption  
of wallpapers for English domestic interiors, c.1740-c.1800.**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Art History**

**Faculty of Arts**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis focuses on paper hangings, an hitherto understudied material in comparison to other components of the Eighteenth century domestic interior. Drawing on recent theories of consumption and the nature of domestic space, the thesis uses study of extant and reconstructed schemes, surviving papers and archival material to illuminate the material's increasingly important role in decoration during the second half of the century. Papers studied include Chinese papers and English papers in the Chinese style, English papers imitating architectural, sculpted and painted ornament and late century English and imported prints and panelled schemes.

Three key issues are examined. Firstly, the thesis focuses attention on the structure of the trade, constructing a new model for understanding the way in which the manufacture, retailing, distribution and hanging of papers was organised. Examining the role of imports as well as the rapid expansion of the domestic trade, the thesis argues that control of this trade was contested by both new, and established, trades involved in decoration.

Secondly, the role of design is analysed, particularly in terms of the relationship between imitation and innovation. Study of papers' sources further illuminates this issue, for example by examining how far English manufacturers sought to imitate Chinese originals and also how some Chinese papers rework European models. The relationship with other types of wall decoration and three dimensional ornament is also considered; the argument here is that far from merely copying printed designs, papers appropriated design sources from stucco, ceramics and textiles.

Thirdly, and finally, aspects of consumption are examined. The thesis investigates how far the selection of paper supports the argument that the period witnessed increased differentiation of space, by gender or function. It questions easy distinctions between the choices of male and female consumers, arguing that both negotiated the materials' positive and negative associations.

**‘Figured Paper for Hanging Rooms’: The manufacture, design and consumption  
of wallpapers for English domestic interiors, c.1740-c.1800**

**CONTENTS**

**Volume I**

<b>List of Illustrations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>0. Introduction</b>	<b>17</b>
0.1. The study of eighteenth-century wallpaper, c.1720-c.1800	18
0.2. ‘Interior design, decoration and the decorative arts’	24
0.3. Situating paper in the eighteenth century	29
0.4. Selection of evidence	34
0.5. Structure of the thesis	39
<b>1. ‘Genteel paper hangings’: the production and consumption of wallpaper in eighteenth-century England</b>	
1.1 Introduction	42
1.2 Eighteenth-century consumer society and the trade in paper hangings	47
1.3 The organisation of the trade	54

1.4 'The Art of Painting and Staining of Paper'	74
1.5 Design and workshop practice	84
1.6 Hanging paper in the domestic interior	91
1.7 Conclusion	98
<b>2. 'India' paper and its imitations: Chinese papers and English papers in the Chinese style, c.1750-c.1790</b>	
2.1 Introduction	99
2.2 'A vast storehouse of luxury goods'?	105
2.3 'Real India paper' and its imitations: production, distribution and hanging	112
2.4 Authenticity and imitation	128
2.5 Chinese paper in upper rooms	137
2.6 Chinoiserie: a ruling class style?	147
2.7 Conclusion	154
<b>3. English papers imitating architectural, sculpted and painted ornament, c.1750-c.1790</b>	
3.1 Introduction	155
3.2 Politeness and antique values	163
3.3 Production and retailing: stucco paper, papier mâché and print rooms	171
3.4 'Modern' and gothic designs	183
3.5 Stair and print room papers	198
3.6 Conclusion	212

**4 ‘New and Fashionable Paper Hangings’: prints and panelled schemes c.1770-  
c.1800**

4.1 Introduction	214
4.2 In search of the ‘new and fashionable’	219
4.3 The English maker: a partial eclipse?	231
4.4 Design and workshop practice at the end of the century	249
4.5 Arabesques and borders	259
4.6 Conclusion	270

**5. Conclusion: the place of eighteenth-century paper hangings** 271

**Bibliography** 273

**Appendix 1. Sample fieldwork sheet** 291

**Appendix 2. List of principal sites discussed in the text** 292

**Appendix 3. Preliminary list of London paper hangings’  
tradesmen researched for the thesis, c.1740-c.1800** 295

**Appendix 4. Map showing distribution of paper hangings’  
tradesmen in London, c.1740-c.1800** 303

**Volume II**

**Illustrations** 1-131



## List of Illustrations

### Key to abbreviations used:

Pl.=plate

VAM=V&A

All others are given in the main list of Abbreviations

### Chapter 1

- 1.1 Paper hangings production at Hardy's in Hull, c.1840 (Ferens Art Gallery, Hull)
- 1.2 Tax stamp, c.1712-25 (VAM E.1345-1963)
- 1.3 Hunting frieze, from Cranford House, Middlesex, 1794 (VAM E.1244-1937)
- 1.4 Embossed paper, lettered 'B. Moore Newgate Street LONDON 1763' (VAM E.1972-1927)
- 1.5 Inscription on reverse of 4.15, attributed to John Boover Brook of Great Queen Street, c.1775-1800 (VAM E.192-1955)
- 1.6 Trade cards for Ann Biddulph and Richard Walkden (Guildhall Library, City of London)
- 1.7 Card for sales at The Exeter Flying Post (Bod JJC Booktrade Devonshire temp sequence)
- 1.8 Bill from Thomas Bromwich to Mrs Hucks, 1748 (Museum of London 20/07/05)
- 1.9 Trade card for the Blue Paper warehouse, c.1720 (Bodleian Library Gough maps 45, fol.173)
- 1.10 Trade card for James Wheeley's warehouse, c.1754 (BM, BC 91.30)
- 1.11 Handbill for (Richard) Masefield, 1760s (BM, HC 91.20)
- 1.12 Rose diaper and trellis work papers from the attic storey, Felbrigg Hall, Norfolk
- 1.13 Top: 'Mock flock', stamped 'PAPER 1'; Right: Flock Both from 17, Albemarle Street, W.1, c.1760 (EH ASC 88082052/1,2)
- 1.14 Paper and border, from Whitehall, Cheam, c.1740 (EH ASC 88082049/1)
- 1.15 John Yenn, Longitudinal section of 'A Mansion', c.1775, ill. Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, pl. 283
- 1.16 William Chambers, Design for York House, 1759, ill. Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, pl. 207
- 1.17 Edward Stevens, Design for a London house 'fit for a Gentleman of Distinction', ill. Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, pl. 240
- 1.18 Flock paper supplied by Thomas Chippendale for first floor front room at 26, Soho Square, 1760 (EH ASC)

### Chapter 2

- 2.1 'An Embassy' from John Stalker and George Parker, *Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing*, 1688
- 2.2: Details of Chinese paper at Kelmarsh Hall, Northamptonshire
- 2.3 Left: Chinese panel, gouache, watercolour and gum arabic (Temple Newsam House)  
Right: Chinese panel, gouache and collage, from Shernfold Park, Sussex, c.1750-c.1800 (VAM E.2849-1923)
- 2.4 Album sheet (Bod, JJC 1-2/1981, f2)
- 2.5 Trade card for Roberts's warehouse (Bod, JJC Trade cards 23 (95))
- 2.6 'Berkeley House', Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire:  
Long Street façade and plan of room containing paper (V&A RFs)

- 2.7 Left: Panel of English paper, tempera with printed border, from 'Berkeley House' (VAM W.23-1924)  
 Right: One of three Chinese panels, ink and gouache, from Clarence House, Brockwell Park (Loan to the Museum of London B516-518)
- 2.8 & 2.9 Interior at 'Berkeley House', before 1920 (Wotton-under-Edge Historical Society)
- 2.10 Chinese panel, c.1750-c.1800 (VAM E. 3881-1915)
- 2.11 English panel in the Chinese style from Longnor Hall, Shropshire, c.1740s (VAM E.990-1921)
- 2.12 Left: English panel in the Chinese style, etched and hand coloured, 1760s  
 Right: Chimneypiece paper  
 (Museum of London from Joicey collection, Old London Museum)
- 2.13 English panels in the Chinese style, etched and hand coloured, 1760s  
 (Museum of London from Joicey collection, Old London Museum)
- 2.14 English panels in the Chinese style, etched and hand coloured, 1760s  
 Left: Ill. Margaret Jourdain, 'Old English Wallpapers and Wall Hangings: Part II Chinese wallpapers and papers in Chinese style', fig 5, p.837  
 Right: VAM E.1852-1919
- 2.15 Saltram House, Devon
- 2.16 Chinese Chippendale bedroom, hung with Chinese silk removed from the former Colopies bedroom
- 2.17 Former Colopies bedroom
- 2.18 Details of silk from the Chinese Chippendale bedroom
- 2.19 Top: Mirror room, hung with paper removed from the former Colopies dressing room, below
- 2.20 Chinese bedroom (now Brigadier's dining room)
- 2.21 White dressing room, Felbrigg Hall, Norfolk
- 2.22 Drawing room, Igtham Mote, Kent (NMR CC45 1514)
- 2.23 Chinese bedroom, Blickling Hall, Norfolk
- 2.24 Chinese bedroom photographed in 1953 by A.F. Kersting (NMR H 4978)
- 2.25 Chinese bedroom: South wall
- 2.26 Detail of rail border
- 2.27 Fragments of the Chinese dressing room paper
- 2.28 Hampden House, Buckinghamshire
- 2.29 State bed chamber, Hampden House:  
 (top) hung with Chinese paper of c.1758, photographed when in use as a library, 1890s  
 (ph Great and Little Hampden 88, Buckinghamshire Photographs Archive, Buckinghamshire County Council)  
 (below) as a dining room
- 2.30 'Ribbons' papers from the State bed chamber, Hampden House  
 (BCM 1961.153 /VAM E.948-1978 )
- 2.31 Block print with ribbon swags and pin print ground, from The Spread Eagle Public House, Epsom, Surrey, c.1780 (EH ASC 88082056)
- 2.32 English frieze in the Chinese style, printed and hand coloured, c.1780-1800 (VAM E.937-2000 )
- 2.33 Parlour, Hampden House  
 Top: dining room extended from parlour in 1920s, and rehung with panels of Chinese paper of c.1758 (Hampden House files)
- 2.34 Parlour looking towards dining room added in 1920s. Right: photographed in 1939 (Buckinghamshire Record Office AR 62/1992/16/2)
- 2.35 Left: 'Watteau' paper from the parlour, Hampden House, Buckinghamshire, watercolour and body colour with 1920s [?] pencilled additions (BCM 1967.262/1)

- Right: Huquier after Watteau, *L'Inocent Badinage*, c.1730, ill. *Pattern and Design: Designs for the Decorative Arts*, ed. by Susan Lambert, pl. 2.4b
- 2.36 Chinese paper associated with Thomas Coutts paper, now hung in the boardroom, Coutts Bank
- 2.37 and 2.38 Details from Chinese paper associated with Thomas Coutts
- 2.39 Unknown artist, *Thomas Coutts' drawing room*, watercolour, after 1822 (collection of Coutts & Co)
- 2.40 'Hunting' panels, gouache, left: from Old Brewery House, Watford, both c.1750-1800 (VAM E.252-1924, E.1181-1921 )

### Chapter 3

- 3.1 Strawberry Hill, Middlesex
- 3.2 Strawberry Hill, the stair hall in the 1990s
- 3.3 Richard Bentley, *View of the hall and staircase at Strawberry Hill*, 1753, ill. Anna Chalcraft and Judith Viscari, *Visiting Strawberry Hill*, p.29
- 3.4 Strawberry Hill, stair hall  
Left: fragments of paper, third (1790s) scheme, discovered 1980  
Right: paint scrapes from the staircase with first (1753) scheme at the top
- 3.5 Portion of second scheme of 1772 (middle) with third scheme, 1790s, by Cornelius Dixon
- 3.6 J.B. Jackson, 'After Marco Ricci, 1744', colour engraving (VAM E.2696-1920)
- 3.7 J.B. Jackson, design for wallpaper (VAM E.4534-1920)
- 3.8 House at Sulgrave, Oxfordshire  
Left: the former hall showing the panelling under which the paper was found (Michael Garton)  
Right: stucco paper, c.1760s (Whitworth Art Gallery W 1995.6)
- 3.9 Boston Manor House, Hounslow  
Left: detail of painted balustrade with paper above, second storey  
Right: Stair looking down from second floor
- 3.10 Stair paper from 16, Young Street, Kensington, c.1760-65 (EH ASC 88082053)
- 3.11 Ceiling paper and border from a house in Faversham, Kent, after 1715 and before 1725 (VAM E.1345-1963)
- 3.12 Stucco paper, from Earl's Hall Farmhouse, Prittlewell, Essex, c.1760 (VAM E.1210-1965)
- 3.13 Trade card for William Trickett (Guildhall Library, City of London)
- 3.14 Details of silvered papier mâché mouldings from the Chinese drawing room (below) and the lobby ceiling at Temple Newsam
- 3.15 Bill from Robert Stark, 1782 (Guildhall Library, City of London)
- 3.16 The Ancient High House, Stafford  
Right: detail of floral flock, from first floor SW room and also hung in room above, c.1760
- 3.17 Printed figure panels and borders in imitation of stucco, after 1758
- 3.18 Printed and collaged panels and borders, hung on stair between first and ground floor, after 1758
- 3.19 Gothic papers associated with the stair [?]  
Right: after 1758  
Top: roller print, c.1840
- 3.20 'The Gothic Bedroom', Temple Newsam House, hung with a reproduction of a complex festoon design from 1, Amen Court (late 1760s)
- 3.21 Gothic festoon paper, from the basement of Upton House, Alresford, Hampshire, c.1800 (VAM E.2265-1966)

- 3.22 Unused panel from the Old Manor, Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, late 1760s (VAM E.964-1926)
- 3.23 Paper from Norwood House, Milton Regis, Kent, c.1760 (VAM E.12-1934)
- 3.24 Harrington House, Bourton-on-the-Water: street façade
- 3.25: Upper hall  
 Top: panelling dividing the space from the stair  
 Right: bedroom created from dividing off upper hall
- 3.26 & 3.27 Upper hall photographed in the 1920s (NMR, BB 79/4833,4821)
- 3.28 Upper hall, trophy and singerie panels on the window wall, photographed in the 1920s (NMR BB 79 4830, 4831)
- 3.29 Boston Manor House, Hounslow
- 3.30 Boston Manor House  
 Above: The drawing room  
 Left: Ann Clitherow's 'Calculation', 1786 (courtesy of Janet McNamara)
- 3.31 Stair paper, 1760s or 1780s
- 3.32 Detail of stair paper
- 3.33 Fragments of stair paper, from the first floor landing of a two storey flat-fronted house at 16, Young Street, Kensington, c.1760-65 (EH ASC 88082053)
- 3.34 Detail of Gothic frieze and border
- 3.35 Philip Hussey, *Interior with members of a family*, oil on canvas, c.1760 (National Gallery of Ireland)
- 3.36 Uppark, West Sussex: Print room and detail of dado
- 3.37 & 3.38 Papers from Doddington Hall, Lincolnshire, 1760s (VAM E. 472-1914 and E.474-1914)
- 3.39 Gothic pattern from Doddington Hall, Lincolnshire, c.1750-1800 (VAM E.475-1914 )
- 3.40 Stucco ceiling paper, from The Old Manor, Bourton-on-the-Water, late 1760s Ill. SE, pl. 39b
- 3.41 Details of single panel of stucco ceiling paper showing painting (left) and sculpture (right) from The Old Manor, late 1760s (VAM E. 966-1926)
- 3.42 Paper from The Old Manor, late 1760s (VAM E.965-1926)

#### Chapter 4

- 4.1 Floral stripe with frame-mark datable to 1791 (Whitworth Art Gallery W 2001.2)
4. 2 Diana Sperling, 'Papering the Saloon at Tickford Park, watercolour, 2 September 1816, ill. Gordon Mingay, *Mrs Hurst Dancing, and other scenes from Regency life, 1812-1823*, pl.26
- 4.3 Left: Giovanni Ottaviani (1735-1808), 'Loggia di Raffaele nel Vaticano', coloured etching, 1772-77  
 Right: Cornelis Bos (1506-56), Panel of grotesque ornament, engraving, 1500.  
 Ill. *Pattern & Design: Designs for the Decorative Arts*, ed. by Susan Lambert, pls. 1.9b & 1.4c.
- 4.4 *The Strangers at Home*, from the 'Drolls' series, 1797, ill. Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, pl. 368
- 4.5 Receipt and bill for supplying paper and borders from Robson & Hale, to [?] Verney Esq, 30 May 1809 (Guildhall Library, City of London)
- 4.6 Detail of engraved and hand coloured paper, attributed to Eckhardts, c.1790-1800 (Manchester Art Gallery 1934.22/12)
- 4.7 'Stork and Fountain', attributed to Eckhardts, from George Hill House, Robertsbridge, Sussex, c.1780 (Whitworth Art Gallery W 1967.39)
- 4.8 Panel attributed to Eckhardts (V&A Furniture, Textile & Dress Dept files)

- 4.9 Trade card for Stubbs's, c.1800 (Guildhall Library, City of London)
- 4.10 Unknown artist, *Portrait of John Middleton and his Family*, oil on canvas, c.1795-97 (The Museum of London)
- 4.11 Paper and border, from 47, Manchester Street, Marylebone, c.1795-1805 (English Heritage)
- 4.12 Papers attributed to Robert Stark, c.1775-1800 (VAM E.1244-1937, E.786-788-1936)
- 4.13 Length and detail of unused paper, from a house at Willerton, Somerset, decorated in 1776 (VAM E.1852-1938)
- 4.14 After J.R. Smith, *Woman and Children in an Interior*, oil on canvas, 1791, Geffrye Museum 10/1984-4 (Geffrye Museum: British Interiors Archive)
- 4.15 Bud design with inscription (1.5) attributed to John Boover Brook (VAM E.192-1955)
- Right: Floral design from a room at Uppark (VAM E.797-1969)
- 4.16 Sprig design, from The Rectory, Barnes, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century (VAM E.2247-1966)
- 4.17 Border, printed in pink and buff on a terracotta ground and flocked, from Stourhead, Wiltshire, with annotation by John Fowler (VAM E.164-1972)
- 4.18 Border with lions and rope edging, from Calke Abbey, Derbyshire, c.1800
- 4.19 East front, Clandon Park, Surrey
- 4.20 *Les Deux Pigeons*, attributed to Réveillon, 1780s, rehung in the Palladian Room, Clandon Park, by John Fowler in 1969
- 4.21 Detail of *Les Deux Pigeons*
- 4.22 Arabesque panel, printed on a cream ground and flocked in green, black and red, from a house on Glamorgan Street, Brecon, c.1785 (VAM E.453-1924 )
- 4.23 Paper in imitation of stucco, printed in white, black and two shades of grey on a grey ground, before 1778, perhaps from the Palladian room, Clandon Park
- 4.24 South front, Moccas Court, Shropshire
- 4.25 Printed arabesque panels and rose borders, attributed to Réveillon, interspersed with narrower painted panels, hung in the round drawing room c.1790
- 4.26 Looking South from the bow window wall
- 4.27 (left) Etruscan style borders by Réveillon from the Château du Bourbonnais ill. Bernard Jacqué, *Papier Peint et Revolution*, p.12
- (top) Detail of printed tablet at base of panel
- 4.28 Detail of rose border
- 4.29 Unknown artist, *Thomas Coutts' study at 59, The Strand*, watercolour, after 1822 (Collection of Coutts & Co)
- 4.30 Baby house, c.1780 (Historic Royal Palaces: Kew Palace)
- 4.31 'A Plan and Section of a Drawing Room of a town house', Thomas Sheraton, *The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book*, 1793, pl. LXI.
- 4.32 Eliza Anna Fordyce, 'The artist in the little sitting room at Putney Hill', 1796, ill. *Inside Out: Historic Watercolour drawings, oil sketches and paintings of interiors 1770-1870* (London: Charles Plante Fine Art Ltd, 2000), pl.9

## Preface

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In the Bodleian Library I have benefited from the patience of the staff in the Upper Reserve Reading Room, and for the efforts made on my behalf by Colin Harris, Superintendent, Special Collections Reading Rooms, and Julie-Anne Lambert, Librarian of the John Johnson Collection, both of whom have undertaken extensive searches to locate trade cards and papers. I am also grateful to John Fisher and Michael Melia of the Guildhall Library, City of London, for access to this Library's trade card collection, and to Beverley Cook and Julia Hoffbrand of the Museum of London for their help at an early stage of my research in locating both trade cards and papers in the museum's collection. The staff of the Prints & Drawings Study Room at the British Museum have also assisted my research on the Banks and Heal trade card collections.

Presenting my research to a wider audience has also been invaluable in developing my ideas, and I would like to thank the organisers of the following for the opportunity to share my research:

*Eighteenth Century Directions* PG conference held in June, 2006 at the University of Birmingham ('Genteel paper hangings': consuming wallpaper in Eighteenth Century Britain)



International wallpaper conference held at the Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, June 2007  
(Chinese papers and English imitations in eighteenth-century Britain)

*Colliding Cultures*, Arts AL Research Conference held at Foxcombe Hall, Oxford,  
September 2007

(‘Like the Temple of some Indian God’: Chinese wallpapers and English imitations in  
eighteenth-century Britain)

*Design, Body, Sense*, annual conference of the Design History Society, held at  
Kingston University, September 2007

(An authentic space? Chinese papers and English imitations in eighteenth-century  
Britain)

Seminar series in connection with the *Thomas Schütte* exhibition held at the Henry  
Moore Institute, Leeds, October 2007

(‘Figured Paper for Hanging Rooms’: consuming wallpaper in eighteenth-century  
Britain)

Art History Department Seminar series, London Regional Office, March 2008  
(‘Paper has in great measure taken the place of sculpture’: English wallpapers  
imitating architectural and sculpted ornament c.1750-1780)

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Clare Taylor,

October 2009

## Abbreviations

<i>Autobiography</i>	Lady Llanover, ed., <i>The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delany</i> , 3 vols (London: R. Bentley, 1861)
Baird	R. Baird, <i>Mistress of the House: Great Ladies and Grand Houses 1670-1830</i> (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000)
BM, BC	British Museum, Banks Collection
BM, HC	British Museum, Heal Collection
Bod, JJC	Bodleian Library, John Johnson Collection
BCM	Buckinghamshire County Museum
Burney	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> Century Burney Collection Newspapers, <a href="http://www.galenet.galegroup.com">http://www.galenet.galegroup.com</a>
Clark	Mrs G. Clark, ed., <i>Gleanings from an Old Portfolio</i> , 3 vols (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1895)
Climenson	E.J. Climenson, ed., <i>Elizabeth Montagu, The Queen of the Bluestockings</i> , 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1906)
<i>Correspondence</i>	F. Seymour, ed., <i>Correspondence between Frances, Countess of Hertford and Henrietta Louisa, Countess of Pomfret</i> , 3 vols (London: Richard Phillips, 1805)
<i>CL</i>	<i>Country Life</i>
<i>DEFM</i>	C. Gilbert and G. Beard, eds., <i>Dictionary of English Furniture Makers</i> (Leeds: Furniture History Society, 1986)
ECCO	Eighteenth Century Collections Online, <a href="http://www.galenet.galegroup.com">http://www.galenet.galegroup.com</a>
EH, ASC	English Heritage, Architectural Study Collection
Entwisle, <i>LH</i>	E.A. Entwisle, <i>A Literary History of wallpaper</i> (London, Batsford, 1960)
Fitzgerald	B. Fitzgerald, ed., <i>Correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster</i> , 3 vols (Dublin: Dublin Stationery Office, 1949), I
<i>FH</i>	<i>Furniture History</i>
Gilbert	C. Gilbert, <i>The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale</i> , 2 vols (London: Studio Vista, 1978), I
Hoskins	L. Hoskins, ed., <i>The Papered Wall: The History, Patterns and Techniques of wallpaper</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005)
<i>JDH</i>	<i>Journal of Design History</i>
NMR	National Monuments Record
OH	C.C. Oman and J. Hamilton, <i>Wallpapers: A History &amp; Illustrated Catalogue of the Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum</i> (London: Sotheby's in association with the V&A, 1982)
Rosoman	T. Rosoman, <i>London Wallpapers: Their Manufacture and Use, 1690-1840</i> (London: English Heritage, 1992)
Saumarez Smith	C. Saumarez Smith, <i>The Rise of Design</i> (London: Pimlico, 2000)
Saunders	G. Saunders, <i>Wallpaper in Interior Decoration</i> (London: V&A Publications, 2002)
SE	A.V. Sugden and J.L. Edmundson, <i>A History of English Wallpaper 1509-1914</i> (London: Batsford, 1925)
V&A, RFs	Victoria & Albert Museum, Registered Files
Wells-Cole, <i>FFF</i>	A. Wells-Cole, 'Flocks, Florals and Fancies: English Manufacture 1680-1830', in Hoskins, pp. 22-41
Wells-Cole, <i>HPH</i>	<i>Historic Paper Hangings from Temple Newsam and Other English Houses</i> (Leeds: Leeds City Art Galleries, Temple Newsam Country House Studies Number 1, 1983)
<i>WHR</i>	<i>Wallpaper History Review</i>

## **0. Introduction**

### **0.1. The study of eighteenth century wallpaper, c.1920-c.1980**

### **0.2. 'Interior design, decoration and the decorative arts'**

### **0.3. Situating paper in the eighteenth century**

### **0.4. Selection of evidence**

### **0.5. Structure of the thesis**

It is impossible to recreate the experience of a newly papered eighteenth-century interior, although the Long Gallery at Temple Newsam, recently re-hung with a green flock, comes close. Rather, what survives was frequently regarded as exclusive and worthy of preservation, such as the four rooms at Saltram in Devon (2.16-2.20) hung with (uniformly faded) Chinese papers, silks and prints. However, unlike Chinese papers, which even if removed from the wall might be stored, reused or sold, English papers block printed in distemper colours with repeating patterns were either stripped from the wall or simply panelled or pasted over when tastes changed, so their survival is often patchy at best. What survives are snapshots, such as the paper on the attic staircase at Boston Manor, remnants of a design which depicted on a vast scale the rediscovery of classical remains (3.31). Even where extensive evidence survives for a scheme, there is both the danger of according such schemes singular status over more fragmentary papers and the difficulty of matching contemporary rhetoric with extant examples.

However, there are other factors at work in wallpaper's disappearance.<sup>1</sup> Papers, with the exception of Chinese schemes, were not readily transportable and collectible, unlike ceramics or furniture. The ambiguity of wallpaper's position, literally on the boundary between architecture and interior decoration (itself not a fully professional discipline until the early years of the twentieth century), and the consequent difficulty of collecting and assimilating the material into a methodological framework has also hampered its documentation. Serious academic study of the field is therefore relatively recent in comparison with that of other designed goods.

### **0.1. The study of eighteenth century wallpaper, c.1920-c.1980**

The scholarly study of wallpaper began in the early years of the twentieth century. Early articles on eighteenth century papers were often written from the perspective of furniture historians. These included a series of articles in the *Connoisseur* published during and after the First World War by MacIver Percival and Oliver Brackett.<sup>2</sup> The pioneering historian of English interior decoration, Margaret Jourdain (1876-1951), also published two articles in *Country Life* in 1924 on English and Chinese papers.<sup>3</sup> Significantly, these illustrated papers both in situ and removed from the wall (not always attributed) and in the V&A's collection. As Elizabeth McKellar has shown, Jourdain 'went well beyond the existing architectural treatment of the interior' in

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<sup>1</sup> When describing what we now call wallpaper eighteenth-century producers, retailers and consumers usually used the term 'paper hangings', or, less often, 'hanging paper'. In the early part of the century the term paper hangings 'for rooms' sometimes appears, in order to distinguish papers applied to the wall or ceiling from those intended for lining books or furniture. As the century progressed the term 'for rooms' falls out of use as hanging paper on the walls becomes more widespread. Sometimes 'hangings' is also considered unnecessary, as specialist terminology is developed to distinguish different papers.

<sup>2</sup> MacIver Percival, 'Old Wallpapers', *Connoisseur*, 47 (February 1917), 79-85; Oliver Brackett, 'English Wall-papers of the Eighteenth Century', *Connoisseur*, 52 (October 1918), 83-88.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Jourdain, 'Old English Wallpapers and Wall Hangings: Part I English', *CL*, 29 March 1924, pp.499-501; 'Old English Wallpapers and Wall Hangings: Part II Chinese wallpapers and papers in Chinese style', *CL*, 24 May 1924, pp.835-37.

considering wall hangings as well as panelling and painted finishes in her publications, developing a less architecturally based approach to the study of the historic interior.<sup>4</sup>

It was not, however, Jourdain but Phyllis Ackerman who in 1923 published the first historical survey of the material, *Wallpaper: Its History, Design and Use*, followed the next year by another American, Nancy McClelland, whose *Historic Wall-papers* was an ambitious survey, including French, American and British material, published in London and Philadelphia.<sup>5</sup> Two years later, in 1926, what remains the only historical survey of the English industry to date, A.V. (Alan Victor) Sugden and J.L. (John Ludlam) Edmundson's *A History of English Wallpaper 1509-1914*, was published. Sugden was then Chairman of the Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd (WPM), a conglomerate created from the merger of almost all the United Kingdom's wallpaper manufacturing interests in 1899, and Edmundson a former journalist with the *Manchester Guardian*. Arguing that, during the eighteenth century, circumstances combined for 'wallpaper to take its assured place in domestic interior decoration', the authors used bills, descriptions and details of patents together with colour plates of papers to build a narrative of the industry based on manufacturing growth.<sup>6</sup> Christine Woods has argued that this publication's emphasis on economic and technical success rooted in craft skills was in part a response to the desire on the part of many WPM members, who were manufacturers of hand-made rather than machine-made papers, to disassociate themselves from large scale machine production.<sup>7</sup> However, it was also an approach based on 'famous pioneers' and equally famous consumers, including Horace

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<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth McKellar, 'Representing the Georgian: Constructing Interiors in Early Twentieth-Century Publications, 1890-1930', in *Eighteenth-Century Interiors-Redesigning the Georgian*, ed. by Hannah Greig and Giorgio Riello (= *JDH*, 20:4 (2007)), 325-44 (pp.337-40).

<sup>5</sup> Phyllis Ackerman, *Wallpaper: Its History, Design and Use* (London: Heinemann, 1923); Nancy McClelland, *Historic Wall-papers from their Inception to the Introduction of Machinery* (Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott, 1924).

<sup>6</sup> SE, p.41.

<sup>7</sup> Christine Woods, ' "An Object lesson in a Philistine Age": The Wallpaper Manufacturers' Museum and the Formulation of the National Collections', *JDH*, 12:2 (1999), 159-171 (pp.159-60).

Walpole. It is this model, based on a handful of suppliers and aristocratic consumers, which this study reassesses.

The publication of Sugden and Edmundson's history seems to have stimulated articles on different types of eighteenth-century paper: *Old Furniture* published a series entitled 'Old Wall-papers in England' by Charles Oman of the V&A in 1927 to 1928.<sup>8</sup> Enthusiasm for chinoiserie in 1920s and 1930s design may also have created a demand for research on this area, including a further article by Oman on English chinoiserie wallpapers, and on Chinese papers by W. Stewart Greene and E.A. (Eric) Entwisle.<sup>9</sup> For Chinese papers, the stress was less on 'famous pioneers' than on their unique qualities and their superiority to home produced products; again a position which informed later wallpaper studies. MacIver Percival was also responsible for a series of articles aimed at the decorating trade entitled 'The World of Wallpaper' in 1925, one of which incorporated enlarged details of papers from satirical prints, suggesting a demand from the trade for new design sources.<sup>10</sup>

However, there were signs that the loss of papers due to the demolition or remodelling of urban and country houses was becoming a growing concern, an issue highlighted in the prefatory note to Oman's first catalogue to the V&A's collection, published in 1929.<sup>11</sup> This seemingly encouraged the WPM to present some examples from its own 'museum' to the V&A, amounting to an increase of almost 50 per cent in the

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<sup>8</sup> C.C.Oman, 'Old Wallpapers in England 2.-Early Coloured Papers', *Old Furniture*, 2 (1927), 168-71; 'Old Wallpapers in England 3.-Chinese Papers', *Old Furniture*, 3 (1928), 15-22.

<sup>9</sup> C.C.Oman, 'English Chinoiserie Wallpapers', *CL*, 11 February 1933, pp.150-51; W. Stewart-Greene, 'Chinese Wall-Papers', *The Architects' Journal*, 61 (6 September 1922), 303-06; E.A. Entwisle, 'Chinese Painted Wallpapers', *Connoisseur*, 93 (June 1934), 367-74. Later articles included Margaret Jourdain, 'Chinese Paper Hangings', *CL*, 1 October 1948, pp.684-85, a rare early example of accurate usage of the term for eighteenth century paper.

<sup>10</sup> MacIver Percival, 'The World of Wallpaper: Wallpaper of the Sheraton Period', *The Journal of Decorative Art and British Decorator* (September 1925), 297-300 (figs 6 & 7).

<sup>11</sup> C.C. Oman, *Catalogue of Wallpaper* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1929); see Woods, 'An Object lesson in a Philistine Age', notes 15 & 16, p.169.

Museum's collection between 1929 and 1934. However, as Woods has argued, although Sugden claimed to have no wish to interfere in the museum other than to improve 'the historical records of our articles' by the early 1930s it was clear that such gifts also involved acceptance of the industry's interpretation rooted in examples of what Sugden saw as 'high art' produced by hand printing, rather than the highlights of large scale machine production.<sup>12</sup>

By the 1930s the desire to collect paper was stimulated by other aims than the industry's desire to construct its own narrative. At the V&A the purchase of a chinoiserie paper as part of a complete room interior from a house at Wotton-under-Edge (2.6) was linked to enthusiasm for the 'period room', since, according to Cecil Smith, the museum had long wanted 'a suitable room - if possible with paper in the Chinese style - in which to exhibit our furniture of this Chinese kind.'<sup>13</sup> This example ties in with some of the key components of the Georgian interior, recently discussed by Hannah Greig and Giorgio Riello, a resilient category whose concerns both with particular categories of materials and objects and with authenticity is well illustrated by Smith's comment.<sup>14</sup>

Awareness of the loss of papers through demolition also resulted in early proactive collecting; for example in 1937 after learning that Cranford House in Heston, Middlesex, was to be demolished a curator from the V&A visited the site and carried

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<sup>12</sup> In the end, the WPM collection was divided across three institutions in Britain: the V&A, the Whitworth Art Gallery and the Manchester Art Gallery. See Woods, 'An Object lesson in a Philistine Age', pp.160-61.

<sup>13</sup> Minute note, 13 August 1924, R.F. Harper correspondence in V&A, RFs, MA/1/H752.

<sup>14</sup> Hannah Greig and Giorgio Riello, 'Introduction', in *Eighteenth-Century Interiors-Redesigning the Georgian*, pp.273-89.



out a survey of the papers which survived, eight of which were subsequently acquired by the museum, so were presumably removed directly from the walls (1.3).<sup>15</sup>

The 1930s also marked the start of E.A. (Eric) Entwisle's pioneering studies of the field. Entwisle had worked with Sugden on research for the 1926 history whilst at the WPM, and consolidated his work in a series of articles that used primary research on bills and trade cards, covering subjects such as Thomas Bromwich, the Blew Paper Warehouse and the Eckhardt Brothers.<sup>16</sup> This approach parallels that of other early researchers such as Ambrose Heal, although Entwisle did little to extend his research beyond known major names.<sup>17</sup>

Entwisle also organised an exhibition of 'Historical and Modern Wallpapers' at the Suffolk Galleries in London in May, 1945. In an article written prior to the opening he claimed that the show would 'provide an opportunity of viewing what promises to be the most representative collection of historical wallpapers ever assembled in this or in any other country'. He also emphasised preparations by the trade 'to turnover from war to peace-time production', suggesting that the industry's narrative still remained in control.<sup>18</sup> The exhibition catalogue, introduced by Sacheverell Sitwell, listed over two hundred and twenty items and although the eighteenth-century papers were largely from the V&A's collection, this part also included private loans, and bills from the WPM's collection.<sup>19</sup> Entwisle went on to produce a series of books on wallpaper

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<sup>15</sup> Minute note, 27 August 1937, Heston and Isleworth borough correspondence in V&A, RFs. MA/1/H1805

<sup>16</sup> Including a series entitled 'Eighteenth-Century London Paperstainers' published in the 1950s. The bills are now untraceable; Entwisle told Heal he thought some items purchased by him for the WPM were probably from Hoare's bank, see letter from The WPM Ltd [E.A.Entwisle] to Sir Ambrose Heal, 28 September 1943, BM, HC, after 91.61.

<sup>17</sup> E.A. Entwisle, 'XVIIIth-Century Paper-Stainers' and Decorators' Bills', *Connoisseur*, 112 (September 1943), 38-41; Ambrose Heal, 'Paper-Stainers of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries', *CL*, 22 July 1949, pp.258-59.

<sup>18</sup> E.A. Entwisle, 'Historians of Wallpaper', *Connoisseur*, 115 (March 1945), 23-29 (p.23).

<sup>19</sup> *Catalogue of Historical and Modern Wallpapers* exhibited at the Suffolk Galleries, London, 1945.

including *A Literary History of Wallpaper*, listing written sources chronologically (though not always accurately). His survey of the field, *The Book of Wallpaper: A History and An Appreciation*, first published in 1944, again had a foreword by Sitwell, and included a brief chapter on 'Chinese Wallpapers and English Imitations', which was followed by two chapters on 'London Paperhanging Makers' covering the period from 1690 to 1800.<sup>20</sup> Entwisle illustrated papers, trade cards and bills, but no attempt was made to analyse actual schemes, although he did include sections on 'Prices' and 'Varieties' and considered different types of schemes in his chapter on the second half of the century, subtitled 'Papier Mâché, Painted Papers and Print Rooms'.

Studies of wallpaper in the 1970s and 1980s marked a shift to focus on the documentation of collections. A number of catalogues were generated by the Whitworth Art Gallery, the only institution in the United Kingdom to have a specialist curator and gallery dedicated to the material.<sup>21</sup> However, this collection's strengths lie in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so the eighteenth-century examples in the collection have been less thoroughly researched. In 1982 Jean Hamilton revised Charles Oman's 1929 catalogue of the V&A's collection, organising the material by place of manufacture (Chinese, English, French etc) and within these divisions by date. Although an invaluable source for the collection, including illustrations of most items, the divisions used meant that a paper's context, for example as part of series of papers from a single site, was more difficult to reconstruct.

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<sup>20</sup> E.A. Entwisle, *The Book of Wallpaper: A History and an Appreciation* (Bath: Kingsmead Reprints, 1970).

<sup>21</sup> For example Joanna Banham, *A Decorative Art: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Wallpapers in the Whitworth Art Gallery* (Manchester: University of Manchester, The Whitworth Art Gallery, 1985).

However, the taxonomy particular to wallpaper continued to be imposed by the imposition of anachronistic categories such as ‘pillar and arch’.<sup>22</sup> ‘Pillar and arch’ not only obscures the difficulty of establishing the styles in which papers using the motif of repeating arches and columns might be produced (3.22), but also ignores the descriptors used by contemporaries in favour of formalist labels. Another category, ‘print room papers’, again a term I have found no references to in contemporary rhetoric, is also misleading since study of this type of paper suggests they were not intended to imitate just prints, but also papier mâché or stucco frames and ornaments (3.37).

## 0.2. ‘Interior design, decoration and the decorative arts’

Although Jourdain pioneered the study of wall coverings as part of the interior, as McKellar has pointed out ‘the study of interiors has remained, for the most part, awkwardly situated between architectural historians on the one hand and furniture historians on the other’, differences exacerbated by the concentration of their proponents in different institutional milieus.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, wallpaper studies, with virtually no presence in academia, has been confined to museums, heritage bodies and to some extent the trade, notably those who began reproducing historic papers as part of the boom in the reconstruction of historic interiors on both side of the Atlantic from the 1980s onwards.<sup>24</sup> Although wallpaper was often included in wider surveys of the furnishing and decoration of (principally domestic) interiors from the 1980s onwards, more often than not it received less detailed study than other wall finishes, regardless

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<sup>22</sup> Used for example by John Cornforth in ‘The Triumph of Pillar and Arch’, *CL*, 23 September 1993, pp.72-75.

<sup>23</sup> McKellar, ‘Representing the Georgian’, p.342.

<sup>24</sup> For example for English eighteenth-century papers Zoffany & Co, Hamilton-Weston Wallpapers and for Chinese papers de Gournay and Fromental.

of whether quite grand or more modest interiors were being discussed.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, when publications of views of interiors made reference to the wall treatment, wallpaper rarely merited a mention in the caption, perhaps because the absence of its serious study meant the lack of the ready means to distinguish it from other wall finishes, notably textiles.<sup>26</sup>

There are exceptions to this, for example the work of John Cornforth and John Fowler. They collaborated to produce the pioneering *English Decoration in the Eighteenth Century*, published in 1974.<sup>27</sup> For wallpaper, this brought together contemporary descriptions of its use with Fowler's studies of colour and finish on the wall, gleaned from paint scrapes and discoveries in country house attics. This approach, although far from archaeological, proved highly influential in what Peter Mandler has called Fowler's 'adaptation' of eighteenth-century aristocratic modes at a series of National Trust properties; and equally influential in its stress on the country house.<sup>28</sup> Cornforth also contributed to the study of wallpaper in the interior, through his *Country Life* articles, many of which I have drawn on in this study, and which often include suggestive comments that this format did not allow him to develop. However, in the introduction to his posthumously published study, *Early Georgian Interiors*, he did identify what were, for him, some key problems in approaching the topic. For wallpapers, the most significant were his observations on the rarity of 'entities, of

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<sup>25</sup> For example Geoffrey Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England, 1660-1820* (Edinburgh: J.Bartholemew, 1981); Geoffrey Beard, *Upholsterers and Interior Furnishing in England 1530-1840* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with the Bard Graduate Center, New York, 1997); James Ayres, *Domestic Interiors: The British Tradition 1500-1850* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> For example Peter Thornton, *Authentic Décor: The Domestic Interior 1620-1920* (London: Seven Dials, 2000) and Charles Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993).

<sup>27</sup> John Cornforth and John Fowler, *English Decoration in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1974).

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Margaret Ponsonby, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors, 1750-1950*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p.163. On Fowler's work see my discussion of the Palladio Room at Clanton in chapter 4, section 5 of this study.

complete rooms, apartments and houses’ and the ‘major distortion that cannot be cured’ of the imbalance of visual evidence between country and London houses, since ‘many fashions must have started in London and spread to the country’. In my study I have been mindful of these problems, since my examples are rarely complete rooms and I have also grappled with the imbalance of evidence between country houses, and those in London and provincial towns. Finally, Cornforth admitted that ‘I have become increasingly unhappy about the way we tend to approach interior design, decoration and the decorative arts’; the problem, as he sees it, is that art history has concentrated on the history of style in painting and sculpture and to a slightly lesser extent in architecture, and the decorative arts have been regarded as ‘second class in the ladder of studies and still largely ignored’ with the result that the history of eighteenth-century interiors is seen as architect driven.<sup>29</sup>

Related to the opposition between the fine and applied arts highlighted by Cornforth are divisions between design and the decorative arts. Historic wallpaper is often categorised as a decorative art rather than an aspect of design; in museums where I have conducted research for this study papers were variously cared for by Print, Decorative Art or History curators. The problematic nature of this term has been probed by Katie Scott in relation to the analysis of objects, especially those valued for their decorative rather than functional qualities. She argues that:

‘Decorative’ arts are arts produced in the artisanal, that is to say pre-industrial conditions, and they have been positioned in modern historiography at the antipodes of design. Design is something applied to objects; it manifests a

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<sup>29</sup> John Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), preface. Cornforth also has a significant chapter on chinoiserie which documents a series of schemes employing Chinese paper and prints.

division of labour in its meaning: decorative arts are by contrast, objects to which the principles of refined manufacture and complex aesthetic elaboration are semantically intrinsic.<sup>30</sup>

These divisions are especially problematic in relation to eighteenth-century paper hangings. Techniques such as hand brushing a ground colour onto a piece of wallpaper prior to printing and printing each colour from wood blocks appear to us today as lengthy and highly specialised, the preserve of pre-industrial printing and the period before the introduction of the continuous paper roll and machine colour printing in the 1830s. Principles of 'refined manufacture' and 'complex aesthetic elaboration' are also crucial in tasks such as registering blocks and drawing patterns. Yet the material also, as Scott puts it, demonstrates 'a division of labour in its meaning', since different trades people cut blocks, make decisions about design, carry out printing, sell and hang papers. Moreover, although it is a two-dimensional material, and shares many features with textiles, papers also, as I demonstrate in this study, share design sources with the three-dimensional objects their patterns imitated. Yet wallpaper has rarely been considered as a designed object; rather it is often perceived as a hybrid material, too ephemeral to withstand categorisation in the same breath as ceramics or furniture.

The growth of conservation techniques since the 1980s has also presented wallpaper historians with an enhanced level of knowledge of the stages and decisions involved in applying paper to the wall. Pioneering work carried out at Temple Newsam House, under Anthony Wells-Cole, has argued for the place of wallpaper in the study of the historic house; an important contribution to preserve, document and conserve

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<sup>30</sup> Katie Scott, 'Introduction: Image-Object-Space', in *Between Luxury and the Everyday: The Decorative Arts in eighteenth-century France*, ed. by Katie Scott and Deborah Cherry (= *Art History*, 28:2 (April 2005)), 137-50 (p.137).

wallpaper samples was made by a 1983 exhibition held there and the accompanying catalogue.<sup>31</sup> What is so significant about Wells-Cole's approach is that individual samples from known houses (from merchants' to aristocrats') were documented, recording not only their manufacturing techniques, but also, where possible, the paper type, pattern size, repeat and the dimensions and aspect of the room in which it was hung and details of the hang including the under paper. In addition, archival research was used to reconstruct the papers' contexts. I have drawn on this approach in developing my own fieldwork sheet (Appendix 1).

A similar model was applied by Treve Rosoman to the study of metropolitan homes in *London Wallpapers: Their Manufacture and Use, 1690-1840*, the catalogue of an exhibition organised by English Heritage at the RIBA in 1992, although room size and aspect were not part of the study.<sup>32</sup> Rosoman's catalogue included an invaluable appendix; a list of over five hundred London wallpaper tradesmen from c.1690 to 1820 compiled from trade directories, registers of apprentices of the Stationers' Company and other sources.<sup>33</sup> This was the first time that an attempt was made to document the scale of the industry, and is something that my study also addresses, in preliminary and indicative form (Appendix 3).<sup>34</sup> There remains, however, no study of the industry such as exists, for example, for furniture historians, although Christopher Gilbert's and Geoffrey Beard's *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers*, published in 1986, included firms who made and sold paper hangings alongside other goods.

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<sup>31</sup> Wells-Cole, *HPH*. The exhibition was reviewed by Cornforth in 'Archaeology and Wallpaper', *CL*, 29 January, 1984, pp. 218-19.

<sup>32</sup> The exhibition was reviewed by Wells-Cole in 'The making of a 'considerable article'', *WHR* (1993/94), 33-34. Wells-Cole's review also debates the role of stencilling.

<sup>33</sup> Rosoman, pp.54 -57.

<sup>34</sup> Sugden and Edmundson included a brief list of 'Other Early London Paper-Stainers', see *SE*, pp.86-88; Entwisle listed fourteen paper hanging makers before 1760 (many involved in the trade in leather hangings) in *The Book of Wallpaper*.

Interest in the historic interior also contributed to the publication of a series of general histories of wallpaper on both sides of the Atlantic from the 1980s onwards. The most significant recent studies are *The Papered Wall*, which maintains an essentially historical framework in a series of essays from international scholars, and Gill Saunders' *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration*. Saunders' work was the first survey to attempt what she called 'a more inclusive history of wallpaper', albeit under the problematic title 'Interior Decoration', opening with an examination of the wider context which explored a series of general questions including 'Who Used Wallpaper and Where?' before moving on to a thematic treatment, based in chronology and largely on examples in the collection of the V&A.<sup>35</sup> To date there has been no sustained attempt to examine the material from the point of view of the meanings it carried for contemporaries, although the pages of the *Wallpaper History Review*, published by the Wallpaper History Society, founded in 1986, have allowed scholars such as Christine Woods and Christopher Breward to open up the potential for such a study.<sup>36</sup>

### **0.3. Situating paper in the Eighteenth century**

What my study aims to do is to apply the techniques pioneered by earlier scholars, notably the attention to contemporary textual sources, as well as the approaches of more recent studies which have highlighted the need for detailed analysis of extant samples. However, my study differs from earlier work in that I consider how paper hangings' manufacture, design and consumption relates to recent scholarship on the

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Saunders, p.9.

<sup>36</sup> Christine Woods, 'Sugar and spice- and all things nice?', *WHR* (2001), 20-21; Christopher Breward, 'A fruity problem: contextualising the "Reynolds" paper', *WHR* (1995), 9-14.



eighteenth century more generally. There are particular problems here in studying wallpaper, where research has often been object-based and curatorial, sidelining consideration of wider questions on the nature of, for example, eighteenth-century consumption. Similar problems have marginalized the study of other so-called decorative arts, for example Marcia Pointon has identified a gap in relation to the study of eighteenth-century jewellery in England, which has been split between jewellery historians concerned with objects, and economic and social historians who focus upon production and circulation.<sup>37</sup>

Work undertaken in the 1990s identified the 'long' eighteenth century of c.1660-1830 as characterised by the birth of a modern 'consumer society' and by developing notions of luxury, politeness and sociability. Although I have adopted a much narrower timeframe, each of these concepts is outlined at the start of the four chapters of this study, in order to situate the material changes that took place in the paper hangings industry and their impact on consumers.

A second, related, area of recent scholarship concerns retailing, particularly concerning new markets and a new language associated with these new forms of consumption. Recent work on this area by Claire Walsh in particular has been applied to investigate retail practice, notably in chapter 1 of this study.<sup>38</sup> I have also probed the role of men and women in purchasing papers, applying work for example by Amanda Vickery. Her analysis of Elizabeth Shackleton's correspondence suggests Shackleton was very much in control of the business of consumption and servicing of a home, where 'shopping was a form of employment and one which was most effectively performed by

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<sup>37</sup> Marcia Pointon, 'Jewellery in Eighteenth century England', in *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850*, ed. by Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp.123- 38 (note 12).

<sup>38</sup> For example Claire Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London', *JDH*, 8:3 (1995), 157-176.

women'.<sup>39</sup> However, Vickery also highlighted the role of male consumers. She argues that, rather than being untainted by the world of goods and fashion, men can also be seen to consume, albeit different items and in different ways, such as luxuries for themselves and certain household and 'dynastic' commodities.<sup>40</sup>

A third area of scholarship on the eighteenth century that I have applied in my study concerns issues of design. Any study of the nature of design in the eighteenth century is necessarily informed by the onset of academic design history in the 1980s. Adrian Forty opened up the area for study by focusing in particular on eighteenth-century ceramic production at Wedgwood. Two issues he raises are especially relevant to my study: the argument that the reasons Wedgwood made reproductions (notably of the Portland vase) was to demonstrate that they were not only as good as the original, but also because 'they showed the sophistication of manufacturing techniques better than any new or original designs could have done'. Secondly, Forty examines how Wedgwood lowered costs yet satisfied demands for variety by limiting the number of shapes in Queensware, whilst still offering a wide choice of enamelled decoration.<sup>41</sup> Similar motives may be at work in English paper manufacturer's imitations of Chinese papers, as well as the ability to print a design using the same blocks in a wide range of distemper colours. However, for the reasons discussed in the previous section, design history was slow to take on the eighteenth century; in wallpaper studies the field preferred the named designer narrative of the late nineteenth century. Here it is Maxine Berg's studies of the nature of imitation and innovation that have proved most useful,

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<sup>39</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p.164.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.168; see also Vickery, 'Women and the World of Goods: A Lancashire Consumer and her possessions, 1751-81', in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. by John Brewer and Roy Porter (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp.274-301 (p.281).

<sup>41</sup> Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire: Design & Society since 1750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), especially pp.17, 39-40.

allowing me to interrogate how contemporaries perceived new papers in terms of existing materials with which they were already familiar.<sup>42</sup>

Fourthly and finally there is the growing literature on the eighteenth century domestic interior, which has frequently focused on textual evidence and on visual representations of the interior. Charles Saumarez Smith's 2000 text, *The Rise of Design: Design and the Domestic Interior in Eighteenth-Century England*, attempted to document changing attitudes to eighteenth-century interiors, by drawing on work from the 1980s onwards by economic, social and cultural historians.<sup>43</sup> According to Greig and Reillo, his study represented a shift in the way the history of the interior was conceptualised, by focusing on a changing history of how the interior was represented, visually and in the written word, rather than just at the materials it comprised.<sup>44</sup> Since then, as McKellar has pointed out, new approaches to interiors drawn from eighteenth-century studies have moved away from casting the interior as 'other' which 'far from representing them as contingent spaces have shown their centrality in creating eighteenth-century culture and identity'.<sup>45</sup>

Central to discussing the hanging of paper in the domestic interior is the way in which it may be used to differentiate rooms by function and gender. My work on this area has again been informed in particular by recent scholarship around models of consumption conducted on other types of goods. Vickery's studies, for example, suggest social differentiation through material possessions rather than social emulation, and this seems a far more appropriate model than an hierarchical one for the studying the role

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<sup>42</sup> For example Maxine Berg 'New commodities, luxuries and their consumers in eighteenth-century England' in *Consumers and Luxury*, ed. by Berg and Clifford, pp.63-85.

<sup>43</sup> The text was from his earlier illustrated work, *Eighteenth-Century Decoration*.

<sup>44</sup> Greig and Riello, 'Introduction', in *Eighteenth-Century Interiors-Redesigning the Georgian*, p.280.

<sup>45</sup> McKellar, 'Representing the Georgian', p.342.

of paper hangings in differentiating rooms by function.<sup>46</sup> This model has also been applied by Christine Velut in her studies of the French paperhanging industry. Velut claimed that ‘this decorative material was pre-eminent among the array of consumer goods that introduced art into the domestic interiors of the public at large’; she further argues that, by the eighteenth century, wallpaper was seen as an aspect of domestic material culture in France which was not just about demonstrating emulation, but also propriety and what she calls ‘the conventions prescribed by membership of a particular social group’.<sup>47</sup>

Related to these models of consumption is the issue of the so-called division between ‘private’ and ‘public’ spheres in the domestic interior. Here Vickery also calls into question the arguments put forward by Ann Bermingham and others, who have characterised the domestic space as a site of increasing female confinement and one where ‘commercial wares constructed gender identities and social positions’.<sup>48</sup> She dismisses the generalized idea of ‘separate spheres’ on the basis that this rough division between public and private is too general to be useful, and by no means unique to the eighteenth century, nor is it one that contemporaries used, women rather singling out social and emotional ties. Furthermore, Vickery goes on to argue that the eighteenth century house was not

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<sup>46</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, pp.174-80.

<sup>47</sup> Christine Velut, ‘Between Invention and Production: The Role of Design in the Manufacture of Wallpaper in France and England at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century’ in *Disseminating design: The French Connection*, ed. by Katie Scott and Helen Clifford (= *JDH*, 17:1 (2004)), pp.55-69 (p.67).

<sup>48</sup> Ann Bermingham, ‘Elegant females and gentleman connoisseurs: The commerce in culture and self-image in eighteenth-century England’ in *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text*, ed. by Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) pp.489-512, (p.509).

In any simple sense a private, domestic sphere. Indeed, the idea that the home was a refuge insulated from the social world is one that would have perplexed the well-established in this period.<sup>49</sup>

Fear of effeminacy is also central to understanding how the new domestic spaces of the eighteenth century were perceived since it is often conflated with, or held to be the inevitable consequence of, luxury, resulting in fears about loss of economic or military strength. As Michele Cohen argues, anxieties about masculinity and the blurring of gender boundaries are played out in the social space, a dangerous space 'where boundaries of gender and propriety were transgressed in display and ostentation'.<sup>50</sup> My study probes this blurring in the domestic space, considering how far paper hangings undermined or indeed reinforced ideals of masculinity and politeness although I am keen to avoid simple constructions of 'male' and 'female' spaces.

#### **0.4. Selection of evidence**

Many of my written sources remain unpublished. To support my study of extant papers I turned firstly, in the absence of manufacturer's records, to trade cards. However, unlike early scholars who focused on a limited range of high end suppliers, I have surveyed four major collections: the Museum of London, the Banks and Heal collections of the British Museum, the John Johnson collection at the Bodleian Library and the Guildhall Library for examples of cards and bills covering the paper hangings trade (Appendix 3). The eighteenth-century trade card has been a subject of recent and

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<sup>49</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, p.9.

<sup>50</sup> Michele Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: national identity and language in the eighteenth century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.74.

current research, and I have therefore examined these sources through the lens of new approaches.<sup>51</sup> Michael Snodin opened up the area for research in an 1986 essay, demonstrating phases in the design of the English rococo trade card and its links to print culture, claiming that the vast majority were designed and engraved by professional engravers.<sup>52</sup> However, Scott has mounted a persuasive argument in relation to the eighteenth-century French card suggesting that, contrary to Snodin's position, the designer does have a close relationship with the tradesman or merchant 'whose wares he was helping to sell' and that this was especially the case in paper selling and printmaking.<sup>53</sup> She has pointed out that 'pictures' furnished as cards' models were tradesmen's signs, and that, over time, the sign or physical object on the card became less important to its semantic function, becoming reduced to the status of ornament, and eclipsed by the written text. Secondly, she argues that trade cards functioned less as advertisements for an unknown future purchase, than a record of a past purchase, drawing on evidence that many designs are also found on bill heads and receipts.<sup>54</sup> My study of paper hangings' cards evidences similar developments, where text eclipses (actual) signs, and designs are repeated on bills, suggesting Scott's model has currency here too and that study of cards can reveal tradesmen's intentions. In addition, I have consulted examples of bills in museums and archives which reveal what trade cards rarely mention: actual price, allowing judgements to be made on paper quality, the cost of hanging, and a scheme's complexity and scale.

To complement the study of trade cards and bills, few of which were digitised at the time of my research, I also conducted a search on ECCO using as wide a range of

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<sup>51</sup> For example the Leverhulme funded collaborative research initiative between the University of Warwick and Waddesdon Manor, see [www.waddesdonmanor.org.uk](http://www.waddesdonmanor.org.uk).

<sup>52</sup> Michael Snodin, 'Trade cards and the English Rococo', in *The Rococo in England: A Symposium*, ed. by Charles Hind (London: V&A Museum, 1986), pp.82-103.

<sup>53</sup> Katie Scott, 'The Waddesdon Manor Trade Cards: More Than One History', in *Disseminating design: The French Connection*, pp.91-104 (p.99).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.94-96.

terms as possible encompassing 'paper hangings'. Advertisements and editorials in newspapers and periodicals, notably those available through the Burney Collection, are also touched in my study, and this is an area that merits further research.

However, it is the material object - papers themselves - that forms the main focus of this study. The thesis draws on contemporary terminology to examine papers produced by block printing in distemper colours or hand painting, as well as patterns produced by flocking (usually termed 'imboss'd') and stencilling. Although the thesis does not discuss in detail one category of eighteenth-century papers, leather hangings, it does include materials for print rooms, since 'India pictures' (imported Chinese paintings or prints) and home produced prints and ornaments for use on the wall were part of the paper hangings' trade.

As noted above by Cornforth, the nature of the surviving evidence is always a problem for the study of wallpapers, particularly in the eighteenth century. As well as being one of the quickest it becomes increasingly, over the century, the cheapest means of changing the look of a room.<sup>55</sup> This brings both positives and negatives. It may, as I point out below, be tied into a period of redesign in an old house or decoration of a new one, but equally its survival may be pure chance under later fittings, concealed in a cupboard or simply papered over as, like flock, it was both expensive and difficult to remove. Even one-off, expensive schemes, likely to be preserved, are subject to changing tastes in decoration. Especially valued in the 1920s as part of the vogue for chinoiserie interiors, Chinese papers appear to have been removed from country houses and sold in considerable numbers during that decade.

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<sup>55</sup> In comparison with the weaving of hangings or tapestries, panelling or stucco, paper is outstripped in terms of speed and cost only by painting, and that, as outlined in chapter 1 of this study, was often done over a plain paper.

The survival of papers for study is also linked to their site. As Greig and Riello have noted, studies of the decorative arts (and interiors) have remained ‘preoccupied with the isolated, elite country seat’.<sup>56</sup> Although my study of certain types of paper (notably Chinese) has led to a focus on the country house, I have attempted to address the prevalence of the country house canon and to look beyond Girouard’s classic model of the ‘great house’.<sup>57</sup> I have done this by examining papers from two other types of site. Firstly, examples of papers hung in urban houses which have been uncovered in recent years, notably by English Heritage in the London region, can often yield precise information on occupancy and location and correct this imbalance. Secondly, my study includes examples of papers from gentry and tradesmen’s houses in two small towns in Gloucestershire and in Stafford. Although these are much fewer in number in this study than those hung in grand urban or country houses, I have striven to identify provincial examples in order to consider Margaret Ponsonby’s arguments that the relationship of provincial to metropolitan taste is not one of simple emulation, but could express a distinct cultural identity.<sup>58</sup>

My choice of wallpapers (Appendix 2) encompassed both those in museum collections and those still extant in houses. I compiled a long list of potential sites arranged by type of paper and by county, and a much shorter list of papers in museum collections, as a result of my literature survey. I then visited the NMR in Swindon to research both photographic and other records of these sites. The ‘Red Boxes’ proved an especially fruitful source, enabling me, for example, to document the scheme at Harrington House (3.27-3.28). The vogue for historic interiors, which began in the 1980s, proved

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<sup>56</sup> Greig and Riello, ‘Introduction’, in *Eighteenth-Century Interiors-Redesigning the Georgian*, p.279.

<sup>57</sup> Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House, a social and architectural history* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980).

<sup>58</sup> Ponsonby, *Stories from Home*, pp.23-24.



to be both the salvation and the downfall of my search for extant schemes, since in some cases it had resulted in their conservation, whilst in others it had resulted in the sale of papers (in one case to fuel the then owner's 'Bugatti habit').

In terms of papers in collections I have made use of many of the resources of the architectural historian to try to resolve questions of location and ownership. Often, the house that a paper came from or the family who donated it will be known, but its precise location in that house and the date it may have been hung are far more difficult to pinpoint. This was the case with many examples in the V&A's collection, where, despite searches in the Museum's RFs, these questions often remained unresolved since material had been donated in the period before detailed documentation became usual. There were other difficulties too, since remodelling in the recent and distant past often concealed earlier schemes, as was the case at Hampden House in Buckinghamshire, where reconstruction of the original schemes was also complicated by the division of the surviving papers from the house between three museums.

I devised a fieldwork sheet to record my findings and enable comparisons to be made (Appendix 1). This was guided by the methods pioneered by Wells-Cole in the 1980s, recording the pattern drop wherever possible in order to speculate on hang (small patterns do not however mean a paper was always destined for a modestly sized room, although the reverse is more often the case) as well as detail of the colours used and the technique(s) used to apply them. I have also recorded the number of lengths used, whenever possible, especially for Chinese schemes where papers were supplied in sets. I have also paid close attention to the paper's relationship to other fittings and furnishings whose survival is more frequent, or at least may more often have been recorded.

My questions are however those of a twenty-first century viewer, not those of an eighteenth-century consumer, paper hanging manufacturer or diarist. There is a wealth of difference between examining a decontextualised fragment of a trelliswork border paper on the table of a museum desk wearing calico gloves and seeing it repeated around a room, anchoring tall panels of landscape paper and complemented by other furnishings chosen for their connotations of luxury and exoticism. My fieldwork in both museum collections and houses has enabled me to experience just that contrast.

My study also draws on what consumers have to say about choosing, paying for and hanging papers, as well as visiting rooms hung with paper and - in the case of Sarah Burney - visiting a manufacturer. I started out with a long list of published references, drawn in particular from the sections in Entwisle's *Literary History* for the period and in the work of Fowler and Cornforth. Further references have emerged principally through my fieldwork and in the V&A's craftsmen's files. Although, as noted above, such sources have long been used to flesh out accounts of eighteenth-century paper, the problem of an elite bias is even more acute, since they do not reflect views across the social scale. What they do convey is anxieties about taste: in particular about choice (of both pattern and supplier), cost and visual effects.

## **0.5. Structure of the thesis**

The study is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 sets out my argument for a new interpretation of the place of paper hangings in the eighteenth century. The remaining chapters consider the material evidence for these shifts in production, design and

consumption in relation to a different group of papers. The subject matter of these reflects contemporary practice: so 'India' and 'mock India' papers and prints are considered together in chapter 2; 'stucco' papers and others imitating architectural ornament in chapter 3 and versions of 'stiles' in chapter 4. However, chapters 2-4 also allow the opportunity to interrogate several key aspects of eighteenth century consumer society: notions of luxury and the exotic, of politeness and the threat posed by the Gothic, and of sociability and the appeal of French design.

Since the import of Chinese papers predates the establishment of the domestic paper hangings industry on any scale these papers are discussed before domestic products. Chapter 2 therefore considers paper hangings imported from China and imitations of these papers manufactured in England. Chapter 3 examines the role of papers imitating not imported, but home produced goods, in particular how materials such as stucco, carved wood and painted ornament were adapted to printed and painted papers, as well as papier mâché. It also looks at an alternative model, the print room, and examines its impact on paper hangings. Chapter 4 focuses on papers produced at the end of the century, examining how papers assimilated new ideas from architecture and design.

The study's structure sets out to avoid the 'pure' stylistic divisions for so long associated with designed objects in the eighteenth century. A focus on the material means that although chinoiserie is a focus of chapter 2, 'stucco' papers using Chinese motifs are also included in chapter 3 as part of a discussion of papers in the Gothic taste.

I have placed particular stress in the final section of each chapter on the relationship between the choice of paper and a room's function and use. This reflects recent

scholarship in the field of material culture, and the problematic relationship between people and things. I have attempted to unpick how 'meaning' is constructed for paper and the spaces in which it was hung by interrogating different types of paper. In chapter 2 I question the perceived associations between the selection of Chinese paper and 'upper rooms', arguing that this is far more complex than it has been seen in the past. What emerges much more clearly is the association between stucco paper and architectural patterns for the hall and stair, whose choice is evidenced across social and geographical boundaries in the schemes discussed in chapter 3. Finally, in chapter 4, the nature of the spread of paper into the principal spaces of sociability is probed, where decoration may be more flexible and new materials such as paper more easily assimilated. The study therefore questions easy distinctions between private spaces, public spaces and spaces of sociability.

## **Chapter 1: 'Genteel paper hangings': the production and consumption of wallpapers in eighteenth century England**

### **1.1 Introduction**

### **1.2 Eighteenth-century consumer society and the trade in paper hangings**

### **1.3 The organisation of the trade**

### **1.4 'The Art of Painting and Staining of Paper'**

### **1.5 Design and workshop practice**

### **1.6 Hanging paper in the domestic interior**

### **1.7 Conclusion**

### **1.1 Introduction**

I begin to fear that the air of Richings is whimsically infectious; for its former owner (lord Bathurst) had scarcely more projects than my lord and myself find continually springing up in our minds about improvements there. Yesterday I was busy in buying paper, to furnish a little closet in that house, where I spend the greatest part of my time within doors: and, what will seem more strange, bespeaking a paper ceiling for a room which my lord has built in one of the woods. The perfection which the manufacture of that commodity is arrived at, in the last few years, is surprising: the master of the warehouse told me that he is to make some paper at the price of twelve and thirteen shillings a yard, for two different gentlemen. I saw some at four shillings, but contented myself

with that of only eleven-pence: which I think is enough to have it very pretty; and I have no idea of paper furniture being rich.<sup>1</sup>

This exceptionally detailed account of the papers recently bought for Richings Park was written from London by Frances, Countess of Hertford, to her friend, Henrietta Louisa Fermor, Countess of Pomfret, in February 1741.<sup>2</sup> As Anthony Wells-Cole noted in 1983 it raises certain obvious issues such as ‘who was buying wallpaper [...] why did they choose them instead of other finishes, where did they hang them, how much did they pay for them, why did they subsequently chose to replace them, what other factors influenced their choice, and so on’.<sup>3</sup> However, when quoted in full, it can also be used to illuminate more subtle messages, in particular issues of innovation, consumerism and the use of papers in the domestic space that have been a focus of more recent scholarship and are central to my study.

Hertford is surprised at both the quality and range of goods available for sale in 1741, which suggests that technical innovations had been rapid even by the standards of the fashionable metropolitan elite. Moreover, the trade is evidently well developed: in London paper hanging warehouses were selling across markets, since Hertford makes reference to papers from thirteen shillings to eleven pence a yard, and to a bespoke ceiling design, perhaps in papier mâché or printed in imitation of stucco.<sup>4</sup> This precise discussion of pricing suggests that it was a key determinant even for an aristocratic client and her correspondent.

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<sup>1</sup> 19 February 1741, *Correspondence*, III, pp.5-6. Quotations from contemporary sources are given verbatim, so punctuation and spelling have not been modernised apart from an ‘s’ replacing an ‘f’.

<sup>2</sup> Richings Park was the Hertford’s newly acquired home near Iver in Buckinghamshire. It was demolished after World War II, see <http://www.richingspark.co.uk> [accessed 15 June 2009]; Baird, pp.55-56.

<sup>3</sup> Wells-Cole, *HPH*, p.2.

<sup>4</sup> Papier mâché and stucco paper are discussed in chapter 3, section 3.

The manufacture and sale of paper hangings was also evidently taking place on the same site here, and her account may reflect the practice of manufacturers carrying samples which would be printed up to order ('he is to make some'). The question of the location of the warehouse visited is also raised. Almost certainly in London, a consumer of Hertford's class would be most likely to have visited the established centres of production around St Paul's churchyard and Ludgate Hill (Appendix 4). But the quality she admires most about its manufacture is the material's 'perfection', which she seems to associate with accuracy in pattern matching, and presumably colour matching too. There is also, I suggest, a tension, signalled by Hertford's declaration that she has 'no idea' of '*paper* furniture being rich', implying it has in the past lacked such associations, but equally could be both cheap ('only eleven- pence') and unassuming ('very pretty'). Her remarks therefore needs to be understood with reference to contemporary, often moralistic, discursive frameworks.

Christopher Breward has also suggested that her comments indicate that wallpaper had found a niche either amongst those who could not afford more expensive wall treatments, or those who wished to change their wall decoration more frequently.<sup>5</sup> Hertford it would seem was in the latter category. This may explain why she comes across as a confident consumer. She has herself viewed a range of goods and has discussed matters with the proprietor before making her choice, but has relied on her own judgement as to the suitability of the patterns for particular rooms when at the warehouse. Nor did she feel the need to justify the visit, implying that her correspondent was familiar with the concept of visiting a paper hangings warehouse, and indeed with the acceptability of a female consumer making such a visit.

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<sup>5</sup> Breward, 'A fruity problem', p.12.

The attention Hertford gives to the choice and installation of paper hangings also suggests they were gaining ground on other decorative options in the eighteenth-century interior. Significantly, the closet represents one entry point for paper hangings in the home, since as early as the 1680s papers were in limited use in closets in aristocratic and wealthy merchants' homes. Frequently, these were luxury goods, imported Chinese papers, which retailed at around the same price as damask hangings. Hertford's choice of a cheap, home produced paper may therefore have represented a deliberate attempt to distance herself from such luxury goods, declaring she is 'contented' with her choice. As recent scholars have shown, concerns about luxury and the weakening of social distinction were often projected onto the female consumer who was characterised negatively both as a threat to social order and to commercial life. As I will show, the choice also had a role in defining her sense of her own identity. That this identity had a gendered dimension is highlighted when Hertford articulated the closet's function as the room 'where I spend the greatest part of my time within doors', an issue explored below in relation to interiority.

Moreover, the choice of paper for the walls of a closet is evidently something she thought her correspondent would find acceptable; what she felt 'will seem more strange' is the choice of a bespoke 'paper ceiling' for what appears to be a garden pavilion, built by Lord Hertford in grounds at Richings. It is difficult to establish here if it is the material itself, its exclusive nature or its use in a space removed from the main house and associated with a male consumer, which she thought the Countess of Pomfret would find unusual. However, what is clear is that paper was a significant element in the 'projects' which both genders found 'continually springing up' in their minds in connection with the improvements at Richings. There is therefore evidence here that decorating decisions, even their execution, were shared, although it is Lady



Hertford who made the final choice of both a repeating print for her own closet's walls and a bespoke design for the ceiling of her husband's 'room in the woods'.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter draws on both written and visual evidence to discuss the issues raised in Hertford's letter. I begin by outlining the key themes of the study: firstly paper's growth as a commercial commodity, how it met consumer demand and its position in relation to other trades supplying decoration for the interior. In section 2 I construct a new model for the organisation of the trade, challenging the focus of earlier historians on a narrow group of manufacturers and retailers by investigating wider sources of evidence for the activities of both metropolitan and regional tradesmen.

Related to paper's growth as a commercial commodity is its relationship to other materials and the ways in which paper does (or does not) reject or adopt norms in decoration. Accordingly, in section 3 I explore how paper was marketed to consumers, in particular how it was framed through references to other, more familiar, wall treatments such as textiles and wainscot, which, I argue, were challenged by paper hangings' ready availability.

The third theme concerns consumers' attitudes to the material, manifested in the choice of paper that could either disrupt or modify aesthetic hierarchies, thus reflecting wider attitudes towards consumption. The desirability of this new material is of course linked not only to availability, facilitated by price and the advent of new techniques in production, but also to issues of design, the focus of section 5.

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<sup>6</sup> In May 1741 Hertford also describes how 'Within doors we amuse ourselves (at the hours we are together) in gilding picture frames, and other small things:-this is so much in fashion with us at present, that I believe, if our patience and pockets would hold out, we should gild all the cornices, tables, chairs, and stools about the house', see *Correspondence*, pp.219-20.

The fourth and final theme is the relationship between the hanging of paper and the differentiation of space within the domestic interior, in terms of both function and gender. In section 6 I argue it is not only a question of new technology, but its acceptability and decorative possibilities which enabled paper hangings to become part of a new design vocabulary in a wider range of domestic spaces, and sites within those spaces. The chapter therefore ends with a brief examination of how far the increased differentiation of space in the eighteenth century, by gender or function, can be evidenced.

## **1.2 Eighteenth-century consumer society and the trade in paper hangings**

As outlined in the introduction, wider scholarship on eighteenth-century design has largely bypassed wallpaper in Britain, and my study aims to correct this by applying the questions outlined below to the material. I set out here to re-establish paper hangings both as a category of consumer goods and a significant material artefact to the psychology of consumption. Previous studies have raised a number of relevant issues to pursue in relation to paper hangings.

The conventional history asserts that paper emerged as a commercial commodity in the 1690s, became established in the 1740s, with growth accelerating in the 1760s and 1770s. Writing in 1999 Matthew Craske referred to a recent 'movement away from the assumption that eighteenth-century design history needs to be understood against the broader canvas of a 'consumer revolution' developed by McKendrick and Brewer, which 'is now being supplanted by a set of more sophisticated historical narratives

sketching out a process of gradual evolution'.<sup>7</sup> This is reflected in the development of the paper hangings' trade over nearly a century. However, it remains an ignored trade. As Giorgio Riello has argued in his recent study of another 'marginalised' material, footwear, there is a need for a broader narrative of the 'consumer revolution' encompassing 'minor' sectors. His model is therefore an attractive one for paper hangings. Riello also points out that social and economic practices in consuming footwear are fundamental to understanding how such artefacts are produced and retailed; he rejects a model of economic development based on the modernisation of production, especially manufacture, in order to focus on 'how social and cultural practices in consumption shaped the way in which consumers' needs were satisfied through the production & distribution of goods'.<sup>8</sup> Again, this is an issue I interrogate in relation to paper hangings, examining not only how goods were produced but also how they were sold and distributed. There is, however, an additional need, when studying paper, to understand both the product's requirement for skills in printing pattern and handling colour, and how they were successfully hung.

The impact of paper's texture, colour and pattern on consumers should not be underestimated. Its predecessors were blank wainscot, pattern being achieved only with much more costly finishes including textiles, leather, painted hangings or paintings themselves. This raises the issue of paper's place within decorating trades and how they responded to competition. In terms of taxation, as outlined below, paper was grouped with silk, but manufacture was carried on by stationers as well as by new groups including paper hangings manufacturers and paper stainers (see Appendix 3). Retailing was even more diverse, with the manufacturing trades sharing this with

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew Craske, 'Plan and Control: Design and the Competitive Spirit in Early and Mid-Eighteenth-Century England', *JDH*, 12:3 (1999), 187-216 (p.188).

<sup>8</sup> Giorgio Riello, *A Foot in the Past: Consumers, Producers and Footwear in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.11.

upholders, cabinet makers, and, by the end of the century, those involved in the supply of other household goods. As my study shows, this relationship remains problematic as paper began to rival other wall finishes in respect of imitation and cost, qualities often used to codify it in terms of other commodities.

Intermateriality is therefore central to my study, not only in terms of paper's relationship to pre-existing wall decorations and print culture but also to material culture, notably ceramics. I argue that paper is not just ephemeral and economical but also malleable, adaptable and flexible. Like shoes, paper is not only functional (protecting from damp and concealing the construction finish) but also raises issues of taste and fashionability.

Examining a range of products including textiles, wallpaper and scagliola, Steven Parissien has related these concerns to the growth in availability of consumer goods. In the course of the eighteenth century, he argues, it became possible to exercise taste through choice as the luxury item became generic, the inaccessible accessible.

Certainly proliferation of choice meant it was more important to differentiate between what was considered acceptable and what was considered 'false', and this, I argue, was an aspect of paper hangings that manufacturers were often at pains to highlight in their promotional texts in oppositional terms such as 'mock' and 'original'. Here, taste is not defined as good and bad, rather the positive effects of being able to exercise taste are conveyed in terms such as 'genteel' and 'elegant'. Parissien has also pointed out that whereas taste may be seen as a 'mutable, ill defined concept,' style can be more easily labelled (and, he notes, therefore sacrificed).<sup>9</sup> As I discuss below, contemporary trade cards stressed the variety of choice they offered to consumers ('gothic',

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<sup>9</sup> Steven Parissien, 'Taste, Style and Georgian Aesthetics', unpublished paper delivered to *The Georgian Interior*, conference held at the V&A, 4-5 November 2005.

'chinese'), suggesting that retailers and manufacturers alike took refuge in these stylistic labels.

Claims by individuals to make personal judgements were, however, also problematic.

*The Connoisseur* of May 1756 noted that:

The fine ladies and gentlemen dress with Taste; the architects, whether Gothic or Chinese, build with Taste; the painters paint with Taste; critics read with Taste; and in short fiddlers, players, singers, dancers and mechanics themselves are all the sons of Taste. Yet in this amazing superabundance of Taste, few can say what it really signifies.<sup>10</sup>

According to *The Connoisseur's* writer, the failure to define taste also resulted in its appropriation (and by implication, misuse) by those who had no legitimate claim on its use. In part these concerns were directed against those whose behaviour challenged the position of the educated elite who laid down rules about taste, particularly those associated in the author's mind with superficial display and fashionability in contemporary visual culture including dress, architecture, painting, literature, music and dance. Similar fears are manifested in the writings about paper examined in this study; these are often about fear of the disruption of hierarchies: paper allows 'the middling sort' to aspire to gentry taste, and the gentry to aristocratic taste, whether it is by hanging English prints based on Chinese papers, stucco papers imitating plasterwork, or plain paper and borders imitating more costly architectonic schemes. Catherine Sharp argues that this reflects a changing social climate: 'Wealth no longer being a reliable measure of social superiority, *taste* became the watchword and the new

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Robert Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.13-14.

mechanism of display'.<sup>11</sup> Preliminary studies suggest that this comment needs refinement in relation to decoration at least, since one result of this is an increased desire to distinguish between good and bad taste. This is how Robert Jones differentiates eighteenth-century taste, in terms of its usage 'to provide an account of "correct taste" and to discriminate against that which is false'. According to Jones, 'to be tasteful entailed noting and defining the worth of any one of a number of objects'.<sup>12</sup> This in turn gave the successful user of taste a licence to discernment in other areas of social life, and may be why Hertford was at such pains to itemise the goods she had assessed at the warehouse.

Consumers' attitudes to this new material, manifested in the choice of paper that could either disrupt or modify aesthetic and social hierarchies, also reflected wider attitudes towards consumption. Berg and Helen Clifford have shown that perceptions of consumers' relationships to material goods were often expressed as the problem of dividing necessities from luxuries, focusing especially on the effects of production and consumption of luxury goods. These were perceived negatively, and centred on the idea of luxury as combining excess and inactivity in opposition to the morally virtuous industry of commercial life.<sup>13</sup>

On the one hand, the paper hangings industry would seem to have successfully negotiated the division between luxury and virtuous commercial life, continuing to import Chinese papers into the late eighteenth century whilst also selling a wide variety of home produced papers. When the focus moves to the exotic interior the division is more relevant, especially when discussing the gendering of chinoiserie

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<sup>11</sup> Caroline Sharp 'Women's creativity and display in the eighteenth-century British domestic interior', in *Interior Design and Identity*, ed. by Susie McKellar and Penny Sparke (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 10-47 (p.19).

<sup>12</sup> Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste*, pp.8-9.

<sup>13</sup> *Consumers and Luxury*, ed. by Berg and Clifford, pp.2-3.

interiors in chapter 2, which were often perceived far more negatively. Recent work by Berg and Elizabeth Eger has highlighted the role of luxury objects in visualising social distinctions, as well as questioning an identification of luxury with effeminacy and weakness. This seems particularly applicable to a product like wallpaper whose consumers were often characterised as female.

These negative perceptions had a strongly gendered dimension. Crucially Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace has argued that the proliferation of consumer commodities highlighted by Defoe enabled the connection to be made between female appetite and the acquisition of worldly goods, centring on the tension between economic benefits and a perceived threat to the status quo:

With the birth of consumer culture, women were assumed to be hungry for things - for dresses and furniture, for tea cups and carriages, for all commodities that indulged the body and enhanced physical life [...] Though it had been necessary for the strong growth of the expanding British economy, female appetite for goods, by the end of the eighteenth century, was also perceived as a sinister force threatening male control and endangering patriarchal order.<sup>14</sup>

This appetite was then associated in contemporaries' minds with a taste for the exotic, the frivolous and the unnecessary in decoration and was conceived as a threat to both the country's wealth and feminine standards of decorum. This is plainly what Hertford sought to avoid. However, the readily available, quickly produced (and therefore responsive to new trends in colouration and pattern) material of paper hangings did

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<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp.4-5.

represent a readily available means to transgress existing boundaries in society, an issue that is developed in later chapters of this study.

The eighteenth century is also often characterised as a period when hierarchical emulative models of consumption give way to a consumerist system, based around individual psychology and fashionability. Examining the consumption of goods by different groups within society has suggested an alternative model of consumption organised not hierarchically as in McKendrick's model, but across more lateral boundaries, such as the women linked by familial and social ties in eighteenth-century Lancashire studied by Vickery. Vickery has rejected the hierarchical model of emulation which rests 'on a traditional interpretation of the transmission of taste, whereby modes, manners, artistic ideas reached the London court via Paris, filtered out through the gentry to the provinces and trickled down to the lowly via uppity tradespeople and artful servants'. She points out that this model of 'unprecedented and unrestrained consumerism' is not supported by evidence of practice.<sup>15</sup> The concern of Lancashire women with access to metropolitan markets through family ties was that their chosen goods be appropriate to age, to social station, to function and above all demonstrate propriety. Hertford's letter highlights similar concerns with appropriateness to her situation.

There is also the question of how far consumers were engaging more directly with the decoration of the interior. Saumarez Smith suggests that by the 1740s wallpaper was becoming a part of the room's decoration, not just a background, and that a well-developed visual culture enabled spectators to 'read the signs of the interior and interpret it in terms of the level of education of the owner, the evidence of Continental

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<sup>15</sup> Vickery, 'Women and the World of Goods', pp.275-76.



travel, and the sophistication with which the different parts of a collection had been put together. This amounted as a whole to a judgement of the owner's taste. Interiors were visited and assessed as aspects of their owner's personality'.<sup>16</sup> The quotations from individuals, markers of taste in different ways, which open each chapter also chart the emergence of a new concept of interiority; one that, as Charlotte Grant has pointed out, is reflected in novels of the period, but is also highlighted through the discussion of this most marginalized material.<sup>17</sup>

### 1.3 The organisation of the trade

This section opens with an outline of the origins of paper hangings' manufacture in London and the shift in the trade around 1740. It then goes on to examine how the trade in paper hangings was organised, examining the technical innovations which allowed it to develop. I argue that the supply of this new commodity was contested, both between established trades including stationers, cabinet makers and upholsters, as well as between new ones: the paper stainers and paper hangings manufacturers. The role of regional suppliers and women in the trade is also examined. As part of the contested nature of the trade I end by reassessing the success of Thomas Bromwich, arguing that it was based on exploiting both trading networks and skills in imitation.

Although the earliest use of paper to decorate an interior (a timber beam) dates from c.1509, single sheet papers block printed in carbon ink (which could then be stencilled in a limited range of transparent colours) are found sporadically on walls and ceilings

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<sup>16</sup> Saumarez Smith, p.85.

<sup>17</sup> Charlotte Grant, '“One's self, and one's house, one's furniture”': from object to interior in British fiction, 1720-1900', in *Imagined Interiors, Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance*, ed. by Jeremy Aynsley and Charlotte Grant (London: V&A Publications, 2006), pp. 134-53.

in England from the late sixteenth century, and Chinese papers also start to be imported at the end of the century, but these survivals are patchy and few in number.<sup>18</sup> However, in the first half of the eighteenth century, single-sheet, black outline prints were superseded by far more ambitious productions. Technical innovations resulted in a much greater range of patterns, colours and finishes being made available and hence made it possible for papers to convey ideas of fashionability and novelty.

What then were these technical innovations? The *Modern dictionary of arts and sciences* of 1774 included a lengthy entry on paper hangings, which claimed they were a 'furniture now greatly used' and highlighted a number of innovations in production which had taken place. Firstly, there were innovations in the paper itself. According to the *Modern dictionary* there was no need to explain the qualities of the 'Unwrought' paper 'proper for Hangings' as it was 'a sort of coarse cartoon manufactured for this purpose' which could 'be had of all the wholesale stationers manufactured in a proper manner'.<sup>19</sup> This suggests that stationers were responding to demand for a quality and weight of paper suitable for decoration and for hanging on the wall. Nor does the dictionary find it necessary to mention another early eighteenth century innovation, the pasting of twelve individual 21 in. wide sheets together to form a 'piece' or length some twelve yards long before decoration was applied. The creation of the piece allowed patterns to repeat beyond a single sheet, so enabling larger scale designs, which could repeat across more than one sheet, as well as the creation of dropped repeats by offsetting the pattern in the next length. The ability to dry these long lengths therefore became an important requirement (1.1, right).

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<sup>18</sup> Geerte Wisse, 'Manifold beginnings: Single-sheet papers', in Hoskins, pp. 8-21 (pp.11-12): Wells-Cole, FFF, pp.22-24 .

<sup>19</sup> *The modern dictionary of arts and sciences; or, complete system of literature*, 4 vols, London, 1774, III, p.334, in ECCO [accessed 9 November 2007]. Much of the entry is based on the appendix 'Of the manufacture of paper hangings' in Robert Dossie's *Handmaid to the Arts*, 1758, see Entwisle, *LH*, pl.29.

There were also innovations in decoration, which could be applied by a range of methods, producing different effects. The dictionary listed three methods of painting paper hangings: 'printing on the colours', 'using the stencil' and 'laying them on with a pencil, as in other kinds of painting'.<sup>20</sup> Study of surviving examples suggests that around c.1720 successful stencilling with opaque (rather than transparent) colours and block printing of outlines in colour (rather than black alone) first appeared.<sup>21</sup> The ability to print over stencilling with wood blocks in distemper colours, rather than just as black outlines, is also documented from c.1720, resulting in a much wider range of colours being available. It was this technical innovation, 'printing on the colours' using durable and fast drying distemper colours, which enabled the industry to really develop as a domestic product since it could respond to increased demand and changes in taste much more quickly. Moreover, the dictionary claims that 'The colours proper to be used for the painting or colouring the paper hangings, are all the kinds that can be used in water and varnish'.<sup>22</sup> The use of distemper met the demand for a solid colour in two ways, since water based paint was mixed with glue, so improving adhesion to the ground, whilst the addition of chalk to the colour improved the spread of colour on printing.

Distemper printing also required improved skills in block cutting in order that complex prints, needing a block for each colour, could be accurately printed. These blocks were a valued part of a firm's holdings, as is shown in a (later) painting of the interior of a Hull manufacturer. Blocks are readily accessible, hung on the rear wall and in use by the printer who works in front of a window, using a weighted treadle, to aid correct registration of the block (1.1, left and rear). By 1761 demand for these skills was

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<sup>20</sup> *Modern dictionary*, p.334.

<sup>21</sup> Stencilling did not disappear, but was used to enhance the depth of colour beneath a layer of flock from around 1740 and also in floral patterns until the end of the century.

<sup>22</sup> *Modern dictionary*, p.334.

sufficiently well established for 'Makers of Hanging-paper' to be listed alongside Calico and book printers as trades offering employment for 'wood cutters'.<sup>23</sup>

Another innovation was the advent of successful techniques for flocking. The same painting may also show a 'flocking box' in use, where powdered wool clippings were shaken through a fine sieve onto the paper, adhering to areas previously printed with adhesive (1.1).<sup>24</sup> This technique allowed paper to imitate not only the patterns and colours of textiles, but also their three-dimensional effects. The imitation of damask in flock paper is documented from the 1730s, and by the 1750s and 1760s flock was often applied in two stages, pigmented and/or colourless.<sup>25</sup> However, as late as 1774, the *Modern dictionary* needed to explain that 'the raising of a kind of coloured embossment by chopt cloth' was called flock-paper, 'the art of making which is of very late invention, and is a great improvement of the manufacture of paper hangings, both with regard to the beauty and durableness.'<sup>26</sup> Manufacture was complicated: first 'Cuttings of Cloth' were dyed in the 'Colour the Paper is design'd to be' then cut 'with an Engine, as small as possible, till it becomes as small as fine Powder'. Achieving the right consistency of varnish to allow the ground to successfully take the 'Flock-Powder' was crucial, since it needed to be applied while the ground was 'yet wet'.<sup>27</sup> Surplus powder was shaken off, taking care not to dislodge that adhering to the ground. Often, the colour of the flock was chosen to contrast with the ground (1.13, right and 1.18).

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph Collyer, *The parent's and guardian's directory, and the youth's guide, in the choice of a profession or trade*, London, 1761, p.298, in ECCO [accessed 1 November 2007].

<sup>24</sup> See <http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/museumcollections> [accessed 23 July 2009].

<sup>25</sup> Wells-Cole: *HPH*, p.3; *FFF*, pp. 22-41 (p.27).

<sup>26</sup> *Modern dictionary*, p.334.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Campbell, *The London tradesman, being an account of all the trades*, London, 1757, pp.118-19, in ECCO [accessed 9 November 2007].

However, plain papers were also popular and were frequently used as a background for prints, in particular a pale bluish green often called 'verditer' or 'verditure'. Sometimes the colour was painted on to plain paper in situ, as is evidenced by the decoration of the eating room at Mersham-le-Hatch in Kent in 1769, where Thomas Chippendale (c.1718-1779) billed for 'Hanging and Colouring the Room Green' at a rate of 1/3 per yard. It has also been suggested that colouring in situ avoided taxation dues, and it was certainly cheaper than hanging a painted paper; Chippendale also hung a dressing room with 102 yards of 'a plane pea green paper' which cost a further 3d per yard in the same year.<sup>28</sup>

It was the development of these skills in handling colour, pattern and three-dimensional effects which meant that by c.1740 a much wider range of designs was available, the subject of succeeding chapters in this study. The significance of technical innovations as an agent for change should, however, be balanced with demand for easily renewable forms of decoration. This, as I will show, allowed paper hangings to gain ground over other forms of wall decoration. Demand came firstly from London. There was a boom in speculative housing in the city in the 1720s-1740s; Trollopes were one firm who profited from this tendency, for example by hanging papers in a speculative terrace, St. Michael's Place, Brompton, in 1798-99.<sup>29</sup> Demand for decoration came too from the expanding rental market, since accommodation was needed for quite wealthy people who rented a furnished house for the season. A guide to landlords from 1786 includes a sample tenancy agreement explicitly stating that tenants 'will then leave on the said premises, for the use of the land-lord, the paper-hangings in the chambers'; this implies that such decoration was not only in

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<sup>28</sup> The addition of a gilt border brought the total cost with hanging to £7.12s., see Gilbert, pp. 224-25 & p. 231.

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Saint, *Trollope and Colls: An Early History*, unpublished MSS, compiled 1977, pp.4-5, copy in V&A Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Dept, craftsmen's files.

widespread use, but also likely to be a cause of disputes.<sup>30</sup> This argument is reinforced by evidence of the use of expensive papers in houses intended for rental; in 1777 the late John Crosse's three storey 'elegant, substantial leasehold house' on the corner of Stephen Street and Rathbone Place was described as 'two neat rooms on each floor [...] finished with marble chimney-pieces, elegant India paper hangings'.<sup>31</sup>

Paper hangings were not only easily renewable, but had other advantages too.

Saumarez Smith quotes Saussure's observation of 1725 that 'hangings are little used in London houses on account of the coal smoke, which would ruin them'.<sup>32</sup> By 1751 the turner J. Emon on the Haymarket advertised his 'Feather Brooms' as 'the very best and only Thing to clean and preserve' not just wood, stucco and other ornaments, but also paper hangings, implying their use had become more widespread.<sup>33</sup> Moth was a problem too in textile hangings, but one that the turpentine used in the adhesive on flocks repelled.<sup>34</sup>

Paper hangings did, however, have some practical disadvantages. An advertisement in the *London Evening Post* in 1738 highlighted the risk of fire, and stated that 'To prevent the many fatal accidents attending the Use of common Paper Hangings', the stationer Simon Vertue on the Royal Exchange had received a Royal Patent 'for making and preparing Paper so it will not flame or communicate Fire' which, 'by the Nature of the Preparations Vermin will not harbour in or destroy them'. Vertue's paper hangings then claimed to solve two problems, the risk of fire and the damage inflicted by mice, attracted to the adhesive, and moreover they were 'equal in Beauty with any

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<sup>30</sup> Walter Robinson, *The landlord's pocket lawyer; or, the complete tenant*, London, 1781, pp.43-44, in ECCO [accessed 8 March 2006].

<sup>31</sup> *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 30 December 1777, in Burney [accessed 2 April 2009].

<sup>32</sup> Saumarez Smith, p.78.

<sup>33</sup> *General Advertiser*, 20 August, 1751, in Burney [accessed 2 April 2009].

<sup>34</sup> Saunders, p.55.

other' paper, both 'much stronger and more durable' and cost 'very little dearer than the common Hangings'.<sup>35</sup>

These technical innovations and new demands in decoration were accompanied by shifts in both the regulation and production of paper hangings. The start of regulation in 1712 suggests that at this early date the industry was already seen as a source of revenue and on a sufficient scale to warrant regulation. Significantly, models for the trade's regulation were taken from textile manufacture, implying the two products had a close relationship from the first. Harry Dagnall's studies have demonstrated how paper hangings were grouped with textiles, rather than paper, in the minds of those who defined and developed the taxation system for paper hangings from 1712 onwards. For example, the original length of a 'piece' corresponded to the length of a piece of woven cloth and stained paper was categorised with printed goods such as silks rather than with paper. Furthermore, the 1715 Act instructed that each sheet making up a piece was to be stamped prior to staining 'with a Stamp or Seal already provided for marking or stamping of Silks, Callicoes, Linens and Stuffs, printed, painted, stained or dyed; thereby to denote that Account had been taken of such Paper'. This consisted of the entwined initials 'GR' and the word 'PAPER' followed by an identification number, whose significance has been lost (1.2). Although the *Modern dictionary* was careful to note that 'considerable penalties' could be incurred if paper was unstamped, manufacturers' attempts to evade the tax by pasting extra (uncharged) sheets onto the piece resulted in the introduction of frame marks on each end of the piece, a technique already in use for printed silk taxation (1.3).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> 11 February 1738, annotated typed note, R.W. Symonds to Ambrose Heal, 27 September 1943, BM, HC.

<sup>36</sup> *Modern dictionary*, p.334; Harry Dagnall, *The Tax on Wallpaper: An account of the Excise Duty on Stained Paper 1712-1836* (Middlesex: author's publication, 1990), pp.4-5& p.9.

It is just possible that the use of models from textile regulation was a response to the perceived threat paper presented to textile hangings. As Dan Cruickshank and Neil Burton have noted, in paper, as in many other spheres of eighteenth-century building activity, taxation exerted a powerful influence on practice. As will be discussed below, it was only when wainscot fell from fashion that paper began to gain ground on textile hangings.<sup>37</sup>

However, work by Wells-Cole and others suggest that for printed paper hangings, unlike textiles, London remained the manufacturing centre throughout the eighteenth century, and even in a town such as Leeds manufacturing makes a late entrance. In c.1800 ninety per cent of the 255,731 pieces of wallpaper produced in Britain were still London made.<sup>38</sup> The organisation of the trade in London was characterised by competition between a number of different trades associated with the sale of paper and other interior goods for a slice of this expanding market. These divisions between trades in part reflected their regulation; whereas paper makers were traditionally members of the Stationers' Company, makers of wallpaper belonged to the Painters' and Painter-Stainers' Company and were known as paper-stainers.<sup>39</sup> These distinctions did however overlap in practice. Treve Rosoman has pointed out that 'in the second half of the eighteenth century there was a blurring of distinctions between paper-stainers, upholsterers and cabinet makers'.<sup>40</sup> This suggests that stationers not only continued their traditional role of supplying papers and ink, but moved into the lucrative market of selling paper hangings, also occupied by the paper stainers who were both making and selling goods from their own warehouses. There is also a third group, made up of cabinet-makers and upholders, who were moving into the supply

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<sup>37</sup> Dan Cruickshank and Neil Burton, *Life in the Georgian City* (London: Viking, 1990), pp.162-63.

<sup>38</sup> Rosoman, p.13.

<sup>39</sup> See Alan Borg, *The History of the Worshipful Company of Painters otherwise Painter Stainers*, (Huddersfield: Mills for the Worshipful Company of Painter Stainers, 2005), p.110.

<sup>40</sup> Rosoman, p.15.



(and in some cases the manufacture) of this new material.<sup>41</sup> I now want to examine the evidence for each groups' involvement in the trade, using the evidence of directory entries and trade cards for the period from the 1760s to the 1790s.

In 1763 Thomas Mortimer listed ten London 'paperhanging makers' in *The universal director*. As Appendix 3 demonstrates, many of these were still prominent suppliers later in the century, including Bromwich, Squires, and Spinage and Compton (presumably Crompton and Spinnage, traded 1753-late 1760s). However, the principal manufacturers also include Haden & Son on St. John's Street, Smithfield, and Woollers near Whitechapel Church, businesses to which I have found no other references.<sup>42</sup> What is more Mortimer goes on to explain that they are mostly, if not all, also makers of papier mâché ornaments 'for Looking Glass and Picture Frames, &c.' suggesting this product (using off-cuts from the paper making process) was as important as paper hangings to manufacturers' income.

Directory entries can also help to map the changes in manufacture in London over the next three decades. A decade later in c.1774 a list of London 'Merchants, Principal Tradesmen etc' gave seventeen names involved in the trade, either as paper hanging makers or paper stainers.<sup>43</sup> Those engaged exclusively in paper hangings manufacture included four firms from Mortimer's 1764 list, amongst them Bromwich, now in partnership with Isherwood and Bradley. However, the simple category of 'paper hanging manufacturer' has been replaced by a range of different titles for those

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<sup>41</sup> Upholders went beyond our idea of an upholsterer today, who is concerned only with the covering of seat furniture or bedding, to the printing of pattern books and the design of products, as well as their supply and installation.

<sup>42</sup> 'Paper-hanging Manufacturers', in Thomas Mortimer, *The universal director; or, the nobleman and gentleman's true guide to the masters and professors of the liberal and polite arts and sciences*, London, 1763, pp.53-54, in ECCO [accessed 9 November 2007].

<sup>43</sup> *The new complete guide to all persons who have any trade or concern with the City of London, and parts adjacent* ([London]: Printed for T.Longman, J.Rivington, Hawes, Clarke and Collins and others, [1774?]), in ECCO [accessed 8 March 2006].

involved with the manufacture, sale and hanging of papers. Two firms combined paper hanging manufacture with the business of a stationer (e.g. Armitage and Roper on Bishopsgate) and a further two with that of the upholster. Although a number involved in the early establishment of the trade were still active, Squires was now specialising in hanging paper and the separate references to Crompton's, and to Spinnage and Hodgson's, would seem to evidence that earlier partnerships were already being replaced by a number of separate businesses.

There is also evidence, I argue, that colouring or printing 'pieces' of paper alone, as opposed to making up the lengths of paper, was a more restricted trade at this date since paper staining was listed as the exclusive trade of only Fry and Hodgson's. Moreover, two firms (Wheelely's and William Grant) styled themselves paper staining and/or 'paper hang.' warehouses, implying that there was now sufficient demand for papers to support the specialist retailer such as that visited by Hertford.

By 1784 Bailey's London Directory listed only eight names involved in the trade, either as a Paper Hanging Manufactory or Manufacturer, Paper Stainer, or a Paper Hanging-maker.<sup>44</sup> Half the manufacturers were also stationers, including established names such as Moore and Co. on Aldgate. This supports the argument that those whose business was reliant solely on the income from paper hangings manufacture (Abraham Hall of Aldermanbury) or paper staining (J.B. Brooks of Great Queen Street, presumably a successor to Samuel) alone were again in a minority. There is further evidence of evolving partnerships; Moore and Co. was perhaps still in partnership with Gough, who also had premises at 6, Aldgate as well as on Bishopsgate.

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<sup>44</sup> William Bailey, *Bailey's British directory; or, merchant's and trader's useful companion, for the year 1784*, 1st edn, 4 vols (London, 1784), I, in ECCO [accessed 9 November 2007].

There is also some evidence that manufacturers were beginning to mark papers with their name. Moore's may be associated with Benjamin Moore who, according to Sugden and Edmundson, was awarded a premium from the Society of Arts for introducing the manufacture of embossed paper to England, and although Oman and Hamilton question this, his name and the date 1763 do appear on a single sheet whose white outlines and lettering are embossed, suggesting a wish to associate his name with this innovation (1.4).<sup>45</sup> A similar desire to mark papers with a name, and perhaps also a pattern number, appears in a trailing bud design inscribed 'Brook Great Queen Street' and 'No 61' (1.5), presumably produced by J.B. Brooks.

By 1793 the numbers involved in the London trade has expanded again to thirty-eight.<sup>46</sup> What is significant here is the extent of specialisation reflected in the entries. Twenty-eight 'Paper Hangers, Stainers and Manufactures' were further sub-divided into the three categories.<sup>47</sup> Eleven manufacturers included established firms such as Crompton's and Isherwood & Bradley, however, many of the stainers are hangers are new names. A second category, 'Stationers and Paper-Hangers', listed only ten names out of over one hundred and twenty who were paper-hangers as well as stationers.<sup>48</sup> This does indicate a decline in the role of stationers in supplying papers.

What these entries reveal then is a contested market; whilst stationers' role in supplying papers was being reduced other specialist suppliers - paper stainers and manufacturers - were expanding, and similarly paper hanging was emerging as a trade in its own right. What is clear, however, is that by the end of the century the retailing

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<sup>45</sup> OH, cat. 112, ill. p.124 ; SE, p.134.

<sup>46</sup> Patrick Boyle, *The general London guide; or, tradesman's directory for the year 1794. With a general index to trade*, London, [1793?], in ECCO [accessed 8 November 2007].

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.76.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p.101.

of paper hangings in London is becoming socially and geographically more fragmented. My annotated 1792 map (Appendix 4) shows the rough distribution of addresses listed in Appendix 3. Paperhanging manufacture and sale is revealed as concentrated in the streets emanating from St Paul's churchyard, the traditional centre of the book trade and of cabinetmakers and upholsterers. Tradesmen are operating to the north on Newgate Street and neighbouring streets, to the west on Ludgate Hill (near Stationers Hall) and Fleet Street, and have also moved east onto Cheapside, The Poultry and onto Lombard Street. However, there are other centres emerging, notably around St. James's Square, off Piccadilly and in Soho. By the 1790s the streets in and around Hanover Square (just off this map to the north west) were also providing sites for warehouse owners and paper hangers.

However, some stationers were moving nearer the banks of the Thames. In 1755 the stationer William Ridgway, trading at the White Bear at the corner of Warwick Court, Holborn was not just selling account books and stationary, but also the 'newest Fashion Figured Paper for Hanging Rooms'.<sup>49</sup> However, as early as c.1750 Richard Walkden, a stationer and ink powder manufacturer on London Bridge, advertised 'ye greatest variety of Paper Hangings for Rooms' (1.6, right). Like Walkden, John Kingsbury, a stationer and print seller off Tooley Street in Southwark, also advertised a 'Great Variety of Paper Hangings', alongside stationery and prints.<sup>50</sup> But Kingsbury's signalling of his clientele as 'Merchants, Captains, or Traders' suggests the appeal of paper hangings was reaching new groups by the early nineteenth century, outside the aristocracy, in particular those directly involved in commerce close to his site on the South bank of the Thames. Here Kingsbury was well placed to import as well as export papers.

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<sup>49</sup> Bod, JJC, Booktrade Trade Cards 4.

<sup>50</sup> Bod, JJC, Booktrade Trade cards 5.

This may in part reflect demand not only for imported papers, but also ease of distribution of manufactured papers. London businesses supplied a geographically diverse trade from a metropolitan base. By the 1780s the supply of patterns by post was an accepted part of manufacturers' business and a way of disseminating the fashionable and the new. Trollopes supplied a wide network of clients from Westminster, frequently dispatching samples of papers and borders. This sample service also enabled clients to in turn send back pieces of their chosen design with an order, avoiding mistakes about patterns and prices. For example in August 1797 a letter arrived from The Vyne, Hampshire:

Mr Chute desires Mr Trollope , will send him 56 Yards of bordering like the widest pattern inclosed, which is two pence a yard and likewise 140 Yards of the Bead Border like the narrow one inclosed of a penny a Yard.<sup>51</sup>

Although the trade was undoubtedly focused on London and carried on by male tradesmen, there are also exceptions to both rules that merit further study. Here studies of other trades can again offer helpful avenues of enquiry. Firstly, there is the question of the part played by female tradesmen. Pat Kirkham's study of the London furniture making trade found that women were concentrated in the upholstery trades, and within that in supervisory and entrepreneurial activities. However, by the 1720s successful furniture makers such as William Hallett Snr. (c.1707-d.1781) are separating their trade from their lives as country gentry allowing Hallett's wife to 'pretend she was a gentlewoman.'<sup>52</sup> Kirkham also suggested that widows carried on businesses, and there

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<sup>51</sup> Saint, *Trollope and Colls*, p.6.

<sup>52</sup> Pat Kirkham, ' "If You Have No Sons": Furniture-making in Britain', in *A View from the Interior: Feminism, Women and Design*, ed. by Judy Attfield with Pat Kirkham (London: The Women's Press,

may be some evidence of this in paper hangings trade by the end of the century. The partnership of Spinnage and Howard may have been continued in this way: William Spinnage, upholster, is listed in Gerrard Street, Soho from 1770-77, but by 1783 Ann Howard was trading alone as a paper stainer and upholster at 25, Gerrard Street. She may have been related to the upholster Thomas Howard who became bankrupt in 1776.<sup>53</sup> Some women were also operating independently; for example Jane Pring was an established Exeter retailer of maps, prints and paper hangings<sup>54</sup> and Ann Biddulph also traded on her own account (1.6, left).

Secondly, there is evidence of a flourishing regional trade, such as that conducted by Pring, which London makers needed to keep supplied.<sup>55</sup> Is there any evidence here of similar divisions in the trade to those shown in London? Study of cards from eighteenth-century Devon suggests this may or may not be reflected regionally. In Tiverton the stationer and bookseller Philip Parkhouse trading from 'Near the White Stone' advertised 'Paper Hangings for Rooms, Prints and Pictures of all sorts' alongside other goods.<sup>56</sup> Another bookseller (and binder) in the same town, Matthew Hodge (1726-75), advertised 'a great Variety' of paper hangings priced 'from Three Shillings to Ten Shillings per Piece, of the newest Patterns' in 1759, suggesting some consumers purchased from very local suppliers.<sup>57</sup> There is some evidence that not all of this trade was controlled by stationers or booksellers, but through weekly sales in cities such as Exeter, since a card advertised weekly sales at 'The Exeter Flying Post' (1.7).

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1995), pp.109-129 (pp.116-117). See too Brian Allen, *Francis Hayman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), cat.27, pp.103-05.

<sup>53</sup> *DEFM*, pp. 453-54, 845.

<sup>54</sup> Bod, JJC, Booktrade Devonshire temp sequence.

<sup>55</sup> Such as Wells-Cole's pioneering studies of paper stainers and dealers in eighteenth-century Leeds, see *HPH*, pp.47-48.

<sup>56</sup> Bod, JJC, Trade Cards 4.

<sup>57</sup> Printed by R.Goadby, Sherborne, 1759, Bod, JJC in ECCO [accessed 8 March 2006].

In the city, however, it was upholsters who emphasised their close links with the London trade, such as S. Porter, an Exeter upholsterer and cabinet maker, who claimed he sold 'Superior London Paper Hangings, Prints & cc'.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, as with other goods, the cachet of papers new arrived from London remained a by-line for upholsters, suggesting that geographical distribution was shaping consumer choice. By the 1770s other regional upholsters were including paper hangings in their goods; when the stock of the Salisbury upholsterer Lall Goodfellow was put up for auction in December, 1773, following his bankruptcy, it included no less than '500 Pieces of Paper Hangings', perhaps a volume of papers he could not afford to keep in stock.<sup>59</sup>

Upholders also played a role in paper supply elsewhere. Thomas Sheraton claimed in his *Cabinet Dictionary* of 1803 that: 'Paper Hangings are a considerable article in the upholstery branch, and being occasionally used for rooms of much elegance, it requires taste and skill to conduct this branch of the business'.<sup>60</sup> This suggests that it is the volume of paper hung, and the spaces in which it is seen, that have brought the upholsters' role to prominence. It also suggests that taste is not just exercised by individual consumers, but by specialised suppliers of household goods such as the upholster, opening the door to those who can, in John Cornforth's words, 'dictate to an uncertain client'.<sup>61</sup> Not everyone viewed this positively. Describing the relationship between the upholster and female consumers Daniel Defoe declared 'the upholster ...draws the gay ladies to such an excess of folly, that they must have their house new furnished every year'.<sup>62</sup> The desire for novelty and frequent changes in decoration,

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<sup>58</sup> Bod, JJC, Trade Cards 4.

<sup>59</sup> *Daily Advertiser*, 8 December 1773, in Burney [accessed 2 April 2009].

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Rosoman, p.13.

<sup>61</sup> Cornforth and Fowler, *English Decoration in the Eighteenth Century*, p.25.

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Craske, 'Plan and Control', p.209.

which may well have appealed to Hertford, could then be perceived far more negatively.

However, Matthew Craske has suggested that the period is characterised by ‘a cultural dialect’ between a narrow elite made up of consumers on the one hand, and prominent retailers and tradesmen on the other, and argues for the reassessment of the expanding role of the upholsterer in co-ordinating specialized trades including paper hangings.<sup>63</sup> Craske maintains this is due to the risks associated with the purchase of luxury goods which encouraged consumers to use products ‘which could be recognised by their peers as tasteful’.<sup>64</sup> Is there evidence of this in paper hangings? The work of Thomas Chippendale suggests that the upholsterer acted as a key figure in executing the decoration of the interior. The examples of his firm’s work discussed in this study show Chippendale could design a paper himself, and organise its production, as well as supply off the peg designs or even send his men out to a nearby town to buy supplies of paper, although the firm did not manufacture paper. However, Crompton and Spinnage advertised in 1768-69 that they manufactured and sold Paper Hangings ‘for Home Trade’ and export, ‘papier machée ornaments’, ‘fine India Paper’ as well as painted floor cloths and Axminster carpets and that they could carry out ‘All sorts of Work perform’d in the Upholdery & Cabinet way’.<sup>65</sup> Upholsterers such as Chippendale and Crompton’s could also supply the skilled labour necessary for a successful hang, suggesting its importance to consumers who were prepared to pay heavily to ensure the correct installation of costly and complex schemes. More modest firms, such as J. Guichard, an upholsterer on Great Marlborough Street, asked firms such as Trollope for assistance when choosing or hanging papers for their clients.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.188.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p.207 and note 74.

<sup>65</sup> BM, HC 91.24, ill. in Entwisle, *LH*, pl. 35; *DEFM*, p.211.

<sup>66</sup> Saint, *Trollope and Colls*, p.4.



It would, however, be wrong to think that upholsters had exclusive control of the supply of papers to the top end of the market. Thomas Bromwich's (active 1727-d.1787) business provides one example of how a tradesman could be an important part of this 'cultural dialect'. Bromwich was a prominent supplier who was a member of the Painter Stainers', rather than the Upholders; by 1760 he was Upper Warden and in the following year he became Master of the company and was appointed 'paper-hanging Maker in Ordinary to the Great Wardrobe'.<sup>67</sup> How did he achieve this success? One part of the answer, I argue, was through family and business networks; Alan Borg presumes he was a relative, perhaps the son, of George Bromwich, who was listed in 1674 as a liveryman of the company and Arms Painter.<sup>68</sup> Thomas's own son, William, was also apprenticed to his father in 1755 although no date is given for his freedom. However, the scale of the business is evidenced by the fact that Thomas took on seven more apprentices between 1745-1763. Although one, Evan Jones, was a yeoman's son from Machenlleth, they were more usually tradesmen's sons, such as John Morgan, a London weaver's son, and Hewitt Squibb, son of a Westminster upholsterer, and some may already have had links to Thomas, links he wished to reinforce.<sup>69</sup> Moreover Bromwich proved adaptable in trading at the same established address, 'The Golden Lyon' on Ludgate Hill, through no less than three partnerships, firstly with Leonard Leigh (1758-65), secondly with Isherwood (1766) and finally as Bromwich, Isherwood and Bradley (1769-88).

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<sup>67</sup> *DEFM*, p.110.

<sup>68</sup> Borg, *The History of the Worshipful Company of Painters*, p.110 and note 20, p.137. Rosoman also suggests that Bromwich may have been associated with William Bromwich, recorded as a bookseller on Ludgate Street before 1740, see Rosoman, pp.16-17.

<sup>69</sup> Eloy Koldewej, 'Gilt leather hangings in Chinoiserie and other Styles: An English speciality', *FH*, 36 (2000), 61-101, Appendix 2.

The other business network that Bromwich made use of was that already established by the gilt leather makers around Ludgate Hill. His trade card of 1748 advertised that he 'Makes and Sells all manner of Screens, Window Blinds, and Covers for Tables, Cabins, Stair-Cases, & c. Hung with Gilt Leather, or India Pictures' and this business evidently included covering fire-screens too (1.8). As the popularity of leather hangings declined, firms such as Bromwich's moved into supplying papers.<sup>70</sup> The members of the Painters' and Painter Stainers' Company whom Borg listed as closely involved in the early wallpaper trade were all makers and retailers of gilded leather hangings for rooms and furnishings, for example John Hutton (d.1764) whose apprentices included Robert Halford (active from c.1748).<sup>71</sup> By the 1750s Halford, trading from the south-west side of St. Paul's churchyard, was advertising that he made not only gilt leather screens and hangings, but also fitted up rooms 'with India Pictures, Prints or Paper in the newest taste, at ye lowest Prices.'<sup>72</sup> Such firms had developed skills which could be readily transferred to printed papers, since their workshops were familiar both with making and installing large designs in interiors. Entwisle has suggested that the stamped and gilded patterns used on leather were also found to be appropriate for paper, and although I have not looked for evidence of this (gilt leather hangings being beyond the scope of this study) leather hangings makers must have become familiar with accommodating shifting tastes for certain patterns and colours in their designs.<sup>73</sup>

There was, I argue, another element in Bromwich's success which was closely tied in with the upholder; his close links to prominent names in this trade and that of the cabinet maker. It is tempting to identify Bromwich as a supplier to Chippendale; but

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<sup>70</sup> Koldeweij, 'Gilt Leather Hangings', p.75.

<sup>71</sup> Borg, *History*, p.110, and Appendix B, p.214.

<sup>72</sup> Koldeweij, 'Gilt Leather Hangings', fig 10, p.74.

<sup>73</sup> E.A. Entwisle, 'Eighteenth-Century London Paperstainers: Thomas Bromwich at the Golden Lyon on Ludgate Hill', *Connoisseur* (American edition), 130 (October 1952), 106-110 (p.106).

there is no direct evidence of this, although the paper-stainer(s) who supplied Chippendale evidently offered a matching service in relation to painted furniture, and Bromwich's, as discussed below, provided this for textiles so presumably had the skills to match other materials. However, Bromwich is linked with two other prominent cabinet-makers, William Hallett Snr. and William Linnell the Younger, for both of whom he supplied and hung 'India' pictures and papers in the 1750s.<sup>74</sup> As Gilbert has noted, around 1745 Hallett Snr. was in partnership with Bromwich, and they worked together at Holkham and Uppark, and both supplied goods to Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, Bromwich's name was linked to Hallett's by Richard Owen Cambridge (1717-1802) as late as in 1756 in the opening lines of *An Elegy Written in an Empty Assembly Room*:

In Scenes where Hallet's genius has combined  
With Bromwich's to amuse and cheer the mind.  
Amid this pomp of cost, this pride of art,  
What mean these sorrows in a female heart?<sup>76</sup>

Hallett is then characterised as possessed of design 'genius', which, combined with the superficialities of the amusement Bromwich's products could offer, created a setting in which the female consumer's taste could be satirised.

The example of Bromwich also reflected a wider process of what contemporaries termed 'imitation'. This term has been scrutinised by Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford,

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<sup>74</sup> These schemes are discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>75</sup> *DEFM*, pp.387-9; Geoffrey Beard 'The Quest for William Hallett', *FH*, 21 (1985), 220-225; Anthony Coleridge 'A Reappraisal of William Hallett', *FH*, 1 (1965), 12-14 (p.12); Ralph Edwards and Margaret Jourdain, 'Georgian Cabinet-Makers VIII-Giles Grendey and William Hallett', *CL*, 24 July 1942, pp.176-77.

<sup>76</sup> Richard Owen Cambridge, '*An Elegy Written in an Empty Assembly Room*', in Literature Online, <http://lion.chadwick.co.uk> [accessed 29 September 2009].

who claim that it combined invention with adaptation, since the sharing of catalogues, trade cards, patterns and tools between makers of luxury and semi-luxury goods resulted in the creation of distinctive products adaptable to broader markets.<sup>77</sup> Berg has argued persuasively that the production of new semi-luxury consumer goods in the eighteenth century reflected a desire both to produce substitutes for imported goods and materials (especially from France and China) and new products. She observes that:

Central to this type of invention was a process of imitation, deploying the design principles, finishes and associations of fine luxury ware and exotic materials across new things, or producing similar goods out of new materials which mimicked the older luxury ware, but were also widely perceived to be quite different products.<sup>78</sup>

Berg examined a group of patents taken out in the period from 1627 to 1825, of which most were concentrated in the eighteenth century, as well as the correspondence of the Society of Arts. She found that not only were imitative and substitute processes encouraged by the Society but applicants stressed their success in imitating foreign imports. Paper hangings were not her focus, but trade cards for this product reveal a similar concern with imitation.

For example, 'imitation' (of more expensive textiles and stucco finishes) was singled out as the key factor in Bromwich's commercial success in his obituary which claims that he 'had acquired a genteel fortune on Ludgate Hill, by his ingenuity in manufacturing paper hangings in imitation of stucco as well as of damasks, brocades,

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<sup>77</sup> *Consumers and Luxury*, ed. by Berg and Clifford, p.11

<sup>78</sup> Maxine Berg, 'New commodities', in *Consumers and Luxury*, ed. by Berg and Clifford, pp.63-85 (p.77).

and other stuffs employed for hanging rooms'.<sup>79</sup> The firm's 1748 trade card also highlighted this skill in imitation, claiming to match textiles including 'Chints's, Callicoes, Cottons, Needlework & Damasks' in paper and 'to the utmost exactness, at Reasonable Rates'.<sup>80</sup>

This section has shown that emerging consumer trends are revealed by the study of wallpaper production and manufacture. The material's move into new markets, noted above in relation to the speculative building market in London and the regional trade, also reflected a wider shift from the production of luxury goods serving only a narrow elite to the manufacture of semi-luxury goods reaching a much wider market beyond the nobility. I now wish to turn to discussing the ways in which this new product was marketed to consumers, consumers often unfamiliar with the qualities it could offer.

#### **1.4 'The art of Painting and Staining of Paper'**

Building on the studies of British and French eighteenth-century trade cards, outlined in the introduction, this section examines how producers and retailers characterised this new material by highlighting the key qualities and visual messages they sought to convey. As part of this study, I also re-examine the relationship between those selling paper hangings in metropolitan and regional centres and their intended consumers. To do this, I will be applying some questions highlighted by Ann Pullan concerning, for

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<sup>79</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, 28 July 1787, quoted in Entwisle, 'Eighteenth-Century London Paperstainers: Thomas Bromwich', p. 110.

<sup>80</sup> BM, HC 91.5, ill. Entwisle, *LH*, pl. 22.

example, the ways in which the female consumer is positioned as both consumer and consumed, and by Claire Walsh on the role of shop design in the eighteenth century.<sup>81</sup>

As discussed above, in 1763 Thomas Mortimer included ten prominent London paperhanging makers in *The universal director*. Mortimer also described the trade:

The art of Painting and Staining of Paper of various patterns and colours, for hanging of rooms, is lately become a very considerable branch of commerce in this country, for we annually export vast quantities of this admired article; and the home consumption is not less considerable, as it is not only a cheap, but an elegant part of furniture, and saves the builders the expense of wainscoting; for which reason they have brought it in vogue, and most of the new houses lately erected are lined throughout with Paper.<sup>82</sup>

To Mortimer then paper staining is not just a passing novelty, but has recently become a significant economic activity. Paper hangings were no longer seen either as imported luxuries hung in individual rooms or as suitable only for certain areas. Rather in these new (or newly refurbished) homes, they dominated the interior which was 'lined throughout with Paper'. Paper was clearly readily available, to London builders at least, and in large quantities. The speed with which paper could be hung and the qualities of newness it conveyed are implicit in the quote, in addition to the attractions of its price in comparison to the cost of installing and painting wood panelling. Nor were these attractions confined to new homes, as John Nichols noted when he described the development of Canonbury House near the New River in Islington in

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<sup>81</sup> Ann Pullan, 'Conversations on the Arts': Writing a Space For the Female Viewer in the "Repository of the Arts" 1809-15', *Oxford Art Journal*, 15:2 (1992), 15-26; Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods'.

<sup>82</sup> 'Paper-hanging Manufacturers' in Mortimer, *The universal director*, p.53.

1788 : 'Such of the old apartments as have been spared, are disguised by alterations, and the fine old panelled wainscot either daubed over with modern paint, or concealed by paper hangings'.<sup>83</sup> This reflects the shift in taste for wainscot outlined by Cruickshank and Burton, who argue that its role as the preferred wall covering for major rooms in London and most provincial cities was waning in 1742, and all but over by 1749, 'lingering on' only in the ground-floor dining room or dining parlour.<sup>84</sup>

Mortimer was keen to highlight that both paper stainers and paper hangings makers were contributing to exports, claiming that 'vast' amounts were exported, again suggesting an alignment away from the negative connotations of the material with imported luxury goods. Crucially he also claimed that the product was 'admired', implying its appeal went beyond that of mere price. Mortimer's assessment that it can be simultaneously 'cheap' and 'elegant' is a subtle distinction from Hertford's 'very pretty' eleven pence paper. What exactly he might mean by 'elegant' is difficult to pinpoint, but clearly he wished to avoid connotations of vulgarity. To him, papers were not about conveying grandeur and formality, rather they were conveying a new form of fashionability.

On the question of cost, terms such as 'the lowest prices' which appear on mid century trade cards for Roberts' (2.5) and Bromwich (the latter of whom arguably also charged the highest prices for some goods) were a stock phrase designed to strike a chord with the burgeoning rental market, and perhaps too with aristocratic clients decorating service areas in the home. For example, alongside the hanging of 'India' paper and

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<sup>83</sup> John Nichols, *The history and antiquities of Canonbury-House, at Islington, in the county of Middlesex*, London, author's publication, 1788, p.31, in ECCO [accessed 8 March 2006].

<sup>84</sup> It was covered with scrim (hessian painted with undercoat) to be papered over, but was however often retained on the dado (surbase) and sometimes at the top of the wall too above the cornice, see Cruickshank and Burton, *Life in the Georgian City*, discussed on p.67 & p.165.

bespoke distemper prints at Harewood House in Yorkshire in the 1770s, Chippendale's billed for two trips to Leeds 'to buy paper for the women Servants rooms'.<sup>85</sup>

Another quality often highlighted on trade cards is neatness. The London paper manufacturers and hangers Dobson and Hayward clearly knew the customers they were addressing in their 1791 trade card where they offered 'Rooms papered or coloured in Town or Country in the neatest manner and on the lowest terms'.<sup>86</sup> 'Neat' is a term often used to describe a small geometric print, but Vickery's study of the letter book (from June 1797 to May 1808) of Joseph Trollope of 15, Parliament Street, Westminster whose paper hanging business was founded in 1778, has also led her to associate neatness with a lack of ostentation. Neatness, Vickery argues, for Trollope's customers carried wider connotations of domestic virtue, propriety and cleanliness. Nor is cheap and neat to be confused with the twentieth century idea of cheap and nasty. Neat is particularly associated with classical vocabularies of decorum and was used not just in relation to decoration, but also to personal appearance and events.<sup>87</sup>

Regional suppliers can be seen to evoke similar qualities. Qualities of newness and decorum are combined in the 1770s trade cards of an Exeter bookseller and bookbinder, William Grigg, who retailed 'Maps and Pictures, likewise Great Variety of Paper Hangings for Rooms of the newest Patterns' whilst the papers sold at Fore Street, Exeter, he claimed were of 'the newest and genteelest'.<sup>88</sup> As Victoria Morgan has noted in her study of regional advertising space in the eighteenth century,

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<sup>85</sup> 1 and 4 September 1770, see Gilbert, p.212.

<sup>86</sup> Dobson and Hayward traded at 114, Wardour Street in 1791, BM, BC 91.10.

<sup>87</sup> Vickery, "'Neat and Not Too Showey": Words and Wallpaper in Regency England', in *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America*, ed. by John Styles and Amanda Vickery (New Haven and London: Yale Center for British Art/Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2006), pp.210-22 (p.214 & pp.216-17).

<sup>88</sup> Bookseller and Book-binder in the Exchange, opposite to Broad-Gate, and in Fore Street, Exeter, Bod, JJC, Booktrade Devonshire temp sequence, c.1770.



courteous language and flattery were used to embed ideas of civility, gentility and respectability, at the same time as drawing on the cultural cachet of London connections and standards of taste.<sup>89</sup> This is well evidenced by the Leeds upholsterer William Armitage (traded 1769-c.1782) who pointed out in his 1773 newspaper advertisement that he has ‘just returned from London where he has laid in an elegant assortment of the following articles, which are of the newest construction and the genteelest Taste, viz India, Mock India, Imboss’d and Common Paper Hangings & c.’ implying that his stock offered qualities of both newness and gentility.<sup>90</sup>

Metropolitan and regional suppliers singled out their products not only in terms of key features such as cost and gentility, but also by comparison with other, more familiar, materials. It is worth noting in this context John Styles’ observation on associations with leaders of taste:

It was not essential to court the patronage of the aristocratic ‘legislators of taste’ to endow products with associations of fashionability and exclusiveness [...] but it was possible to evoke these and other attractive associations in the minds of consumers simply by ensuring the product embodied the right visual messages.<sup>91</sup>

The right visual messages, in paper hangings at least, frequently came from products that were already deemed to carry desirable qualities, especially textiles. As Wells-Cole notes:

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<sup>89</sup> Victoria Morgan, ‘Beyond the Boundary of the Shop: Retail Advertising Space in Eighteenth-Century Provincial England’, in *Cultures of Selling, Perspectives on consumption and society since 1700*, ed. by John Benson and Laura Ugolini (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp.59-79.

<sup>90</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 11 May 1773, quoted in Wells-Cole, *HPH*, pp.47-8.

<sup>91</sup> John Styles, ‘Manufacturing, consumption and design in eighteenth-century England’, in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. by Brewer and Porter, pp.527-54 (p.542).

Paper hangings became acceptable in the houses of the aristocratic families when they successfully imitated luxurious fabrics [...] and the very names by which they were known, 'caffow' or 'caffoy', even 'Postick' [...] mean imitation, although the word did not then carry the pejorative overtones it does today.<sup>92</sup>

It is possible that flocks, described by Rosoman as 'imitations of imitations', supplied a model for imitation of other media since they mimicked British woollen textiles which were themselves copying continental silk velvet or damask.<sup>93</sup> The ability to supply flocks rivalling cut velvets in appearance was foregrounded in a number of trade cards, so accuracy was clearly a quality to be valued and there is obvious commercial advantage in imitating what is already a successful commercial product. Roberts described his paper hanging warehouse as a space where 'Gentlemen and ladies may be served with 'great variety of fine Chintz patterns; embost papers to imitate cut velvets; Likewise linen, cotton and silk damask furniture, match'd to the utmost exactness at the very lowest prices'.<sup>94</sup> However, it was not just accuracy in matching but price that was key to flocks' success; Wells-Cole estimates that although lower grade flocks were still far from being cheap in comparison to colour prints, they were a third of the price of silk damask, and less than one fifth of the cost of cut velvet.<sup>95</sup>

When it came to conveying the right visual messages, some trade cards also depicted products, shop interiors and even their intended consumers. Using the model of Ann

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<sup>92</sup> Wells-Cole, *HPH*, p.4.

<sup>93</sup> Rosoman, p.7.

<sup>94</sup> Bod, *JJC Trade Cards 23 (95)*, c.1760.

<sup>95</sup> Wells-Cole, *HPH*, p.3; *FFF*, p.27.

Pullan's work on Ackermann's plates and Clare Walsh's research in shop design I want to re-examine three London trade cards in order to consider how they frame the relationship between consumers, the product and the supplier within the retail shop to create the 'right visual messages'. Dating from c.1720, c.1754 and c.1758 respectively, these examples are the best known of the eighteenth century trade cards concerned with papers, by virtue of their imagery of retailing.

The Blue-Paper Warehouse trade card of c.1720 depicts large and well stocked premises (1.9).<sup>96</sup> The elaborate interior with its pillars and arches reflects what Walsh has identified as an attempt to echo the grand architectural gestures of both wealthy private homes and lavish public interiors, and thereby attract the right level of customer.<sup>97</sup> Moreover the façade is literally festooned with paper; large scale flocks and floral sprigs line shutters, a pilaster is hung with a 'flamed' effect pattern and lengths with a scrollwork pattern are depicted hung over window ledges and unfurling in a niche. Saumarez Smith has identified the male figure at the entrance as Abraham Price, owner of the warehouse, although there is no precise evidence for this.<sup>98</sup> The consumers depicted inside the warehouse are both female, shown handling lengths of paper implying that this (female) pleasure has not just a visual, but also a textural dimension. However, male and female consumption is also represented by the fashionably dressed couple, to whom the tradesman's gaze and gesture is directed, who occupy a space outside the warehouse which they are promenading past. Significantly, however, women are absent from the production processes shown in the vignette above

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<sup>96</sup> Bod, Gough maps 45, fol.173. I am grateful to Colin Harris for locating this item. Ill. Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods', fig 2, p.162. It seems the business was initially associated with Abraham Price, and after c.1750 with John Hall, see E.A. Entwisle, 'The Blew Paper Warehouse in Aldermanbury, London' *Connoisseur* (American edition), 125 (May 1952), 94-98. On the link to Robert Dunbar see also correspondence between E.A.Entwisle and Ambrose Heal, December 1949, BM, HC after 91.45.

<sup>97</sup> Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods', p.161.

<sup>98</sup> Saumarez-Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, pl. 93.

the shop; production is clearly being signalled as remote from the far more significant process of selling. Indeed, the presence of women in the trade could also be read as carrying negative connotations here. A woman occupies a partially screened area literally to the side of the warehouse and her relationship to the urban space outside it is conceived visually in far more negative terms than that of the tradesman's. She does not greet potential clients at the main entrance, but rather converses with a female flower seller whose occupation and dress are portrayed as below, rather than above, her own social status. This flower seller may even represent the female trader.

The c.1754 trade card for James Wheeley's paper hanging warehouse (traded 1754-1818) depicts just one side of a shop interior, where racks are stocked with rolls of finished paper (1.10).<sup>99</sup> These serve to emphasise both the quantity and variety of choice and what Walsh has identified as a key skill in eighteenth-century retailing, good supply contacts.<sup>100</sup> Rather than making any reference to the wider space of the street, the image focuses on the space in which consumption is enacted, with elaborate seating for customers. A male shopkeeper gestures to a 'piece' in a chintz design which an assistant unfurls whilst another rolls up (or perhaps unrolls), a similar pattern on the counter in front of a fashionably dressed couple. The female consumer dominates the space and the details of her dress and accessories support the argument that such images are designed to appeal to the female viewer's desire for beauty and fashionability in choice of decoration as in dress, reflected in the pleased expression on her face. Indeed, it is possible that the child may evoke the desire to educate the young in these processes of choice.<sup>101</sup> At the same time, the focus of the gazes of the male

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<sup>99</sup> The text advertises his Paper Hanging Warehouse at Little Britain and Aldersgate Street where he manufactured and sold 'all Sorts of Emboss'd Chints & Common Papers for Rooms with great variety of Papiee Machee & other Ornaments for Ceilings, Halls, Staircases & c.', ill. Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, pl. 111.

<sup>100</sup> Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods', p.164.

<sup>101</sup> I am grateful to Richard Clay for this suggestion.

consumer and shop staff on this figure within the print suggests that, as Pullan has stated, a 'feminised public' could only participate in the arts 'at the level of commodity consumption and fashionable display'.<sup>102</sup> This reading does, however, indicate some differences to the actual practice described by Hertford and others, who characterise themselves as discriminating buyers of commodities, actively participating in the decoration of the domestic interior as an extension of their control of the household. Hertford's concerns would seem to challenge Pullan's argument that, unlike the male artist or connoisseur, the accomplished woman is seen not as the creator and producer of culture, but as its consumer and reproducer who is positioned either as an active agent of moral subversion, or a passive object of commodity exchange. This point is reinforced by the choice of chintz both for the paper that is displayed and, in a smaller scale print, for the female consumer's hooped skirt.

The focus on the process of choice and the role of the tradesman in this process also reinforces Christine Velut's claim that 'the choice of pattern became an intrinsic part of the pleasure of shopping, especially when to the traditional examination of rolls of wallpaper off shelves or from sample-books were added ingenious and persuasive techniques of the more imaginative shopkeepers'.<sup>103</sup> Shop keepers were evidently engaged in a dialogue with consumers in both this trade card and Masefield's handbill of the 1760s for his 'manufactory' of 'Mock India Paper Hanging' and 'Papier Macheé' on the Strand (1.11).

Like Price's card, the latter depicts an elaborate architectural interior, here incorporating an archway lettered with Masefield's name that separates the shop into

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<sup>102</sup> Pullan, 'Conversations on the Arts', p.18.

<sup>103</sup> Christine Velut, 'Between Invention and Production', p.58.

inner and outer areas.<sup>104</sup> Floor to ceiling racks of finished rolls face a wall hung with papier mâché ornaments (including plaques, brackets and festoons) and mirrors, whilst beyond the arch more racks adjoin a dressed window, allowing goods to be examined in daylight even at the back of the shop. Nor is there any sign of the manufacturing processes that, the text suggests, were taking place on the same site. Rather, the emphasis is on female choice of pattern. Two female consumers in the foreground are seen taking an active role in the process: their gaze is directed towards each other, one gesturing decisively towards a length of paper printed with a large scale floral repeating design held by a shop assistant, whilst discarded rolls lie on the floor reinforcing the nature of this space as a site of feminine choices alluded to in Hertford's letter. Unlike the selection methods depicted on the Wheeley trade card, male participation in this process is, the image suggests, limited. The male consumer is literally and figuratively in the background of the interior, whilst the male assistant's role is to offer choices on which female consumers will pronounce judgement.

What these trade cards do illustrate, as in the eighteenth-century French examples studied by Scott, is a desire to evoke 'beyond the purchases themselves the event, the exchange that transformed them into personal possessions. In that sense the card-invoice functioned not just as a record but as a "souvenir" in the English sense of the word'. Scott further argues that such elaborately decorated cards are a phenomenon of the luxury trades including the fashion industry 'where shopping had developed into a leisure activity and shops into theatres of consumption'.<sup>105</sup> That is the activity these images model, rather than the aspects of production included on Price's card or the symbol used as a shop sign, such as Bromwich's choice of a lion for his trade card and bill-head (1.8).

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<sup>104</sup> Ill. Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods', fig 3.

<sup>105</sup> Scott, 'The Waddesdon Manor Trade Cards', p.97.

It is however also worth noting the role of male consumers, who are depicted in all three of these cards. Indeed, although Walsh notes that in the eighteenth century shopping was perceived as a feminised activity in terms of both physical space and as a social and cultural activity, ‘some feminised retail spaces’ may have been viewed as opportunities for heterosexual sociability.<sup>106</sup> The examples discussed in this section suggest that the paper hangings warehouse was one such space, a view which is reinforced by Vickery’s study of the Trollope correspondence, which concludes that in contrast to later nineteenth-century practices, women and men shared a common aesthetic vocabulary and women expected some say in the purchase of decorative schemes.<sup>107</sup>

### 1.5 Design and workshop practice

This section examines the evidence for the significance of contemporary discourse on design to paper hangings. Design issues were plainly important to Hertford, and it seems to be this that secures her purchase of a cheaper paper which in her opinion ‘is enough to have it very pretty’. As noted above, consumers could also commission a bespoke design, such as Lord Hertford’s ceiling, or at least a colour way of an existing one. The need for consumers, not just visually aware aristocratic ones, to be educated in aspects of design is also implicit in Hertford’s account. Saumarez Smith has argued that the period after 1740 saw an acute awareness of the visual appearance of goods and of the role of design in the sense of ‘the prior conception and invention of fashionable models’.<sup>108</sup> What is the evidence for this in paper hangings? I argue here

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<sup>106</sup> Claire Walsh, ‘Shops, Shopping and the Art of Decision Making in Eighteenth-Century England’, in *Gender, Taste and Material Culture*, ed. by Styles and Vickery, pp.151-177 (p.167).

<sup>107</sup> Vickery, “‘Neat and Not Too Showey’”, pp.217-18.

<sup>108</sup> Saumarez-Smith, p.124.

that a wider discourse on design, and awareness of this on the part of both retailers and manufacturers, does impact on paper hangings, however, I also argue that papers were designed to be read in relation to other fashionable materials, taking as an example the relationship between textiles, flocks and mock flocks.

Manufacturers and retailers needed to develop skills in marketing papers and therefore were particularly aware of papers' visual messages. Craske has argued that this concern was linked to the increasing significance of the literary discourse on design, 'itself a publishing product which was "consumed" by the producers of designed works', and affected attitudes to design. He claims that qualities of industriousness and invention are most clearly demonstrated in design, and that the realisation of design's economic possibilities allowed producers of luxury goods to exert power over consumers, over indigenous and foreign competitors, and over employees.<sup>109</sup> Craske also makes a case for the role of skilled craftsmen in London and the Midlands in remedying the 'design deficit' with foreign manufacturers between 1730 and 1760 and that 'wallpaper production is, perhaps, the definitive field in which to chart [this] closure' through both technical innovations and the foregrounding of the skill of drawing.<sup>110</sup> Is this born out by the evidence? Certainly as outlined above technical developments are crucial to the expansion of the trade and opened up new design possibilities, although Rosoman challenges the role Craske ascribes to J.B. Jackson (1700-77).<sup>111</sup> Do these qualities appear significant to contemporaries? As this study will show, invention is a term used in patent applications, which are of course for new products, and often too one used by leading manufacturers, who might be expected to invent new products. I have not, however, found much mention of workmanship or

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<sup>109</sup> Craske, 'Plan and Control', pp.188-89.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p.204 & note 62, p.215.

<sup>111</sup> Rosoman, p3. Jackson's role is explored further in chapter 3 section 2.



industriousness in eighteenth century bills and trade cards. Presumably they were not thought to appeal to consumers.

In relation to Craske's second point on the skill of drawing one problem is a lack of material on the sources of designs, perhaps because this served manufacturers' interests. Styles has noted that even if manufacturers were often secretive, 'successful copying and adaptation required information about what other producers, and particularly fashion leaders, were doing, as well as what different markets were anxious or prepared to accept.'<sup>112</sup> This information was communicated either by obtaining an example of the product to be imitated or a two dimensional depiction of it. Clearly the latter was all that was needed for paper hangings, and equally a skilled pattern drawer or block-cutter could easily trace a pattern such as damask. According to *The London Tradesman* of 1747, paper hanging manufacturers employed a 'Pattern-drawer [...] paid according to the Variety and Value of his work' who would carry out such tasks.<sup>113</sup> Styles suggests the term 'designer' was first used in the early eighteenth century to describe those who performed the specialised task of providing new designs for patterned textiles, distinct from pattern drawers. By the mid eighteenth century the term was being used more extensively.<sup>114</sup> One such early example is James Leman, who supplied private and commercial customers with Spitalfields silk motifs which Wells-Cole pointed out are 'so close' to wallpapers that he may have made designs for these too.<sup>115</sup>

There is, however, no evidence of paper hanging manufacturers setting up related institutions to teach drawing as happened with the Fulham carpet trade. What is, I

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<sup>112</sup> Styles, 'Manufacturing, consumption and design', p.544.

<sup>113</sup> Quoted in Wells-Cole, *HPH*, p.4.

<sup>114</sup> Styles, 'Manufacturing, consumption and design', pp.543-44.

<sup>115</sup> Wells-Cole, *HPH*, p.4.

argue, more significant to paper hangings is the role of networks of skilled craftsmen in London and the Midlands who can remedy the 'design deficit' that Craske highlights. St Martin's Lane, where Chippendale, the architect James Paine and the cabinet maker John Linnell as well as the colourman and paper supplier John Middleton (traded c.1792-1810) were based may be one such centre, and further study may well provide links between the St Martin's Lane Academy and paper stainers.<sup>116</sup>

One paper manufacturer who clearly did play a significant role in the wider discourse on design was Matthias Darly (c.1720-c.1779). A handbill for his premises at the sign of the acorn describes him as a 'Painter, Engraver and Paper Stainer', suggesting Darly was carefully positioning himself as high art practitioner first, tradesman second.<sup>117</sup>

However, Eileen Harris' research has shown that Darly supplied ornament to 'gentleman, ladies' and also 'tradesmen'. For example, in the 1771 *Ornamental Architect or Young Artists Instructor*, later retitled *A Compleat Body of Architecture*, Darly, styling himself Professor of Ornament and Engraver, claimed that 'Ornamental studies, hitherto but little known in this kingdom, begin to be more understood and enquired after, and is that part of Drawing which is most essential to Artists Manufacturers, and Mechanics'.<sup>118</sup>

However, it was 'Modern, Gothic or Chinese Taste' that was illustrated on Darly's handbill, which, uniquely, showed a wide range of different designs including rococo florals, a Gothic ogee arch and a bamboo trellis pattern as well as chinoiserie figure panels. Darly's products were therefore aligned with the 'modern' or rococo style

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<sup>116</sup> Middleton is discussed in chapter 4 section 3; the role of Paine and Linnell in supplying 'India' papers in chapter 2.

<sup>117</sup> BM, HC 91.25. Darly's role is discussed in Saunders, p.72. On his wider role in design see Christopher Gilbert, 'The Early Furniture Designs of Matthias Darly', *FH*, 11 (1975), 33-39.

<sup>118</sup> Eileen Harris, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.176-78.

imported into England from France, a style which was applied to objects and decoration, not high art. As Gilbert has argued in relation to Chippendale, the rococo style was disseminated at the level of the craftsman, with members of the St Martin's Lane 'set' of artists, decorators and craftsmen as prime agents in disseminating the style. Gilbert also suggests Chippendale may have received instruction from Darly, and they were certainly closely associated since Darly engraved most of the plates for the *Director*, living at the same address as Chippendale in Northumberland Court while they were engaged in this process.<sup>119</sup> The handbill also mentioned the supply of sketches, and that 'any Gentleman or Lady may be Oblig'd with their own Fancy by sending a sketch of their Design'.<sup>120</sup> This suggests more active involvement by consumers in the design process, similarly seen on Roberts's trade card (2.5), supporting Saumarez Smith's position on the role of consumers in the invention of new models.

Darly also, I argue, occupied a wider role in mediating the relationship between producers and consumers. He advertised that he designed 'Shopkeepers Bills' and what is particularly significant for paper hangings is that he designed a number of other leading manufacturers' trade cards, certainly including those for Jones's and Davenport's and perhaps others too.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, Berg and Clifford have suggested that a trade card engraved by a well known name such as Darly was a sign of status for the shopkeeper, connecting the shop 'with the wider world of polite "art"'.<sup>122</sup>

A further insight into the value manufacturers placed on design is provided by Wheeley's advertisement in the *Public Advertiser*:

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<sup>119</sup> Gilbert, pp.109-11& p.113.

<sup>120</sup> Darly advertises 'Designs for Gentlemen's [Different Fancies]', ill. Rosoman, fig 12, p.12.

<sup>121</sup> BM, HC 91.37; BM, BC 91.8.

<sup>122</sup> Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, 'Selling Consumption in the Eighteenth Century, Advertising and the Trade Card in Britain and France', *Cultural and Social History*, 4:2 (2007), 145-170 (p.162).

James Wheeley, Paper Hanging Maker in Little Britain, begs leave to acquaint all Stationers, Upholders & others that he has purchased all the Art Stock in Trade, working Tools and Prints belonging to Messrs Wagg & Garnett [...] where all who have any occasion for any of the above Person's Patterns, may be supplied with the same.<sup>123</sup>

This highlights the commercial value placed on a firm's design archive. In the case of paper hangings this comprised wood blocks and records of the distemper and flock colours used to print commercially successful designs. Since designs such as damask flocks, diapers, trellis and printed stripes all enjoyed long popularity, possession of blocks enabled firms to reprint patterns in different colours and finishes to reflect shifts in taste.

There is, however, other evidence of the impact of a wider discourse on the design of eighteenth-century paper hangings. Scott has identified imitation as the link between the so-called fine and decorative arts in textiles. She suggests such imitation may be self-reflexive, inviting 'the attentive viewer' of eighteenth century silks to 'read the fabric in relation to other materials, other arts and traditions'.<sup>124</sup> Can these readings apply to paper too? It would seem to be born out in contemporary references to 'true' and 'mock India' paper directing the consumer in the visual referents they should draw from these products.<sup>125</sup> Success in imitation of other materials may be an aspect of what Hertford had in mind when she alluded to 'perfection' in paper hangings. It is also a key component of semi-luxury goods highlighted by Berg above, and a quality

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<sup>123</sup> 31 August 1754, quoted in Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, p.129.

<sup>124</sup> Katie Scott, 'Introduction: Image-Object-Space', p.144.

<sup>125</sup> These products are discussed in chapter 2.

frequently ascribed to paper hangings. I wish to examine this quality in relation to papers imitating textiles and consider if there is any evidence that they were to be read in this way, taking the example of two papers hung at 17, Albemarle Street off Piccadilly.

A dramatically coloured flock paper with a huge repeat was hung in a second floor rear room with a by no means lofty ceiling in c.1760-65 (1.13, right). The flock's thickness, even today, evidences that paper hangings could successfully imitate not only the patterns, but also the three-dimensional texture, of textiles as manufacturers claimed. In contrast a very convincing mock flock paper, achieved by sprinkling powdered colour rather than wool over adhesive, was hung on the more prestigious first floor (1.13, top). It is only through close examination that the mock flock pattern is revealed as block printed. Cost does not seem to be the only grounds for the choice of a mock flock. Lady Mary Heathcote, selecting paper for her father in 1763, explained that 'I have therefore ordered a pattern in Mosaick, Green upon a cloth ground in imitation of real flock (wch. they tell me in that light colour wears better than the real).'<sup>126</sup> Rosoman has also noted that, as the first floor of London houses was the principal main space, it is where one would expect 'a fine, expensive paper appropriate to this fashionable address'.<sup>127</sup> This was the case at Sir William Robinson's newly built town house on Soho Square, where Thomas Chippendale supplied a crimson flock and border on the first floor, and a 'Green mock-flock paper' and borders on the second floor in 1760.<sup>128</sup> Perhaps technique is a clue here, since a mock flock was a conceit that employed the skills of the printer to deceive the spectator's eye on a number of levels. It also implied knowledge of the sources

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<sup>126</sup> Letter to the First Earl Harwicke, quoted in Saunders, p.59.

<sup>127</sup> Rosoman, p.37.

<sup>128</sup> April-May 1760, see Gilbert, p.141.

imitated, both textiles and paper, in order for the viewer to appreciate the extent of the imitation. This may be related to a wider issue highlighted by Hannah Greig, that of changing perceptions of textures in the later Georgian interior.<sup>129</sup> Since wallpaper offered a different way of conveying texture I suggest that it could also change the way in which surfaces were perceived.

However, it was not just the patterns and textures of textile hangings that were imitated. Some papers showed knowledge of the subtleties of textile printing, imitating contemporary (especially French) printed linens and fustians by reproducing the irregularities of over printing inherent in the combination of the two techniques (1.14).<sup>130</sup> Nor were furnishing fabrics the only source for paper hangings. Certain patterns were directly related to dress fabrics, for example Rosoman has identified a summer weight silk taffeta woven with a 'flamed' effect as a source for a block print in two shades of blue on a white ground of c.1760 from 44, Berkeley Square.<sup>131</sup>

Although evidence for the role of design in workshop practice is limited, the examples of consumers and tradesmen's practices discussed here suggests both groups were acutely aware of papers' imitative qualities. In particular, they display concerns with how the material's visual messages could be manipulated in the interior, and it is this issue that I now wish to examine.

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<sup>129</sup> Opening remarks delivered to *The Georgian Interior*.

<sup>130</sup> See Rosoman, pl. 13, p.28.

<sup>131</sup> See Rosoman, pl. 9, p.24. Rosoman suggests this may have been the choice of Lady Isabella Finch (1684-1748) for whom Kent designed the house, or alternatively the next owner, the Earl of Clermont. The conventional model of design concept from dress textiles to paper hangings would merit further investigation.

## 1.6 Hanging paper in the domestic interior

The evidence considered in the final sections of succeeding chapters of this study is used to examine how the choice of paper hangings could allow consumers to manipulate gendered and social boundaries. This section opens up these issues, focusing on accounts of rooms decorated by Hertford and by her friend, Fanny Boscawen. The section also examines the evidence for the 'entry point' of wallpaper into country houses through the closet. It signals the study's focus on male as well as female consumers, metropolitan as well as country houses, by considering evidence for schemes in London and country houses.

In Hertford's case, her visit to the warehouse, her conversation with the master, the price ranges of the papers available and allusion to the qualities of the selected design all highlight the discrimination involved in her choice of paper, and therefore her claim to discernment. Her concerns with justifying the effect produced by the selected paper imply that she sees this as related to her own identity. Nor are these claims an isolated example. In 1747 her friend Fanny Boscawen wrote to her husband describing the choice of wallpapers and fabrics for her South Audley Street house. Boscawen had visited Bromwich's to choose papers alongside other tasks such as having the servants' bells hung, recruiting a maid and buying china, suggesting such decorative decisions were an accepted part of her role. Like Hertford she is concerned about price, complaining that 'My second room is not yet hung, not having been able to get any paper to my mind under an exorbitant price. At length, however, I have agreed for one,

and Bromwich comes to put it up to-morrow'.<sup>132</sup> On the bow window room's decoration she also reveals her concerns with a wider issue, taste:

I want abundance of chintz for my bow-window room. Not but I have got an extreme pretty linen for half a crown a yard; the same pattern as the hangings, only they are coloured, and this is only blue and white. I consulted nobody about either - not one single person having seen either the paper or the linen till both were made up. Everybody commends each separate, but dislike them together and maintain I must have coloured linen to my coloured paper. I agree so far with them that I bestow my old chintz gowns as fast as they wear out, but till then I shall not give up my taste and opinion that 'tis now extremely pretty.<sup>133</sup>

Boscawen ended by declaring forthrightly 'Taste I have always pretended to and must own I shall be greatly disappointed if you do not approve that which I have displayed in Audley Street'.<sup>134</sup> Plainly, others felt able to make (negative) judgements on her choice (and she indeed advised others), although she maintained that she has achieved an 'extremely pretty' effect, the same quality Hertford sought for her closet paper. Interestingly, Boscawen rejected matching colours for textile and paper, although according to her this was a more usual choice.

Access to Hertford's closet may have been more limited than to Boscawen's bow window room. Parissien identifies this as a site where early eighteenth-century consumers overawed their visitors by displaying their taste, and accordingly one which

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<sup>132</sup> November- December 1747, quoted in Cecil Aspinall-Oglander, *Admiral's Wife: being the life and letters of the Hon. Mrs. Edward Boscawen from 1717-1761* (London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1940), p.61 & p.65.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p.73.

<sup>134</sup> Quoted in Saumarez Smith, pp.142-43.



frequently employed considerable spending power.<sup>135</sup> But Hertford's choice is concerned with decorum, not display. Is her choice of paper hangings for a closet then demonstrating the way in which (as Vickery has recently argued) wallpaper firstly gains a 'foothold' in the corners of the house most closely associated with the 'individual in undress', not only the closet but also the dressing room?<sup>136</sup>

An alternative model is suggested by the work of Wells-Cole, who has evidenced the entry of wallpaper into the house in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries through its use in the homes of wealthy merchants in ports and towns in England. According to Wells-Cole's research, in great country houses wallpaper was first hung in attics (1.12) and service areas, moving literally up and down the building to challenge the dominance of textile and other finishes in parade or family rooms.<sup>137</sup> This trend does seem to be borne out by the evidence explored in this study, but the situation is also more complicated. For example on the ground floor at Mersham-le-Hatch in 1760 a striped verdure paper costing 8 shillings per piece and two chintz designs (one called 'Strabery') priced at 5 shillings per piece were hung in the bed chambers. In the Attics the front bedchambers and dressing rooms were hung with a 'small' chintz design and a more expensive (6 shillings per piece) 'Strawbery sprig' with a rail border, whilst in the West wing two more modestly priced (3 shillings per piece) sprig designs (including 'Yarmouth') were hung.<sup>138</sup> Papers were then confined to the attic and ground floors and to lodgings; but other factors were at play in the choice of pattern such as a room's aspect and its perceived position within the hierarchy of space particular to Mersham.

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<sup>135</sup> Parrisien, 'Taste, Style and Georgian Aesthetics'.

<sup>136</sup> Vickery, "Neat and Not Too Showey", pp.202-03.

<sup>137</sup> Wells-Cole, *FFF*, p.27

<sup>138</sup> Gilbert, p.229.

It is also worth noting that such ready divisions are confounded by the story of urban sites in London, where paper is found hung on different levels of the house. Three architects' cross sections associated with Sir William Chambers' practice illustrate the papers deemed suitable for London mansions by the mid century, perhaps in an attempt to dissuade clients or paper hangings tradesmen from hanging their own choice of designs. One section dated 1759 for York House was designed by Chambers for Edward, Duke of York; another of c.1775, titled for 'a Mansion,' was by his assistant, John Yenn (1750-1821), and a third dated 1763 by his pupil, Edward Stevens (1.15-1.17). These drawings demonstrate that by a similar date paper is making inroads not only into the bedchambers, dressing rooms and service areas of grand urban houses, but also into the principal spaces of sociability, in particular the drawing room.

In the Yenn (1.15), a scheme of stucco and painted verditer panels on the ground floor gives way to a patterned wallcovering in what may be the drawing room at first floor level. Although Snodin has argued that this was a textile, it could just as well be a flock.<sup>139</sup> Above the first floor papers hold sway including a red and white stripe on the second floor and a blue check on the attic storey. The overall impression is of variety in colour, pattern and texture; however, there is also close attention to choosing a design whose repeat and pattern (and perhaps colour too) is appropriate to the room's scale and function. Chambers' design for York House, Pall Mall (1.16) also shows fine papers or hangings in two rooms arranged above each other on one side of the central stair.<sup>140</sup> Both rooms are hung with large scale repeating prints appropriate to the spaces in which they are shown, a dramatic scrollwork pattern for the ground floor, again giving way to a damask pattern at first floor level. The way in which the scrollwork

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<sup>139</sup> *Design and the Decorative Arts: Britain 1500-1900*, ed. by Michael Snodin and John Styles (London: V&A Publications, 2001), p.254.

<sup>140</sup> Ian C. Bristow, *Architectural Colour in British Interiors 1615-1840* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1996), discussed p.154, ill. fig. 149, p.140.

design is centred on the chimneypiece, and the use of a dropped repeat, supports the argument that this depicts a paper rather than textile hanging. Moreover, the dramatically patterned walls contrast with the more architectonic schemes composed of niches and classical sculptures shown for the rooms on the opposite side of the stair; indeed the two sides are so different it is almost as if they were intended to show different options. Similarly, in the Stevens (1.17) scrollwork patterns flank the stair at first floor level, whilst in the attic a blue verditer finish is visible.

The decoration of Sir William Robinson's home by Chippendale, discussed earlier in this chapter, provides a useful comparison, since, as noted above, flock (1.18) gave way to mock flock and to 'sprig stripe' (in a back room) on the second floor, which required preparation before papering over the doors and coved ceiling. That this was usual practice is also suggested by the description of the fitting out of three town houses in William Halfpenny's (d.1755) *The modern builder's assistant* of 1757. Here 'plain Wainscot' is to be used for the ground floor rooms, and the garrets and offices below plastered. However, the chamber and attick floors are to be 'wainscotted 3 Feet 6 Inches high for Paper Hangings, with plain Plaister Cornices'.<sup>141</sup>

Evidence of another scheme, Reynolds' decoration of his Leicester Square drawing room, also supports a conclusion that hierarchical and consumerist models were not always mutually exclusive. The hanging of a traditional formal pattern in a public first floor space sought to avoid any associations of transient fashionability and femininity on the part of this male consumer, whilst also carrying connotations of respectability since such patterns are documented in use in the public spaces of the middling sort as well as in royal apartments. Breward concludes that Reynolds' choice of décor, a flock

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<sup>141</sup> William Halfpenny, *The modern builder's assistant*, London, printed for J.Rivington, J.Fletcher and R.Sayer,[1757], pl. XLIV in ECCO [accessed 8 March 2006].

based on a damask pattern , is bound up both with ‘Reynolds’ portrayal of himself as a consumer, and the choice of patterns available at the time’. It was less a reflection of cost constraints than ‘a conscious effort to portray himself as a successful leader of taste’, clearly a key concern for a leading artist of the day.<sup>142</sup>

Hertford also alluded to her own use and occupation of the space in ‘that house, where I spend the greatest part of my time within doors’. Sparke has argued the case for interiors as carriers of identity since ‘discussions of the domestic interior retain a strongly gendered (primarily feminine) dimension to them’ and furthermore that ‘In the home [...] where identity values are largely formed, the link between identity and interior decoration is more sensitive’.<sup>143</sup> In the eighteenth century, this is often manifested in discussion of the role and place of women in the household. It has been argued that the household offered female consumers a particular opportunity to demonstrate their central position and concerns. Although work on this issue in relation to the interior has been limited, Colin Cunningham’s work on gender differentiation in Robert Adam’s designs and commissions offers a helpful starting point for interrogating room function. He claims that, in Adam’s work, ‘rooms set aside for ladies’ are part of the set of State rooms, so are more expressions of public social status than gender difference (‘though he later notes the drawing room as ‘also a part of their space’) and identifies the dressing room as the key space in which to look for gender differentiation.<sup>144</sup> This study takes Cunningham’s work as a starting point, examining the evidence for the use of different types of paper hangings to differentiate space within the domestic interior.

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<sup>142</sup> Breward, ‘A fruity problem’, p.13.

<sup>143</sup> S. McKellar and Sparke, *Interior Design and Identity*, pp.3, 6.

<sup>144</sup> Colin Cunningham, ‘“An Italian house is my lady”: some aspects of the definition of women’s role in the architecture of Robert Adam’, in *Femininity and Masculinity in Eighteenth century art and culture*, ed. by Gill Perry and Michael Rossington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 63-77 (p.67).

## **1.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that developments in techniques and the organisation of manufacture in paper hangings cannot be divorced from changes in demand for new forms of decoration. Whilst it reinforces earlier readings of the trade which assign London a prominent role in manufacture, it argues that retailing also has a strong regional base. It has also highlighted the role of manufacturers' and retailers' rhetoric in marketing paper hangings to consumers, especially in relation to qualities of imitation. The associations between paper hangings and female consumption have also been discussed drawing on trade cards' imagery to challenge models of passive consumption and display. The chapter also examined the significance of a wider discourse on design in relation to paper hangings, and the industry's appropriation of designs from other media. Finally, it has argued that paper hangings were a significant material in defining room function and indeed offered particular opportunities to consumers to define their own identity.

## **Chapter 2: 'India' paper and its imitations: Chinese papers and English papers in the Chinese style, c.1750-c.1790**

### **2.1 Introduction**

### **2.2 'A vast storehouse of luxury goods'?**

### **2.3 'Real India paper' and its imitations: production, distribution and hanging**

### **2.4 Authenticity and imitation**

### **2.5 Chinese paper in upper rooms**

### **2.6 Chinoiserie: a ruling class style?**

### **2.7 Conclusion**

### **2.1 Introduction**

I think with her economy she might afford herself a house of her own, and she might furnish it in the present fashion, of some cheap paper and ornaments of Chelsea china or the manufacture of Bow, which makes a room look neat and finished. They are not so sumptuous as the mighty Pagodas of China or nodding Mandarins. My dressing room in London is like the Temple of some Indian God: if I was remarkably short and had a great head, I should be afraid people would think I meant myself Divine Honours, but I can so little pretend to the embonpoint of a Josse, it is impossible to suspect me of such presumption. The very curtains are Chinese pictures on gauze, and the chairs the Indian fan-sticks with cushions of Japan satin painted: as to the beauty of

the colouring, it is carried high as possible, but the toilette you were so good as to paint is the only thing where nature triumphs.<sup>1</sup>

This account, which is taken from a letter written by Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800) to her sister in 1750, echoes the Countess of Hertford's assessment of the neat effect of paper in firstly describing the choices available to Montagu's friend, Mrs Cotes, in a house of her own. Paper, like home produced ceramics, is seen as suitable for less 'sumptuous' interiors such as that of Mrs. Cotes. However, this contrasted with the decoration of Montagu's own dressing room at 23, Hill Street where European furnishings were combined with an interest in distant, exotic lands. Here, the description of imported originals reinforces the exclusivity of Montagu's taste.

Although she does not refer to the use of paper hangings, another visitor to Montagu's house, Madame du Bocage, recorded in the following year that 'We thus breakfasted to-day at 'My lady Montagu's, 'in a closet lined with painted paper of Pekin, and adorned with the prettiest Chinese furniture; a long table, covered with pellucid linen, and a thousand glittering vases presented to the view coffee, biscuits, cream, butter, bread toasted in many ways, and exquisite tea'.<sup>2</sup> These two accounts convey many of the issues underlying the study of imported Chinese papers, and related examples produced in England recognised as in the 'Chinese' style, which form the focus of this chapter.

Firstly, Montagu's list of furnishings highlights the generic nature of chinoiserie in the eighteenth century as part of a vaguely conceived exoticism, as well as specifically

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<sup>1</sup> Climenson, I, p.270.

<sup>2</sup> R. Hutchon, *Mrs Montagu and her friends, 1720-1800: A Sketch* (London: John Murray, 1907), pp. 204-05; quoted in Rosemary Baird, 'The Queen of the Bluestockings: Mrs Montagu's house at 23 Hill Street rediscovered', *Apollo*, 163 (August 2003), 43-49 (pp.45-46). Baird also discusses the c.1765 redecoration of the room by Robert Adam.

Chinese elements: 'Chinese' window treatments<sup>3</sup> were combined with chairs whose seat backs evoked 'Indian' fan sticks and painted cushions 'Japan', and the room's overall effect was conceived in relation to an 'Indian' temple.<sup>4</sup> These labels also enabled original viewers of the scheme both to identify the furnishings' appearance and visualise the room.

Secondly, there are the commercial associations of the interior described. Montagu has used a European fashion in wall decoration, the hanging of paper, but hers is a luxury import rather than a domestic product. These are painted hangings, clearly differentiating them from the easily repeated English block prints she deemed appropriate for Mrs Cotes and marking them out as unique. Furthermore, she not only lined the room with an imported luxury, but also furnished it with luxury goods which, as discussed in chapter 1 carry connotations of excess, in particular feminine excess, in opposition to the moral virtues based on indigenous commercial life. The relationship between sophisticated readers of decoration and China, Japan and India is then one based on trade, and in particular the provision of luxuries for consumption in the home or coffee house, not only the tea mentioned by Madame du Bocage, but also paper hangings. Indeed, the usual terms for imported Chinese papers 'India papers', or more rarely 'Japan papers', evoke commercial associations, since it is likely that 'India' referred to the East India Company.<sup>5</sup> There is however a tension here since du

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<sup>3</sup> Gauze hangings probably taking the form of pelmets or blinds, see Margaret Jourdain and Roger Soame Jenyns, *Chinese Export Art in the Eighteenth Century* (Feltham: Spring Books, 1967), pl.137. These may have been designed en suite with the paper hangings to continue the design all around the room. It is possible this practice inspired the production of papers, see Saunders, pp.63-64.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the japanned furniture supplied by the Linnells, featuring lattice-work and gilded dragons, see Helena Hayward, 'Chinoiserie at Badminton: the furniture of William and John Linnell', *Apollo*, 90 (1969), pp.134-39. A similar chair is illustrated in *Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain 1650-1930*, ed. by David Beevers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Royal Pavilion, 2008), cat C5, ill. p.113.

<sup>5</sup> These terms are discussed in section 3. Madeleine Jarry has also suggested that 'Papiers des Indes' may refer to painted papers imported from China by other Europeans as well as by the East India Company; see Jarry, *Chinoiserie* (London: Philip Wilson, 1981), p.55.



Bocage's reference to the Imperial capital conveyed the appeal of Chinese courtly culture, seemingly in opposition to these commercial associations.

A third point we can draw from Montagu's letter concerns the way in which the chinoiserie taste is defined. This is often achieved through contrasts, firstly with the choice of 'some cheap paper' and English ceramics whose effect Montagu describes in negative terms as 'not so sumptuous as the mighty Pagodas of China or nodding Mandarins'. Once again objects, here models of pagodas and figures of mandarins, define this taste. She also maintained that:

Sick of Grecian elegance and symmetry, or Gothick grandeur and magnificence, we must all seek the barbarous gaudy gout of the Chinese; and fat-headed pagods and shaking mandarins bear the prize from the finest works of antiquity.<sup>6</sup>

Chinoiserie is then also seen as an alternative for those who are tired of both the 'elegance' of the classical tradition and the 'grandeur and magnificence' of gothic taste. However 'barbarous gaudy gout' conveyed ideas of disorder and disharmony, echoed in Montagu's claim that the toilette cover worked in flowers by her sister is 'the only thing where nature triumphs'. This raises the question of why a sophisticated consumer of decoration such as Montagu should need to characterise her choice in such fundamentally negative terms to signal its departure both from the order associated with Classicism, and from products manufactured at home. A further characteristic of this style is its variety of surfaces, textures and colour, perhaps intended to overawe even a sophisticated reader of spaces such as du Bocage.

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<sup>6</sup> 1750, quoted in Baird, p.177.

'Barbarous gaudy gout' suggests bright hues, but Montagu's assessment of 'the beauty of the colouring' which 'is carried as high as possible' may reflect the appeal to contemporaries of opacity and depth of colour. There is some evidence that prices were linked to colour in paper hangings, as well as variety in subject matter, and this perhaps explains Montagu's focus on this aspect.

The fourth and final point raised by the letter is the fact that the rooms Montagu has decorated in this way, i.e. a dressing room and closet, are spaces gendered by contemporaries as feminine. The comparison between the temple of an Indian god and the dressing room conveys the ambiguities raised by decorating such a space in the Chinese taste. What is more Montagu's labels extend to physical comparisons between her own body and the stoutness ('embonpoint') and other characteristics she uses to identify the hermit whom she imagines occupying the 'Temple'. This suggests the relationship between the idol as an iconic image and its role as a fetish was an uneasy one, challenging the function of certain interior spaces as female sanctuaries highlighted earlier in this study with reference to Hertford and Portarlington. In contrast to the idea of sanctuary, Montagu's contemporary, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, compared her own London apartments to 'an Indian warehouse', and her dressing room to 'the temple of some Indian god', suggesting that this might be a stock phrase signalling a desire to be captivated not just by a desire for goods but by the appeal of the unregulated behaviour which such a decorative scheme might permit.<sup>7</sup> The situation of such a temple, often in the garden, also signals a move away from the security of the domestic space.

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Natasha Eaton, 'Nostalgia for the Exotic: Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750-1793', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 39:2 (Winter 2006), 227-250 (p.230).

This chapter then considers these issues. It begins by discussing the ways in which China was seen by contemporaries, moving from current theorizations of the exotic to consider eighteenth-century perceptions of China itself and the commerce in luxury commodities of which papers formed a part.

The second section examines three previously neglected, but, I argue, significant areas in the study of Chinese papers. Firstly, I reassess their manufacture, suggesting that imported papers from China offered an opportunity to present commerce with China in a more positive light. Secondly, I highlight the contribution of a previously neglected category, 'mock India' papers and pictures (manufactured in England) and their sources, arguing that they were seen less as inferior than as examples of how luxury imports fuelled an improvement in imitative products at home. Thirdly I argue that the successful installation of Chinese papers was reliant on skills in distribution and hanging developed by the English trade.

The comparison between Chinese papers and English papers in the Chinese style is developed further in the fourth section, 'Authenticity and imitation'. I highlight the complex relationship between subject matter, sources and manufacturing techniques in both types of paper. This challenges earlier categorisations of Chinese paper on the basis of their uniqueness and subject matter through the study of trade cards' rhetoric and a scheme from Berkeley House in Gloucestershire of c.1740, which is compared with a group of 'mock India' panels from the 1760s.

Categorisations of papers by subject also ignore readings based on class and gender and the relationship with room function, often the focus of contemporary comment. The fifth section, 'Chinese paper in upper rooms' develops this theme, taking as its

focus the evidence for the use of chinoiserie in certain spaces, in particular the association between the dressing room decorated with 'India' paper and feminine consumers. It studies a group of bedrooms and dressing rooms hung with India paper in the 1750s and 1760s, at Saltram in Devon and at Blickling and Felbrigg in Norfolk. I argue here the Chinese style had a role in cementing social relationships and female control of these spaces. .

Section six develops these issues by studying the concerns of male consumers. It opens with a study of two schemes of the late 1750s from Hampden House in Buckinghamshire, which I compare with Chinese papers from a banker's London premises and a merchant's home. These illuminate just how far Chinese papers could rework European versions of Chinese originals as well as supposedly authentic views of China itself, demonstrating the ways in which manufacturers responded to consumer demand.

## **2.2 'A vast storehouse of luxury goods'?**

This section challenges earlier categorisations of Chinese papers, arguing that recent scholarship on the concept of the exotic, and more specifically on how relations with eighteenth century China were conducted and perceived, enables a reassessment of these papers.<sup>8</sup> Studies of Chinese papers by early wallpaper historians such as Eric Entwisle claimed that these papers 'inspire in us an admiration for a race which lavished its highest artistic accomplishments on articles which they well knew were

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<sup>8</sup> For more on this subject see my essay 'Chinese papers and English imitations in eighteenth-century Britain', in *New Discoveries, New Research: Papers from the international wallpaper conference at the Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, 2007*, ed. by Elisabet Stavenow-Hidemark (Stockholm, Nordiska Museets Förlag, 2009), pp.36-53.

destined for commercial purposes'.<sup>9</sup> His work reveals the prevalence of both an essentialist view of 'Chinese-ness' and the imposition of a European viewpoint. The desire to categorise using European models evident in this statement continued in the division of Chinese papers into three categories, on the basis of types of landscape, as in the academic categorisation by genres: flowering plants with birds, scenes of Chinese daily life (later subdivided to include hunting and urban activities) and flowering plants with animals and people.<sup>10</sup>

Any study of orientalisering exoticism will necessarily be indebted to the work of Edward Said, who opened up questions of difference and the politics of representation in the 1990s. He highlighted the idea of the Orient as invented by Europeans, 'a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences', which provided Europe with 'one of its deepest and recurring images of the Other', against which it could define itself.<sup>11</sup> The model of the European self as opposed to the non-Western other underlies Said's work, which demonstrates the importance of such oppositions in thinking about the orient. Although the oriental 'other' is generally seen as inferior to the West in terms of power relations, it can also have a more positive dimension as it refers to qualities that the Western self is thought to lack, providing a source of vivid and spontaneous 'experiences', 'memories' and 'landscapes'. This approach offers some useful insights to the study of how paper hangings' imagery may have been perceived. There are, however, a number of drawbacks to applying Said's thinking to a study that, like mine, concerns the eighteenth century and the British relationship with China.

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<sup>9</sup> E.A. Entwisle, 'Chinese Painted Wallpapers', p.367.

<sup>10</sup> For example Oman, 'English Chinoiserie Wallpapers'; Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay* (New York: Dutton, 1962), p.134.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1995), introduction, p.1.

What makes Said's model problematic for my purposes is that his evidence is largely drawn from the nineteenth century Western Imperialist explorations of Egypt. The issues for the eighteenth century, a period where contact is pre-colonial and takes place through trading companies, are rather different. In particular, Said's use of opposites needs to be complicated since the distinction here, as Roy Porter and G.S. Rousseau point out, is between the exotic nearer to home, and the remote exotic such as China, rather than between West and East. In contrast to Said, Porter and Rousseau focus on meanings for (and in) the West, rather than its denigration of the East, potentially a more useful approach since the issues of meaning and representation are also the focus of my study. They describe the exotic as 'a vital cultural resource that yoked physical geography to mythical ideas of the past and the future' and argue that, for eighteenth-century men and women, the exotic represented an opportunity to redefine their own values in relation to it, as well as reassuring themselves of their locale.<sup>12</sup> Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer have argued further that, by consuming elements of the exotic, in particular the remote exotic, eighteenth-century Europeans could not only claim emblematic power over the other, but also employ Orientalism to challenge authority and/or escape from normality closer to home: in effect to transgress boundaries.<sup>13</sup> These claims are taken up below in relation to the hanging of Chinese paper.

Studies of fictional narratives of the Orient also offer useful models for studying how far hanging papers represented another opportunity to identify with regions and cultures visually, complementing their projection onto the page in fictional narratives. In particular Ros Ballaster has expanded on Said's position. She argues that, although his work recognised the tension between the image and its representation, this tension

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<sup>12</sup> *Exoticism in the Enlightenment*, ed. by Roy Porter and G.S. Rousseau (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), preface, pp.viii-ix.

<sup>13</sup> *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800*, ed. by Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer (London: V&A Publications, 2003), introduction, p.9.

is based less on Orientalism's transformation of a changing history into a set of unchanging images, than on the shift in perception in the eighteenth century from the Orient as barbaric other to selective identification with regions and cultures 'not one's own', thereby allowing the projection of the 'sympathetic imagination' into spaces previously unoccupied by the European imagination.<sup>14</sup>

As noted above, this identification with the remote exotic comes about largely through commercial contacts, and, since paper hangings were clearly a commercial product, this dimension is vital to any study of the subject. Indeed Maxine Berg argues that, for seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europeans, 'China, Japan and India provided long-standing models of highly urbanised commercial societies providing for a flowering of consumer culture.'<sup>15</sup> She suggests that China was an attractive model for imitation by Britain because it could be seen as a sophisticated trading nation under Imperial rule, albeit a rule which could hardly be characterised as benevolent. Nor, during this period, is the encounter with China through 'government or commercial policy and documents, but rather through the consumption of material goods imported from the East, both imaginary and ethnographic.'<sup>16</sup> What wallpapers' views of manufacture and cultivation offered was an idealized, ordered society based on abundant natural resources, characterised by Robert Markley as 'a vast storehouse of luxury goods'. Furthermore, he argues, this storehouse also bore the promise of an apparently insatiable market for European exports.<sup>17</sup> The reality was very different, since European manufacturers could offer almost nothing other than bullion that the Chinese

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<sup>14</sup> Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England 1662-1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.16-17.

<sup>15</sup> Maxine Berg, 'Asian Luxuries and the Making of the European Consumer Revolution', in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, ed. by Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), pp.228-44 (p.233).

<sup>16</sup> Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient*, p.18.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Markley, *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.4.

could not supply themselves, and, since the trade with China did not involve the military or administrative resources needed for colonisation, it was conducted on Chinese terms.

In the eighteenth century, it was China's own Imperial culture whose practices and hierarchies Western traders and envoys (2.1) such as George, Earl of Macartney and first Ambassador to China, struggled to comprehend. Macartney's embassy of 1792-94 had sought to improve the position of British merchants trading through the East India Company, who were confined to the coastal ports, and, from 1759, to Canton only, where they traded through Chinese intermediaries, *hong* merchants, remaining for the duration of the trading season before retreating to the island of Macao. The embassy failed, however, in its aims to open up more areas to trade and abolish transit duties, in part due to Macartney's lack of understanding of the importance of gift giving and the value of goods to the Chinese. He described how the Embassy has been entertained and complemented but that the Chinese 'wish us to be gone', summing up his incomprehension in the plea: 'How are we to reconcile the contradictions that appear in the conduct of the Chinese government towards us?'<sup>18</sup>

The embassy, and the period when the popularity of Chinese papers was at its height, coincided with a new phase in Britain's interaction with China from c.1740 to c.1790. Scholars such as David Porter have refuted Said's argument that a shift in the range of representations of the Orient took place after 1775, arguing that, for China, it occurs after c.1740. Scholarly and analytical studies focused on uncovering the wider history of China, as Markley has pointed out associated with the period before c.1740, were

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<sup>18</sup> 13 October 1793, quoted in Helen H. Robbins, *Our First Ambassador to China: An Account of the Life of George, Earl of Macartney* (London: John Murray, 1908), p.347.



replaced by representations focused on aesthetic offerings and consumer goods.<sup>19</sup>

Porter claims that the majority of collectors and consumers of Chinese, or Chinese inspired, wallpapers and other goods sought fantasy, not political understanding. He maintains that earlier views of China, as an ideal source of civilised virtue and harmony reflected in European interest in the ideas of Confucius, were replaced by a process of trivialisation of the symbols of Chinese authority. According to Porter, this process is evidenced by the creation of sites such as The House of Confucius as part of the landscape at Kew. Here Confucius becomes 'just another god among many, his temple just another attraction in the theme park of a princess'.<sup>20</sup>

According to Porter, another element that sets chinoiserie apart from other styles is the use of labels evoking exotic places and materials.<sup>21</sup> There is a parallel here, I suggest, with Montagu's list of furnishings, and her letter also highlights what Porter calls 'an exaggerated concern with superficial prettiness' as a hallmark of Chinese taste.<sup>22</sup> The accounts of Macartney's embassy show a similar tendency. For example, 'a copious account of Lord Macartney's embassy' described the 'princely palace belonging to the Viceroy of Canton' occupied by Macartney and the Embassy Secretary where rooms were decorated 'in the first style of Chinese taste', 'the beauty of the colours' and 'the

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<sup>19</sup> David Porter, 'Chinoiserie and the Aesthetics of Illegitimacy', in *Public Inwardness, Intimate Spaces*, ed. by Julie Candler Hayes and Timothy Irwin (= *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, ed. by Julie Candler Hayes and Timothy Irwin, 28 (1999), 27-54 (p.30).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.37. The House of Confucius was built in 1750. In 1763 Chambers attributed it to Joseph Goupy, but John Harris argues Goupy was probably only responsible for the interior, see 'Exoticism at Kew', *Apollo*, 78 (1963), 103-08. The 'Little Saloon' was described as decorated with 'grotesque ornaments, and little historical subjects relating to Confucius, with several transactions of the Christian Missions in China', quoted in Edward Croft Murray, *Decorative Painting in England*, 2 vols (London: Country Life, 1970), II, pp.211-12.

<sup>21</sup> David Porter, 'Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese taste', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 35: 3 (2002), 395-411 (p.398).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.403.

glossy effect of japan' were praised and it was noted that the 'apartments are very spacious, and hung with the most elegant paper, enriched with gilding'.<sup>23</sup>

In his more recent study, Porter has unpicked the craze for Chinese furnishings, arguing that its rootedness in the taste of wealthy women for the foreign and the exotic was rejected as an alternative to classicism by authorities such as Hogarth not because of its underlying aesthetic values, but rather because it would legitimate female desire.<sup>24</sup> This approach does, however, neglect the very real anxieties about the trade in luxuries which are, I suggest, relevant to understanding the trade in both 'India' and 'mock India' papers. This issue has been recently taken up by Ellen Kennedy Johnson, who has argued that in the process of funnelling profits into the domestic trade, home produced chinoiserie papers also allowed 'lesser gentry and wealthy farmers' to register their 'solidarity with the ruling class by approving of the representations of the Oriental other'.<sup>25</sup> I argue below that these paper hangings are not merely an example of what Porter has called 'unmeaning Eastern signs',<sup>26</sup> but rather part of a growing industry which is much more successful than some other 'decorative arts' (notably textiles) in evading the negative censure of feminine excess associated with luxury imports.

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<sup>23</sup> W. Winterbotham, *An historical, geographical and philosophical view of the Chinese empire: to which is added, a copious account of Lord Macartney's embassy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London, [1795?], in ECCO [accessed 8 November 2007].

<sup>24</sup> David Porter, 'A Wanton Chase in a Foreign Place: Hogarth and the Gendering of Exoticism in the Eighteenth-Century Interior', in *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century, What Furniture can tell us about the European and American Past*, ed. by Dena Goodman and Kathryn Norberg (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), pp.49-60.

<sup>25</sup> Ellen Kennedy Johnson, '“The Taste for Bringing the Outside in”: Nationalism, Gender and Landscape Wallpaper (1700-1825)', in *Women and Material Culture*, ed. by Jennie Batchelor and Cora Kaplan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 119-133 (p.127).

<sup>26</sup> Porter, 'Chinoiserie and the Aesthetics of Illegitimacy', p.28.

### 2.3 'Real India Paper' and its imitations: production, distribution and hanging

This section focuses on three aspects of Chinese papers: their production, distribution and hanging. It also explores the nature of English versions of Chinese papers, a hitherto neglected product. These are all areas which have received scant treatment in the past, but which are, I argue, important to our understanding of how these papers were retailed and consumed.

Although Frederike Wappenschmidt has highlighted the difficulties of unpicking the shifting terminology used to describe Chinese paper products across Europe<sup>27</sup>, in England it seems that 'India' pictures (for use on screens, individually on over-mantels or in sets on the wall) may have slightly predated 'India' paper (intended to form continuous scenes) although many suppliers offered both.<sup>28</sup> 'India' may also suggest a paler ground more closely allied to chintz, whereas 'Japan' refers to a dark blue ground paper intended to imitate the western technique of japanning, itself an imitation of Japanese lacquer.

Aristocratic consumers' perceptions of the material often drew associations with specific places and stressed the material's uniqueness, this being, according to Porter, a key signifier of chinoiserie. For example, as already noted, du Bocage draws links to the Imperial capital, emphasising the appeal of China as a courtly culture and aligning Montagu's scheme with the consumption of goods available to the Chinese elite. Such contemporary readings are, however, challenged by the evidence of production for the export market, albeit an elite one.

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<sup>27</sup> Frederike Wappenschmidt, *Chinesische Tapeten für Europa* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1989), p.10.

<sup>28</sup> I am grateful to Allyson McDermott for this suggestion.

What needs to be understood is the local and specific nature of papers' manufacture in the port city of Canton. Understanding of production processes is, however, hampered by a series of myths about the Canton workshops' techniques and sources of subject matter. These firstly concern the workshops where papers were made. It has been assumed that they were produced in export painting workshops, and William Sargent has argued that papers used the technique of standardising each element.<sup>29</sup> However, this is challenged by Craig Clunas, who has emphasised that wallpaper production was very much a 'sideline' for the Canton painting workshops, and may even have been confined to one or two specializing in painted silks.<sup>30</sup> This seems to me a more plausible model, and indeed parallels practices in England, discussed in chapter 1, since it allows for the sharing of skills across textile and wallpaper production in aspects such as pattern drawing, and handling and packing long lengths of painted material. It is also supported by at least one surviving example, the Colopies Bedroom at Saltram in Devon (2.16), hung with painted silk.

Sargent has also claimed on the basis of comparison that album sets (views of cultivation, manufacture, costume and so on, originally produced for Imperial consumption but which became an export staple) are the source for papers and that they were intended to demonstrate manufacturing methods for the West.<sup>31</sup> However, views of manufacture are only one type of subject matter and Sargent's model does not explain the interest in subjects such as landscapes, plants and the theatre.

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<sup>29</sup> William Sargent 'Asia in Europe: Chinese paintings for the West' in *Encounters*, ed. by Jackson and Jaffer, pp.274-78.

<sup>30</sup> Craig Clunas, *Chinese Export Art and Design* (London: V&A Museum, 1987), p.114.

<sup>31</sup> This is an unlikely outcome, since even Sargent notes that the conventions of the Imperial albums was to glorify textile and rice production under a benign ruler, portraying the contentedness of workers, not technical details, see Sargent, 'Asia in Europe', p.276.

A further neglected aspect, geography, is also crucial to understanding production.

Clunas pointed out that painters in Canton would never have seen actual tea cultivation or porcelain manufacture, so could not depict such processes accurately. Papers depicted ordered cultivation and production, ignoring the effects of large scale tea cultivation and smoke from porcelain production (2.36 and 2.37, right).<sup>32</sup> This supports the view that the supposedly authentic views seen on paper hangings produced at Canton are as fanciful as those produced by English manufacturers. Nor, as Joanna Kosuda-Walker has noted, would any traders have visited these regions, since they were not permitted to move outside of the trading cities.<sup>33</sup>

Another myth established in the eighteenth century, evident in Du Bocage's claim and repeated by modern scholars, is that Chinese paper is (hand) painted, not printed, unlike most European papers. This again conflicts with the evidence of production, since examples survive of Chinese papers combining the more usual hand painting with printing for outlines and foliage.<sup>34</sup> Contemporaries concerned with manufacture did not see this as an unusual technique, since Robert Dossie recorded the Chinese use of 'very fine outline sketches, which greatly assist in the painting even of very large pieces by means of wooden prints'.<sup>35</sup> Even painted papers are not always unique, since although very few exact copies of sets survive, motifs can repeat within a scheme.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Craig Clunas, *Chinese Export Watercolours* (London: V&A Museum, 1984), p25 & pp. 28-9.

<sup>33</sup> Joanna Kosuda-Walker with Elizabeth Johnson, *Landscape Wallcoverings* (New York: Scala in association with Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 2001), pp.19-20.

<sup>34</sup> For example the Corbett screen panels, 1720-50, VAM E.412, 413-1924, use block printing, see OH, cat. 655, p.230. See also the discussion below of stencilling on the 'Ribbons' paper from Hampden House.

<sup>35</sup> *The Handmaid to the Arts*, 1758, quoted in Entwisle, *LH*, p.32.

<sup>36</sup> For example in the Chinese Chippendale bedroom at Saltram scenes of tea production are repeated around the room (2.16), an effect disguised by 'dropping' the repeat, allowing a pair, or even two pairs, of motifs to alternate across the wall to create variety, see letter from Sugden and Edmundson to *CL*, 13 February 1926, p.251. In the Chinese bedroom at Blickling (2.25) the principal figure groups and pavilions in the near ground repeat, an effect masked by the differences of scale and variety of other buildings depicted.

How then did the market for these papers develop? Although their heyday was the period from the 1740s to the 1790s, papers from China are recorded in London as early as 1690.<sup>37</sup> They were imported as part of the quota of private trade to which the East India Company's officers and men were entitled, constituting an often highly profitable sideline.<sup>38</sup> The scale of this trade was set by rank and, according to David Howard, at the start of the eighteenth century a captain could carry £300 worth of Private Trade, whereas an ordinary seaman who could carry £10 worth, individual quotas that increased as the century progressed.<sup>39</sup> However, even though papers made up only a small percentage of the private trade total in comparison to goods such as gold and tea, imported papers were not few in number; for example, in 1775, a Company ship brought 2,236 pieces of paper hangings to London from where they were sold for internal consumption or re-exported.<sup>40</sup> In part this was due to their light weight, which enabled Company employees to exploit the restrictions on tonnage.

As they were part of individuals' trade or personal gifts, they may have been seen as in a different category to the larger volume goods fuelling the Company's vast profits.<sup>41</sup> This may explain the absence of any evidence of Chinese paper provoking the negative responses about the draining of bullion surrounding the import of other luxuries such as tea and silk although these appeared as subject matter on papers (2.37), which may again have fuelled their appeal. Demands for the extension of duty and abolition of monopoly which characterised the import of textiles are also absent from the early trade in papers; duty was only extended to Company imported paper in 1792, almost

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<sup>37</sup> For example 'paper hangings of Indian and Japan figures' were advertised in the *London Gazette* for 1693; quoted in Jourdain and Jenyns, *Chinese Export Art*, pl.137.

<sup>38</sup> For example Montagu's brother Robert was appointed Captain of an East India Company vessel in 1742, and when in 1750 he was appointed to a Madras and China voyage, his sister claimed 'it is reckoned a profitable and healthful voyage', quoted in Climenson, I, pp.128, 279-80.

<sup>39</sup> David S. Howard, *The Choice of the Private Trader* (London: Zwemmer, 1994), pp.18-19.

<sup>40</sup> Clunas, *Chinese Export Art and Design*, p.112.

<sup>41</sup> When Montagu's brother returned in 1752 she related that 'He has brought me two beautiful gowns and a fine Chinese lanthorn' suggesting that gift giving should not be ignored as a means of acquiring imported goods, quoted in Climenson, II, p.10.

eighty years after the start of taxation on English-made papers and over a century since Chinese papers appeared in Europe.

In addition to being light weight and free of import duties, a further appeal of the papers for traders lay in their potential profitability. Although 'India' pictures were available individually, 'India' papers were supplied in numbered sets (2.2). A number of surviving papered schemes comprise between twenty to twenty-five sheets (filling the drop from cornice to chair rail or skirting board), which suggests that larger sets may have been broken up from the start to increase their saleability and value (2.3, left).

Once in the city, goods were auctioned. By 1733 the Company was taking a percentage of any auction results over £2,500 in value, acknowledging that captains were frequently carrying more than the permitted scale of private trade. The inscription 'Royal George' on the reverse of the Chinese paper from the Ballroom at Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire hung c.1800 suggests papers could be marked with the name of the ship, perhaps in order to record auction results.<sup>42</sup> Aristocratic consumers such as Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk (c.1688-1767), who had hung 'India' paper in her new dining room at Marble Hill in 1751, bought the Chinese borders now in a bedroom at Blickling at auction since some are inscribed '1758', '[?] Suffolk of [?] Lott 30' (2.26).<sup>43</sup> So too did the actor David Garrick, when decorating the first floor back room at 5, Adelphi Terrace in 1772, although he turned to Chippendale to hang the paper.<sup>44</sup> However, such consumers could also commission their architect to supply the paper; for example the inscription '18 pictures birds and flowers, Mr Payne', found

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<sup>42</sup> *The Wallpaper History Society Newsletter*, November 1999, p.4.

<sup>43</sup> Sandiford and Mapes, *précis of Conservation report and work*, 2002-3, copy in Blickling files.

<sup>44</sup> SE, p.81.

on the reverse of the White dressing room paper during its restoration at Felbrigg in 1974, refers to the architect James Paine (d.1789) who also supplied a drawing for the hang (2.21).<sup>45</sup> Nor were architects the only trade involved in supply, since at Nostell Priory in Yorkshire Chippendale negotiated the purchase of eighteen sheets of 'Fine India paper birds and flowers' for £12 15s. 0d. on his client's behalf.<sup>46</sup>

Chinese papers could also be purchased from tradesmen dealing in wallpapers.

Some tradesmen may have specialised in the supply of these products, since Ambrose Heal quotes from the card of a paper stainer trading 'At the Chinee [*sic*] Paper Warehouse in Newgate Street', perhaps a business associated with the paper hangings maker John Trymner.<sup>47</sup>

By the 1760s the business of supply was largely in the hands of a group of London based paper hangings manufacturers, suggesting the investment required to purchase stock at auction was within their means only. For example, the trade card of the paper hanging maker Robert Stark of Ludgate Hill emphasised the 'Great variety of India Pictures' he offered, whilst in c.1771 William Jones's of Holborn Hill stressed the choice and 'lowest prices' of his 'India' paper stock.<sup>48</sup> However, Chinese papers were also sold for internal consumption or re-exported.<sup>49</sup> By the 1760s both 'India' and 'mock India' papers were available from regional tradesmen. In Leeds, upholsterers such as William Armitage and Michael Simpson advertised the supply of 'India'

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<sup>45</sup> A 'scribbled note' of '18 pictures birds and flowers, Mr Payne' was revealed during the National Trust's removal, restoration and repainting of the paper in 1974, author's interview with David Mason, Land Agent at the time the National Trust took over the house, 2 August 2006; Letters William Windham to Robert Frary, Sept 1751 and April 1752, copies in V&A Furniture, Dress and Textiles Dept files.

<sup>46</sup> Wells-Cole, *HPH*, p.45.

<sup>47</sup> Ambrose Heal, *London Tradesmen's Cards of the XVIII Century: An Account of their origin and use* (London: Batsford, 1925), p.55; for Trymner see Bod, JJC, Trade Cards 24 (85) and BM, HC 91.57 dated by Heal to c.1740-50.

<sup>48</sup> BM, HC 91.53 and 91.37.

<sup>49</sup> For example the bill head of Bromwich & Leigh advertises 'Indian Pictures & Paper Hangings/FOR Exportation', BM, HC, 91.9, 1760s.



papers, Armitage noting his stock reflected metropolitan taste in that he frequently claimed to have 'just returned from London'.<sup>50</sup> Armitage and Simpson also advertised 'mock India' paper, and it was not just provincial upholsterers but also cabinet-makers who were involved in supplying this type of paper: when Henry Hill's successor, Samuel Hilliker, in Marlborough, Wiltshire died in 1785 he bequeathed to 'my old friend William Day –all my mock India Paper my Drawings of Cabinet Furniture'.<sup>51</sup>

They were certainly an expensive purchase for the consumer. It seems that price varied according to quality, since although Chippendale stipulated his 14s per sheet paper was 'fine', in 1752 William Windham claimed his wife wanted 'a cheap india paper' for her light closet at Felbrigg, and hoped that it could be hung 'when the man is about the india paper [so] he may do all at once'.<sup>52</sup> Ground colour also affected cost. Two 'Gold ground Indian flower paper wth Borders & c', supplied by Bromwich for Stonor Park in Oxfordshire in May 1733, cost 10s. 6d. each, although it is unclear what quantity this represented.<sup>53</sup> Dark ground 'Japan' papers were evidently much more expensive than paler ground papers, perhaps on account of their rarity, since I have not traced any actual examples of these, or gold ground papers. In 1766 Lady Mary Coke described 'the chief curiosity' in the Great Room at Richmond Lodge as a dark blue ground Indian paper that she thought 'looks like japan' and cost three guineas per sheet.<sup>54</sup> An album, perhaps a pattern book, for figurative panels and borders for japanned decorations demonstrates this effect (2.4).

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<sup>50</sup> Wells-Cole, *HPH*, pp.47-48.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Lucy Wood, 'Furniture for Lord Delavel', *FH*, 26 (1990), 198-234, p.202.

<sup>52</sup> Letter from William Windham to Robert Frary, 21 January 1752, copy in V&A Furniture, Dress & Textiles Dept files.

<sup>53</sup> Stonor Archives, Ms.Carpul 171/1/23.

<sup>54</sup> 1766, Sudbrook, in *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, ed. by J.A. Home, 4 vols (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1889), I, p.61.

It was not just the colouration which affected price but also the complexity of the design. A letter at Dunster Castle, Somerset, indicates that a paper showing 'the several stages of a Chinese manufacture [...] the figures very compleat and intersperst with romantick views' cost 7s. a yard (4 yards making up a sheet) whereas that 'representing trees, birds and flowers' cost some 4s. a yard.<sup>55</sup> This costliness could however carry less positive connotations for consumers. In 1753 Montagu described a visit to Mr Hart's Chinese house near Culham Court on the Thames, consisting of a 'suite of rooms pav'd with pantyles and hung with paper, and the outside embellish'd with very costly decoration of the Chinese manner' which she criticised for its costliness and ephemeral nature: 'It seems to me no more than a whim, and so much money flung away'.<sup>56</sup>

How then were English papers in the Chinese taste viewed by contemporaries? More recently, English manufactured papers have been denigrated as mere imitations, just as Chinese papers have been praised for their uniqueness. Entwisle claimed they were manufactured simply to increase 'the somewhat tardy supply of genuine Chinese papers from overseas.'<sup>57</sup> However I argue that they fuelled the demand for 'India' papers with a product that was vastly cheaper, more readily available and could incorporate new design trends much more rapidly than waiting for the return of ships from Macao with that year's cargo would have done. In a reversal of the threats to indigenous industries that Defoe and others saw in luxury imports (discussed above in chapter 1), products such as India papers stimulated English paper hanging manufacturers to improve the quality of their imitations from early on, as Berg has argued.

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<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Gill Saunders, 'The China Trade: Oriental Painted Panels' in Hoskins, pp.42-55 (note 5, pp.260-61).

<sup>56</sup> Climenson, II, p.105.

<sup>57</sup> Entwisle, 'Chinese Painted Wallpapers', p.372.

These imitative processes at the heart of the cross-cultural transmission of luxury were also the processes that generated product innovation in Europe, and the technological innovation to carry this into an industrial Revolution. European imitation of Oriental luxury created new products, but also sought to convey the taste for the original.<sup>58</sup>

This argument is supported by manufacturers' promotional rhetoric, which frequently emphasised this taste for the original, at once acknowledging and circumventing it. For example Masefield pointed out how his 'Original Mock India Paper' equalled ('though does not yet surpass) 'Real India paper' on the grounds of choice, 'durability' (presumably related to colour fastness) and its aesthetic effects (1.11). Commercial rivalry was also a factor, since Masefield claimed that his technical innovation 'surpasses everything of the kind yet attempted'. In so doing, tradesmen such as Masefield could draw both on a ready source of patterns from their (or perhaps their clients') stock of Chinese papers and employ their own manufacturing facilities. This may lie behind the claims made by Roberts's paper hangings warehouse on Pall Mall which listed 'Mock India' and 'India' pictures alongside 'papier machee ornaments' in a variety of styles, including 'Chineese' (2.5).

Imitation, according to Berg, is also a key word in patents for other decorative products of the period. This quality of imitation should not, however, be seen as linked to the pejorative associations of novelty characteristic of the discourse on luxury goods. Rather it is associated in contemporary artistic life with qualities of originality and seeks to give respectability to the new through its reinterpretation of the past. New

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<sup>58</sup> Berg, 'Asian Luxuries and the Making of the European Consumer Revolution', p.230.

finishes, technology transfer from one category to another and the growing interrelationship of commodities are all singled out as part of this process, together with the 'imitation' of ancient, especially classical, models.<sup>59</sup> Is this concern with imitation seen in patents for paper hangings?

As early as c.1700, Abraham Price, the owner of the Blue Paper Warehouse, was careful to point out that he 'Sold the True Sorts of Japan and Indian Figured Hangings, in Pieces of Twelve Yards long, and Half Ell Broad, at 2s.6d by the Piece'.<sup>60</sup> He also manufactured and retailed imitations of at least other materials, tapestry and wainscot (the later accommodated 'for Rooms and Stair-Cases') by this date. Price was keen both to defend his invention and advise consumers how they might distinguish his products from that of rivals who used 'a thin and common Brown Paper, daub'd over with a slight and superficial Paint'. His clientele were given advice from the material's patentees (probably Price himself) on how 'the said True Sorts may be distinguish'd from Counterfeits by their Weight, Strength, Thickness and Colour, Dy'd through'. Yet the qualities that really stand out here are Price's final claim, that this added up to a lasting and serviceable product, 'in every way more lasting and serviceable', far from the image of paper hangings as ephemeral and short lived purchases.

Some seventy years later, the patent between John Sigrist, Edward Dighton, Jonathan Harris and Jonathan Lilly for the manufacture and sale of 'The New Invented Paper' also claimed that this 'imitated the India paper So near that many good Judges have taken it for the same'.<sup>61</sup> This also supports Berg's stance that manufacturers were not just creating substitute goods, but also 'modern novelties', and to do so they

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<sup>59</sup> Berg, 'New commodities', pp.80-81.

<sup>60</sup> Hand-bill, BM, Bagford collection, ill. Entwisle, 'The Blew Paper Warehouse', pl. III, p.95

<sup>61</sup> BM, BC 91.9. Undated, but Sigrist was in business as a paper stainer at the address given, The King's Arms, from c.1778-89. Dighton was also likely to have been a paper stainer or warehouse owner. See Rosoman, pp.55-56, who suggests the patent dates from the 1770s.

‘combined the arts of imitation with the science of invention’.<sup>62</sup> Significantly, in the case of this patent, imitation was defined by reference to the fact that those deemed worthy to form a judgement have been deceived by the plate printed, hand coloured example. Moreover, commercial rivalry was again a factor, this time on a European scale, since the patent went on to claim that the paper ‘for Beauty, Strength and Durability of Colours Far Excells/Any other made in Europe’.<sup>63</sup> This patent stressed the product’s colour strength, durability and price and deemed it suitable for a variety of sites: ‘Rooms, Ceilings [sic], Stair Cases, Screens, Chimney-Boards’. Hand drawing was also highlighted, suggesting a more overt link to the technique used to produce the original.<sup>64</sup> Since Sigrist’s trade card listed a wide range of design types ‘India Landscapes | Figures| Flowers| Birds & c’ that he could imitate, it seems likely that this patent was applied commercially.<sup>65</sup>

Such ‘Choice’ and ‘variety’ did not, however, extend to matching ‘India’ papers purchased previously. In May 1759, the Earl of Leinster tried and failed to match a sheet of ‘India’ paper for his wife, reporting that it ‘could not be match’d anywhere nearer, and people who sell India paper think it cannot be match’d in England’; he added that:

Mrs Handcock can get but two good sheets of India paper to match yours as yet, but she is gone again to-day to the last and only place she has not been at, where there was the least chance of getting any.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Berg, ‘New Commodities’, p.78.

<sup>63</sup> BM, BC 91.9.

<sup>64</sup> Although in the long term copper plates proved much less suitable for printing paper hangings than wood blocks, an issue explored in relation to J.B. Jackson in chapter 3 section 2.

<sup>65</sup> John Sigrist, Piccadilly, c.1770s, BM, HC 91.48.

<sup>66</sup> Fitzgerald, I, pp.78, 81.

Evidently she had no success here either since later in the same month he wrote again: 'As to the India paper you want, there are patterns gone to Chester of every kind in London, for you to choose out of; so that you will please yourself.'<sup>67</sup> Choice and variety could then be had, in London at least, and there is a suggestion here too that patterns changed from year to year. This is also supported in a letter to the Countess from her sister, Lady Louisa Connolly, who wrote from Staffordshire a few months later that 'I shall not, I believe, bring over India paper for the bedchamber and dressing-room, as they will not be done this year, and then perhaps there may be something new'.<sup>68</sup> Interestingly, there does not seem to be any suggestion of this aristocratic consumer purchasing a 'mock India' paper, suggesting the continued dominance of imported papers in this market into the late 1750s. There is also the possibility that designs were customised from an early date scale: in a panel from Shernfold Park, Sussex (2.3, right) a figure group and pavilion have been collaged on to a simpler design of a flowering tree.<sup>69</sup>

Contemporaries were not just concerned with the choice of paper, but also with its safe arrival since it could not be replicated if stolen or damaged. Caroline, Lady Holland, was well aware of the problem since, in writing to her sister Emily, Countess of Leinster, about some painted textiles from Mr Horner, she stated that 'being Indian, and unmade, I fear 'twill be seized unless some careful body carries it'.<sup>70</sup> The family frequently resorted to leaving goods at Chester until a friend or family member could carry it across to Ireland and through customs. There were other worries too. Then, as now, Chinese paper was susceptible to damp, leading John Hampden VIII (d.1754) to write anxiously to his Steward, Mr Harding, early in 1758: 'Pray, let the Waggoners be

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.87.

<sup>68</sup> Fitzgerald, III, p.23.

<sup>69</sup> Although these additions are hard to date, they should not perhaps be dismissed as twentieth century. The issue of customisation is explored in chapter 3.4.

<sup>70</sup> Fitzgerald, I, 1756, p.167.

told to take care to keep the Case of Indian Paper, which I have ordered Owen to send [new?] up by Hine next journey, removed from all wett'.<sup>71</sup>

Chinese papers' success was also reliant on skills in distribution and hanging developed by English firms. Leading manufacturers such as Bromwich went to considerable lengths to ensure the safe arrival of their goods, as a letter to John Grimston (1725-80) of Kilnwick Hall, near Beverley in Yorkshire in June 1753 reveals:

Pr Wm.Cave ye York Carrier yesterday morning I sent ye India paper hangings which I hope will come safe and meet with approbation, I have put a Chinese [sic] ornament round ye Top, by order ye Bishop of Feone which I hope will also please I have markt each piece with a number & Enclosd ye plans of ye room.<sup>72</sup>

Bromwich's letter also demonstrates the efforts manufacturers made to ensure a paper was correctly hung. He fixed the border to the paper, and numbered the lengths using a plan of the room (probably the drawing room) for which the paper was intended. A similar process was used in the panels now at Temple Newsam (2.3, left). Such care may have been intended to erase the memory of a previous error in supply, when Bromwich was forced to admit that Grimston had 'just reasons of Compliant (sic) which I assure you shall be stopp'd directly,'<sup>73</sup> although it seems such detailed

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<sup>71</sup> Buckinghamshire Record Office: Archives of the Earl of Buckinghamshire MS/D/MH Stewards Accounts/Bundle 39/Item 64k.

<sup>72</sup> Entwisle, 'Eighteenth-Century London Paperstainers: Thomas Bromwich', p.109.

<sup>73</sup> Letter from Bromwich to John Grimston, July 1753, which also highlights the problems of using third parties, here the cabinet maker John West: 'I am sorry to hear that the yellow paper is wrong. It is what Mr. West order'd but I will exchange for any thing Else', quoted in M. Edward Ingram, *Leaves from a Family Tree* (London and Hull, A. Brown, 1951), p.48.

instructions were standard for the firm and perhaps contributed to their overall commercial success.<sup>74</sup>

Hanging these fragile and high value goods was then a demanding task.<sup>75</sup> The first problem was to avoid damp affecting the thin layers of paper (usually three), which were bound together with starch paste, and secondly to ensure a smooth ground. The Edinburgh cabinet maker James Cullen gave detailed instructions about how to line panelled walls which: 'must have a linen and the linnen [sic] must be covered with a smooth whited brown paper to prevent its cracking and then put on the Indian paper'. Alternatively if hung on a plastered wall it 'must be well siz'd and then covered with whited brown paper'.<sup>76</sup>

In England, the task of hanging Chinese papers once purchased was often entrusted to the same London firms, sometimes (but not always) the one who supplied it. Thomas Bromwich and his successors seem particularly prominent, perhaps, as noted in chapter 1, making use of the firm's early experience in the demanding task of installing leather hangings.<sup>77</sup> At Mawley in Shropshire, Caroline Girle admired the 'fine India paper in pea-green put up by Spinnage' in Lady Blount's Dressing Room; the work of Crompton and Spinnage of Charing Cross whose trade card for their Charles Street warehouse highlighted their ability to not only supply, but 'well put up Choice of India

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<sup>74</sup> See for example letter from Lady Caroline Fox, afterwards Lady Holland, to Emily, Countess of Leinster, October 1759: 'I will take care to send about the moreen and to enquire of Brumich. All your notes and messages have been sent immediately; a parcel of Indian and English paper arrived t'other day with directions', quoted in Fitzgerald, III, p.263.

<sup>75</sup> Entwisle quotes Pepys on his wife's use of paper hangings to decorate a closet due to the ease of mounting sheets on batons, see Entwisle, 'Chinese Painted Wallpapers', p.374.

<sup>76</sup> From the letters of James Cullen to the Earl of Hopetoun, 1750-70, quoted in Anthony Coleridge, 'Hanging Chinese Wallpaper', *FH*, 2 (1966), p.65.

<sup>77</sup> For example Bromwich & Leigh advertised 'Rooms fitted up with gilt Leather, Indian Pictures or Prints & c.', BM, HC 91.9.



papers', suggesting this was an important aspect of their business too.<sup>78</sup> 'India' papers also required ongoing care, as evidenced by Bromwich and Leigh's work at Kenwood in 1757 where rail borders were hung in four rooms and repairs carried out in another, perhaps to hide wear from furniture, or alternatively to update the schemes.<sup>79</sup> For those with country houses remote from London supply and hanging could be a fraught process. In September 1751 William Windham had just been to see his architect's (James Paine's) clerk about the papers for Felbrigg and wrote that:

I find all he says in his letter about the India paper being fitted by him in to the room & that he had sent drawings is all false the paper is now at his house in pieces and not at all fitted nor did he send any drawings & the man says he must send a person down at 3s 6d per diem while at Felbrigg & 6d per mile travelling charge which I think a cursed deal.

It was not until December that Windham was able to report that 'I have seen Paine and approved his drawing of the chimneypiece for my wife's dressing room he promised to expediate the gold cord papers & c directly and then the man can come down to put up the india paper at once in both rooms.' In the end, the paper was not dispatched until the following April, followed by Paine's 'drawings for the India paper', presumably a plan of the hang, similar to that Bromwich supplied.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Quoted in Entwisle, 'Chinese Painted Wallpapers', p.368. Crompton & Spinnage advertised a 'Great Choice of fine India Paper' in their warehouse at Cockspur Street, c.1769, whilst at their Charles Street warehouse 'may be had and well put up choice of India papers', BM, HC 91.24 and 91.23.

<sup>79</sup> Billed Lady Mansfield for 'painted Chinese rail borders 18 in. wide put round the blue room' and '23 Doz/Painted rail Borders put round 3 Indian Rooms' as well as for time spent 'repairing India paper', quoted in Eileen Harris, *The Genius of Robert Adam: His Interiors* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), p.181. I have found evidence of trellis work borders at Felbrigg, Hampden and Blickling: these may be the 'rail borders' referred to here. The 'Chinese railing to staircases and panels striped in imitation of ditto' at The House of Confucius is a possible source for these (repainted in 1813, PRO Wks 5, I am grateful to Lee Prosser for this information).

<sup>80</sup> Letters William Windham to Robert Frary, Sept 1751- April 1752, copies in V&A Furniture, Dress and Textiles Dept files; see R.W. Kelton-Cremer, *Felbrigg: the story of a house* (London: Century in

Paper hangers needed not only to ensure the wall was smooth and damp free, but also had to deal with the problems of a limited supply of lengths of fixed dimensions. As noted above, the lengths were numbered in Canton (which Bromwich at least seems to have transcribed), the bottom edge sometimes indicated and also the walls for which they were intended (2.3, left).<sup>81</sup> The presence of an experienced London craftsman was therefore crucial, as is evidenced by John Scruton's work in the Bow Window dressing room at Felbrigg in 1752. He carried out the scalloped trimming of the lengths which serves to disguise joins, and used large overlaps to tighten the design, perhaps in response to shifts in taste.<sup>82</sup> Since the lengths were not long enough to fill the space from cornice to dado horizontal strips were also added above the dado to extend the height by an average of 25 cms (2. 21, right).<sup>83</sup> This shortfall was a frequent problem for paper hangers, who in the Chinese Bedroom at Blickling (2. 25) arrived at the radical solution of cutting out and discarding the sky portion of the paper. This part of the design was then extended by painting in distemper directly onto a laid paper hung over the lining paper before the Chinese paper was pasted up. Even with these modifications, an elaborate rail border was still needed above and below the paper (2.26). The tradition that extra sheets were supplied from which insects, flowers and birds might be cut and collaged onto Chinese papers to disguise joins has some evidence in surviving schemes, but equally such motifs might be used to fill out the design, and they were sometimes cut from European paper too.<sup>84</sup>

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association with The National Trust, 1986) p.133; John Cornforth 'A Role for Chinoiserie?', *CL*, 7 December 1989, pp.144-151 (p.148).

<sup>81</sup> For example the panels now at Kelmarsh (2.2) are variously numbered 22 and 6. One is also inscribed 'bottom edge', see letter from John Sutcliffe to Miss Lancaster, [?1980s], Kelmarsh Trust files.

<sup>82</sup> Sandiford and Mapes, *Method Statement*, 2002-03, copy in Felbrigg files. I am grateful to Anna Hawker for this information.

<sup>83</sup> Sandiford and Mapes, *Report*, to Chris Calnan, Regional Conservator, 18 September 2003, p.2, copy in Felbrigg files. I am grateful to Andrew Bush for this information.

<sup>84</sup> Lady Mary Coke described this practice in 1772: 'I called on the Duchess of Norfolk and found her sorting butterflies cut out of India paper for a room she is going to furnish', quoted in Entwisle, *LH*, p.50.

This survey of production and hanging methods does then challenge two established views of Chinese papers. Firstly, despite being convenient goods for private traders, they were far from unique items; rather, they were manufactured employing techniques of batch production to produce goods that were high in value. Secondly, English papers in the chinoiserie style should be seen less as inferior products but rather as another aspect of commercial innovation. As has also been shown, Chinese papers' success was reliant on innovations in the English trade, especially in distribution and hanging.

#### **2.4 Authenticity and imitation**

This section returns to the issue of imitation. It examines this issue in relation to a group of 'India' and 'mock India' papers, focusing on how they treat the stock motifs of landscape, plants, animals and figures. I argue that claims for the authenticity of 'India' papers are flawed, just as the labelling of 'mock India' papers as inauthentic ignores the reasons for their appeal to contemporaries. In reality, European consumers had absolutely no reference point for judging authenticity. In China, papers were not used to create a continuous decoration; rather the only paper pasted directly to the wall was plain painted, not patterned, and provided a backdrop against which scroll paintings might be displayed. Nor did European consumers have access to accurate views of China against which to measure the views of production, landscapes and urban life depicted in these imported papers.

This section challenges previous interpretations of Chinese paper which emphasised their purity and distance from European taste, arguing rather that Chinese papers reworked European versions of Chinese originals just as English manufacturers responded to consumer demand for certain designs. The literary scholar Chi-ming Yang has argued in relation to eighteenth-century drama that ‘Through a complex process of back-and-forth (and back) imitations, original and copy are no longer locatable’.<sup>85</sup> I argue that a similar process can be seen to underlie the use of chinoiserie papers, such as the scheme of c.1740 from Berkeley House (2.6).

This paper’s origins have been contested. It was not, in fact, the uncontaminated Chinese design Archibald Russell claimed it was in 1905, since, once it was removed from the wall in the 1920s, English tax stamps were revealed on the reverse.<sup>86</sup> Even when this was recognised the paper was still seen as in a different category to other surviving English papers in the Chinese style. In 1945 Entwisle illustrated it to represent a paper ‘worthy of study’ with the caption ‘Better type of XVIII-century Chinoiserie design’,<sup>87</sup> whilst Hugh Honour claimed that it ‘should be classed as pseudo-Chinese rather than chinoiserie’.<sup>88</sup>

This example highlights the difficulties of making clear distinctions between Chinese and English sources noted by Chi-ming Yang. In this case distinctions were complicated since the design was painted, not block printed, and the Chinese landscape format was reworked in order to leave no open space of sky, whilst birds were arranged symmetrically in the branches and perched along the shoreline which wove

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<sup>85</sup> Chi-ming Yang, ‘Virtue’s Vogues: Eastern Authenticity and the Commodification of Chinese-ness on the 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Stage’, *Comparative Literature Studies*, 39.2 (2002) 326-46 (p.341).

<sup>86</sup> Archibald G.B.Russell, ‘A Seventeenth-Century Wall-Paper at Wotton-under-Edge’, *Burlington Magazine*, 7: 28 (July 1905) 309-11. Russell’s assessment is repeated (unattributed) by Entwisle in ‘Chinese Painted Wallpapers’, p.373.

<sup>87</sup> E.A. Entwisle, ‘Historians of Wallpaper’, ill. pl. III, p.24.

<sup>88</sup> Honour, *Chinoiserie*, p.134.

around the room at dado height (2.8). This choice of pattern and technique, I argue, can be read in terms of eighteenth-century preferences, showing manufacturers responding to consumer demand for a pattern both denser than Chinese papers and designed with the scale of a town house room in mind, reducing the expense and wastage of hanging a Chinese paper discussed above.<sup>89</sup> It also reflects rococo taste in the present border of foliage and rope swags in red/pink on a black ground, contrasting dramatically with the paper (2.7, left), and the carved over-mantel with shelves for displaying porcelain ornaments (2.9).<sup>90</sup> The scheme is likely to have been installed by a local tradesman, probably William Mayo (d.1740), a town mayor whose family were goldsmiths.<sup>91</sup> Arguably then it enabled, as Ellen Kennedy Johnson has argued, the creation of chinoiserie wallpapers that allowed the 'middling classes' to decorate their homes in the style of the upper gentry.<sup>92</sup>

The discovery that the Berkeley House paper was English made also led to negative comments about the scheme. In 1933 Oman claimed that 'the artist has been at pains to copy accurately the fauna and flora of the originals, (but) a comparison shows that he has entirely missed the skilful composition which the Chinese papers invariably display'.<sup>93</sup> According to Oman then, the English designer is a copyist who has 'missed', rather than deliberately reworked, aspects of the 'originals' composition.

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<sup>89</sup> As Saunders notes '- it sits above a dado rail at the height of a chair-back at half the length of most Chinese papers'; see Saunders, p.72.

<sup>90</sup> In July 1993 a daughter of a later owner visited the V&A and reported that the house had originally contained a powdering closet with shell form ceiling and 'connected wig brackets like the chimneypiece'. This had been removed in the early twentieth century, see note in Berkeley House file, V&A Furniture, Dress & Textiles Dept. A letter to the museum from F.C. Harper, 1920, reports that the wallpaper formerly had a fret work pattern border, at a later date replaced with the stencilled edging of floral festoons, V&A, RFs.

<sup>91</sup> Letter from Miss BA Kingan, Wotton under Edge Heritage Centre, to T. Murdoch, V&A, 1 October 1996, Berkeley House file, V&A Furniture, Textiles & Dress Dept.

<sup>92</sup> Kennedy Johnson, 'The Taste for Bringing the Outside in', p.123.

<sup>93</sup> Oman, 'English Chinoiserie Wallpapers', p.150.

Oman also highlights the use of botanical schemes, which are, I argue, a key element of Chinese papers' appeal to contemporaries. Throughout the period of Chinese papers' popularity, papers were produced showing flowering plants in a landscape setting, often interspersed with birds and insect life. Their botanical accuracy was praised by Joseph Banks who advised in 1771 that:

A man need go no further to study the Chinese than the Chinese paper. Some of the plants which are common to China and Java as bamboo, are better figured there than in the best botanical authors that I have seen.<sup>94</sup>

But according to John Barrow (who travelled with Macartney's embassy), writing in 1805, supply was fuelled by European demand: 'The Chinese having found that the representations of natural objects are in more request among foreigners, they pay strict attention to the subject that may be required'.<sup>95</sup> Barrow's comments do highlight the appeal of nature, and suggest that these products were not just intended, as Porter argues, to evoke fantasy and meaninglessness. However, some later Chinese papers do seem more concerned to provide if not fantasy then artifice. For example in the panels from Clarence House, Brockwell Park, birds are carefully depicted in pairs, trees simultaneously flower and fruit, and branches teem with insect and bird life, depicting the idea of China as a place of profusion, in this case of the natural world rather than of manufactured products (2.7, right). The appeal of these papers may also be related to another desire, to possess exotic plants, especially those that have successfully flowered and fruited. In this sense papers displaying these plants could act as a substitute for the real thing, an alternative route to the type of possession which Beth Fowkes Tobin claims was a form of cultural capital. She argues that the tropical plant

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<sup>94</sup> Quoted in C.C. Oman, 'Old Wallpapers in England 3. Chinese Papers', p.18.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Jourdain and Soame-Jenyns, *Chinese Export Art*, note 5, p.29.

circulated as a social signifier in eighteenth-century British society through literature and plant collecting, whereby exotic plants were domesticated and de-contextualised.<sup>96</sup> Papers then contain these exotic plants, which perpetually fruit and flower in the domestic space, as in the Hampden House State bed chamber paper discussed below (2.30).<sup>97</sup>

This domestication is also evident in the contrast seen in Chinese papers between the accuracy with which individual plants are depicted, and the artificiality of the landscape in which they are set. Their 'skilful composition' usually takes the form of a flowering plant emerging from mounds composed of rockwork and roots convenient for perching birds, thereby accommodating the practical need to trim the paper at the top (in the sky) and bottom (below the rockwork) without disrupting the central motif, a costly procedure which the Berkeley House paper discussed above avoids. However far from being an uncontaminated format, this reflects eighteenth-century European taste for the Chinese style garden. This is a key site for the interpretation of paper-hangings, just as for chinoiserie as a whole.

The landscape and its enjoyment are not the only subjects depicted in Chinese papers. By the second half of the eighteenth century other luxury goods are creeping into them. One of a set of three panels given to the V&A in 1915, and documented in the donor's family for almost a century previously (2.10) depicts a flowering tree within whose branches sits a stand with a fruit tree growing in a pot, and from which is suspended a basket of fruits.<sup>98</sup> Like the basket of fruits, the vivid pink glazed ceramic pot moulded with scrollwork is another exotic commodity, supporting Berg's view that part of the

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<sup>96</sup> Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Colonizing Nature: The Tropics in British Art & Letters, 1760-1820* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), chapter 6 especially pp.170-72.

<sup>97</sup> This may well reflect the fashion for bringing flowering plants into the home, a fashion also reflected in the Uppark print room, discussed in chapter 3 section 5.

<sup>98</sup> Margaret Jourdain, *English Interiors in Smaller Houses 1660-1830* (London: Batsford, 1927), fig.140.

attraction of 'oriental commodities' was not just the objects themselves, but the 'exotic skills and production processes behind the materials, colours and patterns otherwise undiscovered in Europe'.<sup>99</sup> However, the marbled wooden stand on which the pot is placed seems more likely to represent a European model. This again refutes Oman's claim about the supposed purity of the sources of Chinese papers.

A correspondingly negative attitude towards English papers has persisted even in the writings of later twentieth century commentators on Western designs who continued to criticise what they saw as their lack of authenticity. Honour, for example, maintained that: 'The relative simplicity of Chinese designs rarely satisfied the chinoiserie fancier and English paper-stainers therefore manufactured wallpapers crowded with oriental motifs, producing an effect strikingly different from those printed in China'.<sup>100</sup>

Saunders also highlights technique, describing the Berkeley House paper as 'delicate and beautifully executed' but also as betraying its origins in features such as 'a certain naivety in the drawing' and what she characterises as 'crude simplicity' in the botanical details.<sup>101</sup> Cornforth echoes this approach in his assessment of a fragment from Longnor Hall, Shropshire, perhaps originally hung in a bed chamber (2.11). It is thought to date from c.1740, but may, Cornforth suggested, be earlier given its 'sparse design', which he believed 'suggests a certain lack of confidence on the part of the painter'.<sup>102</sup> So what might be seen as purity in a Chinese paper is then dismissed as undeveloped when seen in English made papers.

Study of a group of English papers of the late 1760s, including single panels (each 68 cm x 55 cm), and multi-sheet decorations, shows that these conclusions are

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<sup>99</sup> Berg, 'Asian Luxuries and the making of the European Consumer Revolution', p.229.

<sup>100</sup> Honour, *Chinoiserie*, p.134.

<sup>101</sup> Saunders, 'The China Trade', in Hoskins, pp. 42-55 (p.55).

<sup>102</sup> John Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p.265; see also his article on Longnor in *CL*, 20 February 1964, pp.392-96 (p.396).



questionable (2.12-2.14).<sup>103</sup> It has been suggested that they may have been intended to decorate blinds used to cover chimney apertures when the fires were not in use.<sup>104</sup> The inscription on one multi-sheet panel of a classical vase of flowers, surrounded by miniature Chinese figures riding ducks, does indicate that they were used on chimneys in some way (2.12, right).<sup>105</sup> However, the competitively priced portrait format panels (18d per sheet, see 2.14, right) are more likely to have been intended for hanging with borders on the wall.

Like the Chinese papers, their design is based on a landscape of rockwork, mounds, flowering trees and water. They also imitate Chinese production methods, using hand colouring of etched outlines. However they adopt Western perspective, and play with scale, rejecting of Chinese models. The sheets suggest parallels with contemporary literature: they can be seen to portray on the wall the imaginary world which fiction evoked on the page. Ballaster has argued how ‘hybridity is transformed from the ponderous to the playful’ in Horace Walpole’s early piece of Chinoiserie, *Mi Li. A Chinese Fairy Tale*.<sup>106</sup> This points ‘to the often under-acknowledged attractions of an imagined China as a source of fantasy, play and topsy-turveydom’ which she maintains is closer to ‘experiments in architectural and ceramic chinoiserie of the period’.<sup>107</sup> According to this position, these papers depicted a hybrid space where in

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<sup>103</sup> Now divided between the V&A and the Museum of London, the numbering system suggests they may have been samples. Two papers in the Whitworth Art Gallery (Ill. *Chinese Whispers*, ed. by Beever, cats F18 & F19) may also be related to the series. None show any evidence of having been hung on the wall.

<sup>104</sup> Entwisle argues the single sheet papers were intended to cover fireplace apertures in summer, see ‘The Blue Paper Warehouse’, p.98. For the argument about the use of paper prints on chimney blinds see Lucy Wood ‘Furniture for Lord Delavel’, note 45, p.210.

<sup>105</sup> I am grateful to Beverley Lemire for assistance in deciphering this inscription. Ill. Stewart-Greene, ‘Chinese Wall-Papers’ as ‘A Chinese wall-paper of formal design’, p.303. A similar paper, VAM E.2001-1919, is engraved ‘Accordg to Act of Parlt Decr 1<sup>st</sup> 1769.’, ill. Oman, *Catalogue of Wallpaper*, pl.Xb.

<sup>106</sup> Ballaster, *Fables of the East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.133-35.

<sup>107</sup> Ballaster, *Fabulous Orientals*, p.235.

one sheet a Chinese male rode a camel and hunted with a greyhound (2.14, right),<sup>108</sup> whilst in another the figure could ride an ox (2.12, left). Ethnic categorisation was also subverted, for example in a further sheet European figures were shown in ‘non Western’ dress (2.13, left). Another sheet in the same series, inscribed ‘Indian Prince’, stereotypes the Orient as a place of fantasy, where ‘Indian’ royalty may ride through a Chinese style landscape (2.13, right).

The sources drawn on by English manufacturers for such papers are however difficult to pinpoint. Although the overall form of the design is often loosely based on the motif of the flowering tree emerging from rockwork with perching birds familiar from the ‘India’ papers themselves, it seems that figures and buildings were drawn from European prints. As noted in chapter 1, one figure who combined the production of paper hangings with prints was Matthew Darly. At least one plate from *A New Book of Chinese Designs* published by Darly with Edwards in 1754 was used as a source for a printed cotton.<sup>109</sup> David Pullins has argued that Darly’s integration of figures into exotic landscapes, as well as the plates’ form which filled geometric reserves, made these designs especially suitable for adaptation as room decorations.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, Saunders has suggested that Darly’s pattern book functioned as a source for the single sheet papers including ‘Indian Prince’, examples of which appeared on his trade card.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Ill. Saunders ‘The China Trade’, fig 72, p.55.

<sup>109</sup> *Pattern and Design: Designs for the Decorative Arts 1480-1980*, ed. by Susan Lambert (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1983), pls 1.7a, 1.7b.

<sup>110</sup> David Pullins, ‘Robert Adam’s ‘Silver Room’: Neoclassicism and Chinoiserie’, unpublished paper delivered to the conference *Eighteenth Century Directions*, University of Birmingham, 11 June 2006.

<sup>111</sup> Gill Saunders, ‘Focus on chinoiserie: a new acquisition at the V&A’, *WHR* (2001), 19; Darly advertised ‘Ceilings, Pannels, Staircases, Chimney/Boards &c. Neatly fitted up either with/Paintings or Stainings in the/ Modern Gothic or Chinese Taste’, c.1760-70, BM, BC 91.7.

As well as illustrating the consumption of imported luxuries (animals, people, ceramics and above all tea) these panels also depicted the consumption of chinoiserie products: garden buildings, furniture and dress occupy these landscapes. A further panel, now known only through reproduction, showed Chinese servants stacking a dresser with blue and white porcelain in a garden setting, whilst a man and woman (this time in contemporary English dress) sat drinking tea (2.14, left). The tea table then would seem to be a common motif in these panels, part of a repertoire that included pagodas, trellis-work balustrades and flowering plants which could evoke 'in China'. Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace has argued that the tea table also served as a means to construct the modern female subject, functioning as a way in which the upper class female body might be disciplined just as the coffee house disciplined the masculine body. She points out that at the tea table both men and women could be feminized, but suggests that 'that process has a different valence for each gender', signalling not just class distinctions but marking the upper class woman as an item of display.<sup>112</sup> One reading then of these papers is then as an attempt to discipline female (and male) behaviour at the tea table.

Chinese landscape papers then are not the uncontaminated products they appear, but rather responded to the demands of European consumers for accuracy (in so far as they depict the details of exotic plants) and for familiarity in their interpretation of a Chinese style garden. The inclusion of other exotic commodities including ceramics and furniture, in addition to flowering plant and fruits, suggests further that they responded (or even fuelled?) demand for other luxury goods. Luxury exports *and* European-produced imitations feature in the sheets manufactured in London in the late 1760s. Far from imitating Chinese papers directly, these rework the landscape format

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<sup>112</sup> Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, pp.24-29.

to evoke an imaginary space which suggests not order, but disorder, and reject images of manufacture in favour of those celebrating consumption. Chinese papers and their English imitations therefore need to be seen as two sides of the same industry, one where both painters and printers in Canton and London were adept at responding to changes in tastes, balancing demand for images of the exotic in a remote tea plantation with images of the exotic at home at the tea table or in the landscape garden.

## **2.5 Chinese paper in upper rooms**

Here I examine the claim that it was the playfulness and informality of Chinese styles which made them popular choices in apartments used by women, reflecting the view that chinoiserie's exotic informality was seen as infantile and irrational and therefore essentially 'feminine'. However, as discussed in chapter 1, the identification of luxury with effeminacy and weakness has been questioned by Berg and Eger, who argue that the primary role of luxury objects was to make social distinctions visible. This section takes up these issues, firstly by examining male fears about the effects on women of the taste for chinoiserie, before comparing what men and women say about the use of Chinese decorative schemes. Then it tests these positions against the evidence of a group of apartments decorated with 'India' papers and associated with women. These are compared with apartments associated with male patrons in the final section of the chapter.

Male fears about chinoiserie are often rooted in the fundamental threat to good order posed by female sexuality. As Ballaster notes 'Enthusiasm for China in the period is often presented as a form of madness- a madness frequently manifested in women &

associated with sexual disorder'.<sup>113</sup> Contemporaries voiced these fears. John Shebbeare (writing as 'Battista Angeloni') claimed in 1755 that 'The simple and sublime have lost all influence almost everywhere, all is Chinese or Gothic; every chair in an apartment, the frames of glasses, and tables, must be Chinese'. He went on to identify the implicit danger that even painted representations posed to female suggestibility: 'the walls covered with Chinese paper filled with figures which resemble nothing of God's creation, and which a prudent nation would prohibit for the sake of pregnant women [...] Such is the prevailing taste in this city'.<sup>114</sup> This claim is informed by the belief that what a pregnant woman saw could affect the shape of the child in her womb. It also suggests the use of such imagery is transgressive, deviating from classical and by implication masculine norms.

It was not just luxury goods but the whole style and its European imitations that underlay male fears. William Parrat, writing in London's *The World* in March 1753 highlighted the particular dangers in relation to Chinese papers and their English imitations 'so much in fashion in our great houses' in his story of a newly married man whose wife redecorates with the aid of a Chinese upholsterer, Mr. Kifang, satirising the role of the (male) upholsterer, discussed in chapter 1. The upper rooms in the house are 'hung with the richest China and India paper, where all the powers of fancy are exhausted in a thousand fantastic figures of birds, beasts and fishes which never had existence'. According to Porter this fictional wallpaper 'degrades nature from a well spring of truth and beauty to a handmaiden of monstrous deceit', subverting through its 'hollow' images an implied 'ideal of legitimacy in representation'.<sup>115</sup> Like 'Angeloni' this imaginary husband is clearly fearful of this subversion and the power of the male

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<sup>113</sup> Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient*, pp.203-04.

<sup>114</sup> Letter LVI 'the taste of England at present in architecture' to the Revd. Father Fabio Maretti, at Rome, Battista Angeloni (John Shebbeare), *Letters on the English Nation*, 2 vols (London: 1756), II, p 261.

<sup>115</sup> Quoted in Porter, 'Chinoiserie and the Aesthetics of Illegitimacy', p.52.

upholsterer, who in this racist fantasy is imagined as Chinese, rendering him a further threat to sexual order within the marriage.

These writers all reveal negative attitudes about the alleged effects of Chinoiserie on women's bodies and minds (and indeed on men's minds) and the threat they posed to order, both in the natural world and in male and female relations in the home. These male concerns must surely have presented problems for female consumers of these luxury goods, who also needed to negotiate contemporary fictional manifestations of orientalised femininity based on the popular figure of luxury, the Oriental Woman. According to Ballaster, this figure combined the negative connotations of dangerous indulgence and display, with the positive virtues of the control of masculine excess.<sup>116</sup> This suggests that by using the chinoiserie style female consumers, such as Montagu, not only claimed domination of the exotic other but also challenged masculine models in decoration, presenting an alternative version of living based not on order, structure and classical models but on sensuality, playfulness and hedonism.

This model is supported by descriptions of actual schemes, which concentrate not on their negative effects on minds and bodies, but suggest that Chinese papers served to differentiate apartments for use by women from an early date. In the 1740s this contrast was in evidence at Cornbury in Oxfordshire, where Mrs Delany described the rooms occupied by herself and her husband the Dean as:

So neat and elegant that I never saw anything equal to it [...] the first room is hung with flowered paper of a grotesque pattern, the colours lively and the pattern bold and handsome (that is the Dean's dressing-room); the next room is

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<sup>116</sup> Ros Ballaster, 'Performing "Roxane": The Oriental Woman as the Sign of Luxury in Eighteenth-Century Fictions' in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Berg and Eger, pp.165-77.

hung with the finest Indian paper of flowers and *all sorts of birds*, (that is my dressing-room); the ceilings are all ornamented in the Indian taste, the frames of the glass and all the finishing of the room are well-suited; the bedchamber is also hung with *Indian paper on a gold ground*, and the bed is *Indian work* of silks and gold on white satin; the windows look into the park, which is kept like the finest garden, and is a Paradise.

She concluded that ‘upon the whole I think the house the *most comfortable and pleasant fine house* I ever saw, for it is not only magnificent and elegant but *convenient and rational*; it resembles its master, and is both strong and genteel’.<sup>117</sup>

Evidently, the floral grotesque (probably an arabesque pattern, a type of design with classical precedents) was considered suitable (‘handsome’) for male use, whereas, in the female apartments, ‘India’ patterns on papers, ceilings (perhaps papier-mâché) and bed hangings vied for attention. This suggests a contrast between the masculine authority of the classical style in the male apartments, and the fanciful indulgence conveyed by the decoration of the female apartments. Yet to Delany the effect is not one of over indulgence, luxury and irrationality, but rather of gentility, elegance and order. There is however a clear sense that these spaces are set apart from those characterised by masculine order.

How far then is this conclusion supported by surviving schemes? As discussed in chapter 1, Cunningham identifies the dressing room as the key space in which to look for gender differentiation. This is a space often decorated in the chinoiserie taste, as suggested by Thomas Chippendale who captioned a plate illustrating designs of ‘Chairs after the Chinese Manner’ as ‘very proper for a Lady’s Dressing Room:

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<sup>117</sup> Mrs Delany to Mrs Dewes, Cornbury, 30 October, 1746, *Autobiography*, pp.441-42; quoted in Baird, p.57, who misattributes this description to Delville.

especially if is hung with India paper.’<sup>118</sup> However, the dressing room is often decorated as part of a suite of lodgings including the bedchamber. This section now examines the significance of the choice of papers in a group of apartments, including bedchambers and dressing rooms, used by aristocratic women at three country houses: Saltram, Blickling and Felbrigg.

At Saltram near Plymouth in Devon (2.15), no fewer than four chinoiserie interiors survive. It seems that John Parker (1703-68), who inherited the house in 1743, and his wife Lady Catherine Parker (1706-58) conceived the idea of the chinoiserie schemes as part of their remodelling of the house using Lady Catherine’s money, ideas which were also taken up by their descendants. The Colopies bedroom and dressing room on the North East side of the house may have been intended as a dowager suite for Lady Catherine’s use, after her husband became seriously ill, forming part of a planned reorientation of the house to the North in the 1740s-50s (2.17, 2.19).<sup>119</sup> The papers seem to have been hung in the late 1750s, and Thomas Bromwich almost certainly had a hand in their supply and perhaps their installation too.<sup>120</sup> The involvement of Lady Catherine is also hinted at in some lines from a sonnet written by a relative in 1774:

Here might you see how both our faces

Are set in frames of black and gold

Like China Gods in Japan cases

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<sup>118</sup> Thomas Chippendale, *The gentleman and cabinet-maker’s director: being a large collection of the most elegant and useful designs of household furniture*, London, 1762, pls..XXVI-XXVIII in, in ECCO [accessed 8 November 2007].

<sup>119</sup> I am grateful to Sue Baumbach for this suggestion, following Rosemary Baird.

<sup>120</sup> Cornforth found a mirror painting in the dressing room backed with Chinese paper dated 1756, leading him to date the scheme to shortly before Lady Catherine’s death in 1758; see ‘Saltram-III’, *CL*, 11 May 1967, pp.1160-1164. Andrew Bush reports that a gilt frame mirror at the house is backed with a ‘recycled wrapping grade western paper’ which has a note ‘birds and flowers cut out of India paper for filling up vacancies in other paper, March 1757’ (email to the author, 9 October 2009). The evidence of a stamp onto canvas backing found when the papers were moved in 1962 may suggest a link to the Golden Lyon, see correspondence between Nigel Neatby, NT Curator at Saltram, and Natalie Rothstein of the V&A, December 1963 (Saltram files).



To Dowagers at Auctions sold.<sup>121</sup>

This may refer to purchases of Chinese goods, as well as to the lacquer frames of some of the mirror paintings of Chinese figures surviving at Saltram. The subject of the bedroom scheme, now re-hung in the Chinese Chippendale bedroom, is the growing, curing and packing of tea for export (2.16, 2.18).<sup>122</sup> Multi point perspective allows us to observe figures cutting wood, carrying tea, tending tea in gardens, transporting it in canisters and stamping on the leaves. This is not a scene of playfulness and social disorder, but rather one of productiveness and order, which has been compared to the Coutts paper discussed below. Its subject is a luxury import, of key importance in signalling female authority through the tea table, discussed above in relation to Kowaleski-Wallace's readings about the upper class female body in the 'mock India' sheets. Yet the bedroom scheme avoids any connotations of luxury and indulgence by depicting not consumption, but idealized production.

However, the 'Clouds' paper, hung in the adjacent dressing room (now re-sited in a ground floor room adjacent to the library, known as the Mirror room, 2.19), fits more closely the model of fantasy. It is dominated by groups on clouds including horsemen, a 'choir' of women with musical instruments accompanied by a god in a dragon chariot, women and children playing in a pavilion and an official out walking shaded by a parasol.<sup>123</sup> Yet Saunders claims that stylised clouds are more common in Chinese decorative arts intended for internal consumption, suggesting the paper is appropriating motifs from goods intended for use by the Chinese elite, an association highlighted

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<sup>121</sup> Written by Frederick ('Fritz'), John Parker's (d.1799) brother in law, quoted in Ceri Richards, *Saltram, Devon* (London: The National Trust, 1998), p.47.

<sup>122</sup> This was noted as long ago as 1926, see H. Avray Tipping, 'Saltram-II' *CL*, 30 January 1926, pp.160-170 (p.163).

<sup>123</sup> This now hangs in the mirror room on the ground floor. A fragment of blue illusionistic drapery border remains attached to the paper to the right of the library door.

earlier in du Bocage's comments, and refuting the commercial associations of tea production.<sup>124</sup>

In addition to these chinoiserie schemes which use textiles and papers, a fourth space, the south-west bedroom, is decorated as a print room. Bromwich's were especially admired for their skill in executing print rooms, using 'India' pictures. At Fawley Caroline Girle praised the firm's taste in the billiard room: 'adorn'd with very good prints, the borders cut out and the ornaments put on with great taste by Broomwich'.<sup>125</sup> At Saltram Chinese watercolours including large format landscapes, figurative panels and small album prints, as well as the addition of a female figure from a fourth scheme, are united by the green and black fret (English) border (2.20). As early as 1742 Lady Cardigan's dressing room was being decorated in this way.<sup>126</sup>

By 1750 Walpole was decorating a drawing room in the Chinese style:

That I fancied and have been executing at Mr Rigby's in Essex; it has large and fine Indian landscapes, with a black fret round them, and round the whole entablature of the room, and all the ground or hanging is of pink paper.<sup>127</sup>

This evidence, I argue, suggests that what is often characterised as a classical model has its origins in the practice of decorating with India pictures and prints. At Saltram

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<sup>124</sup> Gillian Saunders, *Saltram, An evaluation of the Chinese wallpapers*, n.d., typed copy in Saltram files.

<sup>125</sup> October 1771, see *Passages from the Diary of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys*, ed. by Emily Climensson (London, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co, 1899), pp.146-47. This scheme seemingly either updated the India paper or eked out a limited supply. Bromwich also hung 'different pictures in frames' made up of India paper on a peagreen paper in a dressing room.

<sup>126</sup> Daniel Woodroffe supplied '88 India pictures at 4/6', which were fitted up by Benjamin Goodison (c.1700-67) who was paid £11 for 'Linnen cloth to cover all the Sides of the Dressing room & fitting & fixing up Do & pasting India pictures all over Do & making good the Figures over the Joyning of the pictures', account book of the Fourth Earl of Cardigan, quoted by H. Avray Tipping in 'Saltram', p.163.

<sup>127</sup> Letter to Sir Horace Mann, 2 August 1750, quoted in Oman, 'English Chinoiserie Wallpapers', pp.150-51, who claims this was designed by Walpole.

then, a bedchamber and two dressing rooms were hung with Chinese papers. These schemes are all confined to the 'upper rooms' of the house, and are distinct from the Adam interiors created on the ground floor. There does not however appear to have been any continuity between the schemes, even between the Colopies bedroom and adjacent dressing room, perhaps reflecting the difficulty in acquiring sufficient India paper for even one room, outlined earlier in this chapter. What is more all three schemes are figurative, signalling their ostentation in the display of the most expensive category of 'India' paper.

Are there other examples of this taste being confined to 'upper rooms'? The 'Bow Window Dressing Room' (now known as the White dressing room) (2. 21) is the only surviving scheme decorated with 'India' paper at Felbrigg.<sup>128</sup> The colours were originally vibrant, since a pink ground, perhaps with a rail border, was combined with a gilded rope fillet. Cornforth thought this another of Windham's economy measures, but equally it could have been intended to complement gilt lacquer furnishings and contrast with the coloured ground. There was also a clear contrast between this exotic fantasy and the Cabinet directly below which was built at the same time to house the paintings collected by the Windhams on their Grand Tour. Once again, exotic taste was confined to the upper rooms although there seems little attempt here to mask its luxurious connotations in views of consumption or production. However, the same design, repeating panels of four kinds of birds (including herons, ducks and other game birds), was also used at Igham Mote in Kent, part of the remodelling of the drawing room as a classical space (including a Venetian window) by the Selby family in the

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<sup>128</sup> In the 1771 Inventory an 'India paper with Pigeons' was hung in another dressing room (copy in V&A Furniture, Dress & Textiles Dept. files). A scheme hung at Kelmarsh Hall in Northamptonshire in the late 1920s (2.2) was formerly at Kimberley Hall in Norfolk, and is traditionally associated with nearby Felbrigg, so may possibly be a lost bedroom scheme. Like the 'White' dressing room paper it may originally have had a pink ground, and features pairs of exotic birds such as cockatoos, peacocks and pheasants, together with miniature figure groups dwarfed by roots, flowering trees and shrubs. See Oman, 'Old Wallpapers', col. pl. between pp.18-19.

eighteenth century (2.22).<sup>129</sup> Here then a Chinese paper is being used to convey modernity, drawing the eye away from the Jacobean chimneypiece and frieze and masking earlier finishes.

At Blickling too a suite of bedchamber and dressing room decorated with Chinese papers in the 1760s signalled a departure from the previous classical scheme, whose remnants (the cornice and chimney piece) nevertheless dilute the effects of the Chinese papers. The schemes may be associated with the marriage of Mary Ann Drury (d.1769), to John Hobart (1723-93), Second Earl of Buckinghamshire, in 1761.<sup>130</sup> The extravagance of the bedroom scheme which uses twenty-two panels to create a vast landscape peopled by exotic buildings, people and products, with its borders and the accompanying (more modest) dressing room scheme, would have signalled the importance of the marriage (2.23-2.27). The bedroom's rail borders are a variant of that from the parlour at Hampden House, suggesting they may have had a common source. As noted above, they (2.26) were purchased at auction by the Earl's aunt, Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk. John Hobart is known to have sought her advice on decoration on at least one occasion during the programme of improvements at Blickling, asking her to intervene in his wife's and sister's schemes, insisting that 'Your authority is necessary to silence them'.<sup>131</sup> Henrietta's own taste is reinforced by her hanging of 'India' paper and borders in the new dining room at Marble Hill, her Palladian villa near Richmond where John Hobart had grown up.<sup>132</sup> This was part of

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<sup>129</sup> I am grateful to Nino Strachey for drawing my attention to the comparison with Felbrigg.

<sup>130</sup> Baird, p.56.

<sup>131</sup> Quoted in Tracy Borman, *King's Mistress, Queen's Servant: Henrietta Howard*, (London: Pimlico, 2008), p.134.

<sup>132</sup> This scheme was hung sometime after September, 1751, when the walls were being battened in preparation 'to putt ye Chinees paper on.' The cabinetmaker William Hallett the Younger seems to have contracted Bromwich to supply the very large quantity of goods needed (62 sheets of India paper and 135 yds. of border, together with linen and tacks). Although Hallett may have been responsible for stretching the canvas over the battens, it was Bromwich's specialist workmen who executed what was evidently a complicated scheme, since it took forty-seven days to hang (probably involving two men) at

the 1750s remodelling carried out by Matthew Brettingham, who was recommended by her brother, John Hobart's father, who had earlier employed him at Blickling.<sup>133</sup>

In conclusion, there is then a correlation in this small sample considered between the hanging of Chinese papers and apartments used by women, in particular (although not exclusively) the bedroom and dressing room suite, as Delany's description suggests. The appeal of playfulness and informality alone does not however explain these papers' popularity. Nor is there a simple association between gender and space; rather the particular context of these schemes may contain clues as to the choice of paper. It appears that in some families there was a particular taste for Chinese papers and that they were frequently used to convey fashionability and mask earlier schemes. Luxury is clearly referenced in scenes of production or consumption but so too is a love of fantasy, represented by life size birds, imaginary landscapes or Chinese figures trying on European hats. This supports Berg's and Eger's claims that luxury goods visualise social distinctions.

There is also no simple link here between luxury, effeminacy and weakness. Even if the threats to order posed by chinoiserie seemed to conflict with the public sphere's idea of marriage as underpinning sexual order, in some schemes women played a role in the choice of decoration, at least indirectly. This supports Porter's idea that the use of chinoiserie represents a 'revolt' not only against classical taste but the masculine identity associated with that taste. Papers were also used in spaces of sociability such as the drawing room where men were involved in decorating too. These brightly coloured, detailed and luxurious products were moving out of the closet, into the

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a total cost of over £42 for materials and labour. No original fragments survive, but English Heritage have recently restored the room to its 1750s appearance, to whom I am grateful for these references.  
<sup>133</sup> Borman, *King's Mistress*, p.262.

dressing room and also other spaces of sociability. By 1790 in *Ellen Woodley* Mrs Bonhote was describing Lady Alford's 'superb drawing room hung with India paper', its furniture 'a mixture of modern and antique' which displayed 'a striking scene of Eastern splendour, united with English taste and magnificence.'<sup>134</sup> This, I argue, supports the view that it may rather have been the ability to redefine a sense of self against this fantasy background, what Ballaster calls the projection of the 'sympathetic imagination' into spaces previously unoccupied by the European imagination, that appealed to both men and women.<sup>135</sup>

## 2.6 Chinoiserie: a ruling class style?

This final section highlights the shifting associations between chinoiserie and class through examination of three schemes across the social spectrum: the country house of John Hampden VIII (Hampden House in Buckinghamshire), a banker's private rooms above his firm's premises (Thomas Coutts's drawing room at 59, The Strand) and a merchant's house on the edge of London (a brewer's home in Watford). At least two of these sites are associated with male patrons, allowing comparison of how male consumers negotiated the apparently negative connotations of effeminacy inherent in chinoiserie. For John Hampden VIII this was done through the choice of papers which mimicked repeating papers or European print sources, whereas for Thomas Coutts it was through the depiction of ordered manufacture

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<sup>134</sup> Elizabeth Bonhote, *Ellen Woodley. A novel*, 2 vols, London, 1790, II, p.33 in ECCO [accessed 8 November 2007].

<sup>135</sup> Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient*, p.16.

John Hampden VIII's (d.1754, succeeded by his cousin Robert Trevor, Lord Hampden) use of Chinese papers illustrates the different ways in which male consumers applied chinoiserie in their homes.<sup>136</sup> He was at the forefront of the fashion for things Chinese. Hampden purchased Goupy's prints for his London home when The House of Confucius was being erected at Kew for Frederick, Prince of Wales, and as early as 1741 he attempted to purchase a Chinese temple for himself.<sup>137</sup> However, the choice of papers for his country seat seems to suggest other criteria (2.28). As part of his remodelling, Chinese papers were hung in two adjoining rooms on the ground floor.

The 'Ribbons' paper (2.30)<sup>138</sup> was hung in the State bed chamber (2.29) in the late 1750s, possibly with William Linnell the Younger employing Bromwich who had done the same task at the Earl's London house.<sup>139</sup> The design is unlike any other surviving Chinese papers since it imitates European paper patterns and techniques in the pattern of intertwining ribbons (2.31), creating two sizes of hexagon, and its use of stencilled outlines for objects such as the urns (2.30).<sup>140</sup> Specimens of lotus and other plants grow in pots, whilst bunches of cut flowers and fruit including watermelon and apricots are arranged in groups. Their prominence suggests that it was not only the hanging of luxury imports, but also their display of exotic plants, which signified the

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<sup>136</sup> John Hampden III was succeeded by his cousin Robert Trevor, Lord Hampden.

<sup>137</sup> 'An Account of what the Goods at Hampden House have cost me', 1750, includes an India Picture of Canton (£10 6s.), Six prints of Goupy's (£10 6s.); Letter from Richard Ford, Haymarket, to Mr Hampden at his house in Conduit Street, 28 March 1741: 'Agreeable to you Desires my Friend has enquired about the Chinese Temple, & has just sent me word that the Gentleman who brought it will not part with it for any money, intending it for a present to a public library', MS/D/MH Stewards Accounts/Bundle 32/item 16/7a & Bundle 39/Item 29j.

<sup>138</sup> Study of the dimensions of the walls suggest the surviving fragments' original locations: the Bucks paper may have come from the room's NW corner, flanking the alcove, whilst the V&A's fragment may have formed one half of the double panel on the window (East) wall.

<sup>139</sup> Bromwich for paper hanging in 'An Account of what the Goods at Hampden House have cost me', 1750; in April 1757 Hampden mentions that 'young Linnell' has been to inspect the Masons' work, Bundle 32/item 16/7a & Bundle 39/Item 64j.

<sup>140</sup> Saunders notes that the design 'departs from the pictorial mode in favour of symmetry and 'all-over' patterning', see 'Painted Paper of Peking', *V&A Album*, 2 (1983), 307-311 (p.309). However, detailed examination suggests the pattern is rather more complex, motifs repeating every fifth band, in different colours, whilst pairs of motifs also alternate horizontally.

owner's cultural capital. Such an idea might have held particular appeal for Hampden, who spent almost as much on improvements to his gardens as on his house, as a kind of virtual collecting. However, images of the natural world alternated here with man-made objects including masks, the bamboo flute, ink-stones and brushes and swords. It is tempting to associate these with the enjoyments of a scholar: theatre, calligraphy, scientific investigation and music, echoing the courtly associations that du Bocage saw in Montagu's scheme. Indeed, the use of ribbons and a sword in the composition has echoes in an etched and hand coloured English paper, possibly a frieze, now in the V&A, which may have been intended for a music room (2.32).<sup>141</sup>

The surviving decorations from the 'parlor' (2.33, 2.34), often termed the 'Watteau' paper (2.35, left), consist of a number of panels and fragments of the ensuite border which show that European printed material was also used as a source.<sup>142</sup> This paper is even more overtly European in appearance, since the cartouches are derived from a design by Watteau (c.1710-20) engraved by Huquier (published c.1730), perhaps reflecting the practice of porcelain painters (2.35, right).<sup>143</sup> However, at Hampden, the central vignettes of landscapes with figures are decidedly Chinese. This is a Chinese landscape paper transformed into individual panels, perhaps reflecting taste for a more adaptable form.<sup>144</sup> In a panel from Hampden, now in the Bucks County Museum, the focus is on figures drinking tea, suggesting a link to other pictorial 'mock India' papers depicting the consumption of luxuries discussed earlier. In another panel, now in the

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<sup>141</sup> See Saunders 'Focus on Chinoiserie', ill. p.18.

<sup>142</sup> Panels: BCM 1967.262/1; VAM E. 51-1968. The latter fits the dimensions of the panel to the right of the pillar on the East (window) wall. See another two panels illustrated in Jacobsen, *Chinoiserie*, p.135. A further two panels are known, showing a man and boy in a landscape with a pavilion, another a man seated at table with an unidentified object (letter, Jonathan Harris to Sarah Gray, 3 March 1998, BCM files). Others shown in a photograph at Hampden of c.1895 include boating and fishing scenes. Border papers: Wycombe Museum HIWLH: T24.11.1999.8, 2 (I am grateful to Elise Edwards for identifying this paper); VAM E. 984-1978.

<sup>143</sup> Letter from G.F. Wingfield Digby, V&A, to Curator, BCM, 29 March 1968, BCM files.

<sup>144</sup> Other panels were purchased in London by a French envoy acting on behalf of the Landgrave William VIII of Hesse-Cassel, probably in 1756, see Wappenschmidt, *Chinesische Tapeten für Europa*, Abb.94, discussed pp. 60-62. I am grateful to Alexandra MacCulloch for this reference.



V&A, two female figures are set in a garden landscape in front of a moon gate, inscribed in Chinese characters 'The Place of the Valley of Deception (Error or Illusion)'. Might this be a further play on the art of imitation, a message only the papers' makers (and certainly not its consumers) could appreciate?

At Hampden, the paper in the State bed chamber may have fulfilled a similar function to the 'mock flock' discussed in Chapter 1, whose actual origins are only visible at close quarters to the informed viewer, since from a distance the paper could be taken for a European repeating print. Equally, by adapting a European print source, the parlour paper demonstrated that Chinese manufacturers could rework European versions of Chinese papers, reflecting the transmission of western models to China as well as the other way around.

Study of the Chinese paper hung in the drawing room of Thomas Coutts' (1735-1822) private rooms at 59, The Strand, remodelled in 1769 suggests rather different associations. Like the 'Ribbons' paper the subject is luxury, but here the paper takes as its subject well known Chinese exports: porcelain (2.36) silk, rice and tea (2.37). This picture of harmonious economic life populated by industrious workers may well have had particular appeal for Coutts and his banking associates.<sup>145</sup> That appeal may also rest with the paper's depiction of the classes that benefit from this labour; it also shows a leisured elite which strolls in gardens and watches theatre performances, in scenes memorably described by Oman as depicting 'the life of a well-to-do quarter of a city where, though there is plenty of activity, little actual work is being done' (2.38).<sup>146</sup> Once again there is a tension here between a courtly culture and a trading nation.

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<sup>145</sup> Saltram's Colopies bedroom paper also shows tea production, suggesting these scenes also appealed to those remote from the metropolis, close to a centre for imports at nearby Plymouth.

<sup>146</sup> Oman, 'Old Wallpapers in England 3. Chinese Papers', ill.p.16.

The paper is traditionally thought to have been acquired from the Chinese Emperor by Lord Macartney during his embassy of 1792-4, and then given by Macartney to Coutts.<sup>147</sup> The two were linked in public and private life, since Coutts was Macartney's banker and his daughter married a member of Macartney's family.<sup>148</sup> Coutts, who with his brother James had come south from Edinburgh to build up a banking business which, by the 1790s, was providing him with an income of £25,000 per year, may therefore be appropriating aristocratic taste on a number of levels, since he is decorating with a product associated with the aristocratic elite.<sup>149</sup> Ironically, the consumer who had built his fortune on funding overseas trade was removing himself from such commercial associations.

Chinoiserie's associations of frivolity and 'barbarous gaudy gout' surely remained problematic for male consumers such as Coutts, especially since the author of an early biography sought to deflect criticism of his choice of wives and his love of the theatre (he married firstly his brother's servant, secondly the actress Harriet Mellon) by claiming that he 'possessed the manners and accomplishments of a gentleman; he was plain, but fashionable in his dress; [...] frugal and sparing as to his personal expenditure, careful of his health, and still more of his reputation. His great ambition

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<sup>147</sup> No record of this association has been found predating 1908 when Helen Robbins illustrated a 'Room at Messrs. Coutts Bank, showing the wall-paper brought by Lord Macartney from China', see *Our First Ambassador to China*, pl. facing p.142. Family history maintains Japan cabinets were brought back and used in family homes, see Clark, II, introduction, p.225. A further set of papers at Ramsbury Manor, Wiltshire is associated with the Coutts gift, see H. Avray Tipping 'Ramsbury Manor, Wiltshire, I', *CL*, 2 October 1920, pp.432-39.

<sup>148</sup> Macartney sought an advance from Coutts on at least one occasion, in 1797, which was refused, see Robbins, *Our First Ambassador to China*, p.442. However, after Macartney's death in 1806, Coutts wrote to his widow, begging 'that you might draw without difficulty for whatever money you might want previous to the settlement of your business'; see Clark, III, p.147; Macartney is also discussed in letters between the daughters of the Earl of Bute: see Clark, I, pp.17, 172-3; II, pp.52, 130.

<sup>149</sup> Ernest Hartley Coleridge, *The Life of Thomas Coutts Banker* (London: Bodley Head, 1920) p.46.

seemed to aim at establishing a general character as a man of business'.<sup>150</sup> A series of views painted soon after his death indicates that the decoration of his suite of private rooms on the first floor of the bank offered a similar contrast in mood, between the dining room and study (4. 29) which were soberly decorated in a green verditer finish hung with family portraits, and the drawing room (2.39) furnished informally with bright chintz side chairs, a settee and card tables and without any paintings or a chimney garniture, allowing the Chinese paper to dominate the space. It was then, I argue, a combination of the prominence of its scenes of manufacture and cultivation, and its supposed provenance, that enabled the Coutts scheme to escape contemporary censure.

Later critics of the taste for Chinese styles also associated it with trade and the nouveaux riches, an appeal that it had perhaps always had in its views of production at least, most famously William Shenstone who declared: 'A mere citizen is always showing his riches [...] and talks much of his Chinese ornaments at his paltry cake house in the country'.<sup>151</sup> Like female consumers, this group's ('mere citizens') use of chinoiserie represented then a threat to order and social hierarchies. It was not just town houses in Gloucestershire that were decorated in the Chinese style, but those closer to the metropolis. Two Chinese panels showing pairs of Chinese male figures hunting for deer and pheasants against a backdrop of flowering trees and rockwork, formed part of a panelled scheme hung in a merchant's home in Watford, after 1755 (2.40, left). The figures are very different to the energetic group seen pursuing monkeys and deer up a hillside in another Chinese paper of similar date depicting a hunt (2.40, right), and suggest this shift is more than a response to European demands

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<sup>150</sup> *Life of the late by Thomas Coutts by a person of the first respectability* (London: John Fairburn, n.d.), p.3.

<sup>151</sup> Quoted in Saunders, p.67.

for variety. The use of panels in the Watford scheme clearly avoids the difficulties and expense, outlined above, of installing sets of papers to form a continuous landscape. The figures are also carefully placed just above dado height to engage directly with the viewer, suggesting that the owner (a member of the Cannon family, brewers in the town) is appropriating an aristocratic pursuit as well as an aristocratic mode of decoration.<sup>152</sup>

These papers illustrate how, far from being meaningless, papers serve to subvert legitimacy in representation. Hampden's papers look on first glance neither European nor Chinese, and, far from losing control of the rules of taste, demonstrate how Chinese taste could be manipulated, reflecting John Hampden's taste for chinoiserie schemes. The Coutts schemes also manipulates this taste, hanging a paper depicting views of ordered manufacture with courtly associations. The Watford paper also aspires to aristocratic associations, here the hunt, but, like the State bed chamber scheme at Hampden, it rejects the complexities of hanging a continuous landscape scheme in favour of individual panels linked by a common theme. As with the subject matter of the dressing room papers, the choice of these Chinese schemes has, I argue, more to do with the ability to redefine a sense of self against a fantasy background.

## 2.7 Conclusion

Although enjoying prominence in wallpaper studies over domestic products, Chinese papers are rarely considered as more than a footnote or short section in studies of chinoiserie. This chapter suggests they merit reappraisal, and can contribute useful

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<sup>152</sup> I am grateful to Lindsay Speight for this information. See <http://www.watfordmuseum.org.uk> [accessed 20 August 2009].

insights to the debates about how eighteenth-century men and women defined, and interacted with, exotic places, peoples, plants and animals. By analysing the myths surrounding their manufacture, distribution and hanging, I argue that both Chinese papers and English papers in the Chinese style responded to consumer taste, and both were reliant on the skills in hanging and retailing developed by the English trade. The chapter rejected the approach of previous studies of Chinese papers that focused on their categorisation as pure and unchanging examples, against which English papers in the Chinese taste were seen as inferior and imitative. I argued that the Chinese taste in paper hangings is not simply about superficialities and the disruption of cultural hierarchies, rather study of the schemes themselves suggests that consumers used these papers to define space in terms of class, gender and function. These schemes also suggest that by the end of the century Chinese taste in paper hangings had moved out of the closets, dressing rooms and bedchambers of the aristocracy and into the social spaces of their town and country houses, as well as into bankers' and merchants' homes.

## **Chapter 3, English papers imitating architectural, sculpted and painted ornament, c.1750-90**

### **3.1 Introduction**

### **3.2 Politeness and antique values**

### **3.3 Production and retailing: stucco paper, papier mâché and print rooms**

### **3.4 'Modern' and gothic designs**

### **3.5 Stair and print room papers**

### **3.6 Conclusion**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Now you shall walk into the House. The bow-window below leads into a little parlour hung with a stone-coloured Gothic paper and Jackson's Venetian prints, which I could never endure while they pretended, infamous as they are, to be after Titian etc., but when I gave them this air of barbarous bas-reliefs, they succeeded to a miracle: it is impossible at first sight not to conclude that they contain the history of Attila or Totilla, done about the very aera. From hence under two gloomy arches, you come to the hall and staircase, which it is impossible to describe to you, as it is the most particular and chief beauty of the castle. Imagine the walls covered with (I call it paper, but it is really paper painted in perspective to represent) Gothic fretwork) [...] The room on the ground floor nearest to you is a bedchamber, hung with yellow paper and

prints, framed in a new manner invented by Lord Cardigan, that is, with black and white borders printed.<sup>1</sup>

Horace Walpole's (1717-97) description of the decoration of his 'castle', Strawberry Hill in Middlesex (3.1), was written to his friend Sir Horace Mann in June, 1753, when he had just begun the decoration of the house, a project that was to occupy him for some fifty years. Strawberry is often cited as a pioneering example of the Gothic Revival, in which Walpole challenged classicism's monopoly on a body of historically validated architectural knowledge by establishing one based on medieval Gothic.<sup>2</sup> Walpole's approach to Strawberry's decoration followed the overall gothic form, but adopted its details as he thought fit. He is therefore often characterised as ignoring architectural propriety and rules regarding scale and material, and the decoration seen as inauthentic in relation to later nineteenth century taste for archaeological accuracy.<sup>3</sup> However, the Gothic Revival is not the only frame of reference against which Strawberry's decoration can be interpreted, since Walpole was not concerned simply with accuracy, but rather enthralled by the possibilities of combining coloured and patterned papers, papier mâché, stained glass and floor coverings to create theatrical effects.<sup>4</sup> His schemes therefore merit positive re-evaluation in terms of their innovative use of ephemeral decorative materials.

Walpole's account also raises four key issues which are, I suggest, key to understanding English papers imitating architectural, sculpted and painted ornament. Firstly, it highlights the difficulty of establishing what these products actually looked

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<sup>1</sup> 12 June 12 1753, quoted in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann*, ed. W. S Lewis with Warren Hunting Smith and George L. Lam (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1960), vol 4, pp380-81.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival* (London: Phaidon, 1999), pp.90-91.

<sup>3</sup> Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, p.87.

<sup>4</sup> Anna Chalcraft and Judith Viscari, *Visiting Strawberry Hill* (Wimbledon: authors' publication, 2005), p.12.

like. For example, in the 1950s, the 'Gothic fretwork' hall and stair paper at Strawberry was reprinted in pink (3.2), following a misreading of the effects of stained glass in a watercolour by the scheme's designer, Richard Bentley (3.3). It was not until the more recent discovery of evidence for the eighteenth-century scheme printed in chiaroscuro (3.4) that this error was exposed. Difficulties also surround the interpretation of contemporary terminology, such as what was meant by 'paper in imitation of stucco', which, according to *An Account of the Principal Seats in and about Richmond and Kew* of c.1770, was hung in Walpole's Refectory, or 'Great Parlour'. This chapter therefore investigates this and other problematic terms, such as Walpole's 'stone-coloured Gothic paper', which the same guide describes as 'gothic paper of stone colour in mosaic'.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, it raises issues of consumption, notably the ways in which printed papers can be customised. Walpole's account highlighted the combination of techniques used to depict particular effects of light and shade, by customising a commercial product to produce the effect of what he called 'gloomth'.<sup>6</sup> What seems to have underlain this scheme then was the desire to convey proto sublime lighting effects, indeed Michael Snodin has suggested that the scheme is linked to the description of the hall in Walpole's archetypal Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, published in 1764.<sup>7</sup> This view is reinforced by Anna Chalcraft and Judith Viscari's studies of the route taken by visitors to Strawberry (rather than Walpole's personal friends), who would have viewed the scheme from the first floor balustrade 'where from the darkness of the Armoury they would have appeared to have been standing inside the tomb of Prince

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Simon Swynford-Jenkins, 'Furniture in Eighteenth-Century Country House Guides', *FH*, 42 (2006), 63-152, (p.131).

<sup>6</sup> Walpole's hall and stair paper used colourways and patterns associated with gothic architecture and sculpture, but classical orders and proportions were also reworked in wallpapers elsewhere in the house, as discussed below.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Snodin, 'Strawberry Hill: The construction of the Gothic Interior', unpublished paper delivered to *The Georgian Interior*. Walpole called the hall the Paraclete, after Abelard's hermitage.



Arthur itself, surrounded by objects associated with the Plantagenets and by the implements of war'.<sup>8</sup>

However, printed paper enjoyed an ambiguous relationship to painted schemes, at least in the mind of consumers like Walpole, who admitted that 'I call it paper, but it is really paper painted in perspective'. Chalcroft, who has analysed the phases of decoration of the hall and stair at Strawberry, concludes that Walpole's 1753 scheme consisted of printed paper hung by Thomas Bromwich which was then hand-painted with shaded ornament in situ by one of Bromwich's paper stainers, Tudor, who, according to Walpole, painted the paper on the staircase 'under Mr Bentley's direction' in a design that incorporated the effects of light and shade particular to the site. This solution seems to have partly been a matter of necessity, since Walpole complained to Bentley about his failure to paint another room at the hall in November, 1754, reminding him that:

You made me fix up mine [the hall paper], unpainted, engaging to paint it yourself, and yet could never be persuaded to paint a yard of it, till I was forced to give Bromwich's man God knows what to do it.<sup>9</sup>

This may well reflect Walpole's desire to avoid the associations of commercial uniformity, by customising the scheme. Similar views are also expressed in a letter written by his friend, the poet Thomas Gray, to Thomas Wharton:

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<sup>8</sup> Chalcroft and Viscari, *Visiting Strawberry Hill*, p.28.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Anna Chalcroft, 'The use of light to enhance wallpaper in a Gothic House', *WHR*, 2004/2005, 51-53 (pp.52-53).

I will look out for papers in the shops. I own I never yet saw any Gothic papers to my fancy. there is one fault, that is the nature of the thing, & can not be avoided. The great beauty of all Gothick designs is the variety of perspectives they occasion. this a painter may represent on the walls of the room in some measure; but not a Designer of Papers, where, what is represented on one breadth, must be exactly repeated on another, both in light and shade, and in the dimensions. This we cannot help; but they do not even do what they might: they neglect Hollar, to copy Mr Halfpenny's architecture, so that all they do is more like a goosepie than a cathedral. <sup>10</sup>

For Gray then paper could never achieve the 'variety of perspectives' he sees as the hallmark of Gothic design, since papers were designed so that when they are hung on the wall an exact repeat was produced. Moreover, in a comment that seems to condemn the very aims of his friend Walpole, he criticised paper designers' who, rather than using supposedly accurate sources such as the etchings Wenceslas Hollar (1607-1677) produced to illustrate the works of the antiquary William Dugdale, turned instead to the fanciful designs of their contemporary William Halfpenny (d.1755).

For commercial manufacturers, such as Bromwich, the scheme demonstrated that the firm could imitate the perspectival effects associated with the Gothic in paint, as well as in block printing, to produce a bespoke scheme that challenged the material's status as a ready-made product. Here then very different perspective models were deemed appropriate to those employed in the 'mock India' papers discussed in chapter 2, implying manufacturers were well aware of the conventions of different models.

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<sup>10</sup> Wharton consulted Gray about papers for his house, Old Park near Durham, in September 1761. Quoted in Edward Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England 1537-1837*, 2 vols (London: Country Life, 1970), I, p.43, footnote 4.

However, Chalcroft argues that Bromwich subsequently cut blocks to reproduce Walpole's painted paper in a simplified form in order to make the design available commercially. By 1755 the paper was hung in the great dining-room at Latimers in Buckinghamshire, a house which belonged to the Cavendish family, where Walpole saw it, declaring in a letter to the designer, Richard Bentley, that it was 'not shaded properly like mine'.<sup>11</sup>

Thirdly, this design highlights the issue of inter-materiality, in particular the inherent ambiguity in using the engraved copy as a reproductive tool, since, as Vicky Coltman notes in her book on British Neoclassical taste, it replicates a second hand experience of the encounter with an authentic object, an encounter which may also not reflect the reality of the object.<sup>12</sup> Bentley's design for the hall and stair scheme did not come from a wall, but from an engraving of a three-dimensional object (the screen to a tomb in Worcester Cathedral). The ability of paper hangings to offer multiple overlapping renderings in a single design was noted by Walpole in 1753, when he visited the sculpted monument that formed the engraved source for Bentley's design of his stair paper. Size, material and colour all differed in the original, as he wrote to Bentley: 'prince Arthur's tomb, from whence we took the paper for the hall and staircase, to my great surprise, is on a less scale than the paper, and is not of brass but stone, and that wretchedly whitewashed'.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, it is possible that Walpole's decision to redecorate the hall in the 1770s and again in the early 1790s may have been part of a desire for greater accuracy (3.4, 3.5).<sup>14</sup> An engraved print of a carved stone object thus became

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Chalcroft, 'The use of light', p.53. Perhaps Bromwich also sought to capitalise on the prestige of an association with Walpole, and the much visited site of Strawberry, by producing a simplified version of the design, seeing no conflict in catering for both bespoke and off the peg markets.

<sup>12</sup> Vicky Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p.128.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Chalcroft, 'The use of light', p.53.

<sup>14</sup> I am grateful to Anna Chalcroft, and to Kevin Rogers of Peter Inskip & Peter Jenkins Architects, for details of these schemes.

the source for a hybrid printed and painted scheme, itself reproduced as a printed paper, in a vivid illustration of the way in which a paper can simultaneously juxtapose multiple imitations based on a single object.

Finally, Walpole's account raises issues concerning the wider relationship between the decoration of the wall and print culture. His description of a bedchamber 'hung with yellow paper and prints, framed in a new manner', an invention he attributes to the fourth Earl of Cardigan (1712-90); 'that is, with black and white borders printed' has given rise to debates about the origins and nature of Print Room schemes which are investigated below. The tension between products which reproduced such imagery mechanically and the 'high art' painted works which they threatened to usurp is again highlighted by the comments Walpole makes in his letter to Mann about the prints after the Venetian school (e.g. 3.6) by John Baptist Jackson, declaring that 'I could never endure [the prints] while they pretended, infamous as they are, to be after Titian, & c'. However, Walpole evidently had a change of heart when he pasted the prints onto the wall, declaring that: 'but when I gave them this air of barbarous bas-reliefs, they succeeded to a miracle'. This points to the ambiguous nature of such printed schemes that evoked the 'air' of carved reliefs and even their narrative effects, but only by denying their precise association with painted works.

The chapter starts by outlining the significance of antique values associated with the notion of politeness to the interpretation of paper hangings. I argue that these goods present opportunities for new readings based on the ambiguities between the polite and the impolite, high art and commercial life. These claims also point to the way in which antique taste is often gendered as male, in opposition to the feminine associations of luxury and superficiality explored in relation to chinoiserie and the gothic.

The second section, 'Production and retailing', argues that certain key skills and techniques were needed to successfully imitate high art models in papers, some similar to those required for 'mock India' papers. It also seeks to relate manufacturers' rhetoric to extant examples, in order to identify the range of imitative products, arguing that wallpaper historians' categorisations have obscured the nature of papers imitating stucco, the significance of papier mâché and the role of print sellers in supplying 'Print Room' schemes.

In the third section, 'modern and gothic designs', I examine papers imitating architectural components, ruins and trophies, arguing that there was a close relationship between painted and printed schemes in paper hangings manufacturers' output. However, far from reproducing exact designs, manufacturers adopted a flexible approach, by combining styles and by distorting proportions and rules in order to produce innovative 'fancy' prints.

The chapter ends by examining the link between the choice of these designs in relation to the function of the hall and stair. It analyses the significance of the hall and stair as a space of display and ostentation, established in Walpole's description, focusing on papers depicting the rediscovery of antique remains. The creation of print rooms and the choice of the so-called 'print room papers' is also re-examined, suggesting that this new commodity was undermining the very high art forms it purportedly imitated.

### 3.2 Politeness and antique values

Not everyone saw paper-hangings in as positive terms as Walpole. Book V, 'Of Inside Decoration', in the architectural writer Isaac Ware's (c.1717-1766) *A Complete Body of Architecture* published in 1756 begins with a chapter entitled 'Of decorations for the sides of rooms'. Ware opens this chapter by claiming that 'Paper has, in a great measure, taken the place of sculpture upon this occasion; and the hand of art is banished from a part of the house in which it used to display itself very happily'.<sup>15</sup> According to Ware then, by this date, sculpted and carved finishes were being not just imitated, but replaced, by a material that was perceived as undermining the very 'hand of art'. He goes on to outline his hierarchy of decoration of the wall as 'of three kinds': firstly stucco, that is low relief plaster ornament, not only 'the grandest' finish but also the most elegant; secondly wainscot, that is panelled and carved wood, described as 'the neatest' finish; and finally hangings (in which he included paper and textiles) and which he thought the 'most gaudy'. After setting out the practical considerations for the choice of each of these three finishes, he advised his readers: 'This will be a farther guide to the architect in his choice; for there are apartments in which dignity, others in which neatness, and others in which shew are to be consulted.' Paper hangings are associated then with the 'most gaudy' taste, the antithesis of what is perceived as elegant, conveying not dignity but 'shew'.

Ware's comments imply that the exclusive and bespoke nature of stucco decorations is being undermined by a material that could reproduce its effects mechanically. He also suggests that there is a conflict here between the ephemerality and fashionability of

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<sup>15</sup> Isaac Ware, *A Complete Body of Architecture*, London, 1768, in ECCO [accessed 27 February 2008]. According to Thornton, Ware had papier mâché in mind, see p.98. However, when Ware criticised the use of papier mâché for door-cases earlier in his book he described it as 'the old deception of stamp paper' which 'is coming up with all the rage of fashion'.

this commercial product, and the supposedly timeless and universal values of high art which it threatened to undermine. Central to this conflict is the relationship of commercial life to the notion of politeness, and in order to examine this relationship I want to explore recent work in this field in order to illuminate how commercial products such as paper hangings were perceived.

Ware's values need, however, to be seen in terms of early eighteenth-century ideas of civic virtue, which characterised luxury as a cause of moral and political corruption and favoured simplicity and restraint. An early advocate was the third Earl of Shaftesbury, who favoured classical unadorned forms. This aesthetic of simplicity is something that papers needed to negotiate, since they were already associated with debates about luxury through the supply of papers for chinoiserie interiors, and, in the papers discussed in this chapter, with other styles which disrupted classical norms: the gothic and the rococo. A focus on simpler forms also left manufacturers with two further problems. Firstly, a preference for austerity of colour rejects the very potential of wallpaper, and this is reflected in the chiaroscuro palette of many of the papers discussed in this chapter. Secondly, materials such as stucco and papier mâché, which, I argue below, provided many of the models for paper hangings' patterns, were much better adapted to imitate the rococo, with its absence of rules and orders and its emphasis on imaginative interpretation, than what Patricia Crown calls the 'costly simplicity' of the classicising styles.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover Shaftesbury's stress on civic values reflects those not of commerce, but of the landowning class and of patrician taste, rooted in order, harmony, unity and in the antique. However, the second half of the century saw the concept of civic virtue and its

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<sup>16</sup> Patricia Crown, 'English Rococo as Social and Political Style', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23:3 (Spring 1990), 269-282 (pp.278-79).

associations with the landowning and ruling class challenged by the growing commercial culture. This threat is defused by the application of polite taste to a much broader range of activities, what Stephen Copley has called 'instruction in discriminating consumption', and a much broader social group, enabling 'the polite' to acquire standards of taste to guide their manners and social and economic behaviour.<sup>17</sup> This code of manners stressed the need to demonstrate both self-discipline and the values associated with what John Brewer called 'a refined, moderate sociability' as of the notion of politeness.<sup>18</sup> Paper-hangings need then to be seen against this of manners, even if their associations with gaudiness and show would seem to be in opposition to this emphasis on self-discipline and moderation.

Shaftesbury's civic values also found expression not in public schemes, but, according to Philip Ayres, in private projects, what he calls the 'domestication of Vitruvius', as a desire to express affiliation with the Roman oligarchy, expressed through the decoration of interiors.<sup>19</sup> However, such neo-Palladian interiors, according to Ayres, provided a means to align decoration with 'the spirit of classical antiquity', and this was achieved not through paper hangings but materials such as stone and stucco (particularly in the entrance hall).<sup>20</sup> However, there were tensions, especially in relation to the design and fitting out of buildings since, although Shaftesbury's values were derived by an archaeological approach, in practice different kinds of buildings were introduced.

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<sup>17</sup> Stephen Copley, 'The Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Polite Culture', in *Painting and the Politics of Culture: New Essays on British Art 1700-1850*, ed. by John Barrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp.13-37 (p.16).

<sup>18</sup> John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), p.102.

<sup>19</sup> Philip Ayres, *Classical Culture and the idea of Rome in eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.118.

<sup>20</sup> Ayres, *Classical Culture*, p.115.



However, as Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar have recently argued in relation to architecture, the boundaries between the polite and the impolite are often arbitrary and require a reconsideration of perceptions. Study of the reception and spread of classicism in relation to buildings in the eighteenth century also suggests, according to Arciszewska and McKellar, 'not a top-down model but rather overlapping spheres of influence between the national and the provincial, the classical and the non-classical, the elite and the everyday'.<sup>21</sup> The examples discussed in this chapter do I argue support this flexibility. The sites are not the aristocratic houses where 'India' papers were hung, discussed in chapter 2, but encompass the urban homes of gentry and merchants in the provinces and in London.

The period from the mid eighteenth century also saw a new kind of engagement with the antique. Although the 'Grand Tour' undertaken by artists, writers and aristocrats from about 1740 to 1790 involved experiencing first hand the archaeological sites of classical antiquity in Italy, many of which had only recently become accessible, engravings of these sites and the objects discovered also opened up commercial opportunities. They supplied manufacturers back home as well as artists, architects and sculptors with a ready supply of imagery and forms to be copied, such as the 'ruins' and 'trophies' discussed below. Although much recent study has concerned the influence of the Grand Tour and the rediscovery of classical antiquity on ornament and products such as ceramics, surprisingly little attention has been paid to wallpaper, even in studies which focus on imitation and interiors.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Articulating British Classicism, New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture*, ed. by Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.xxiii.

<sup>22</sup> Indeed Coltman uses the label 'literary wallpaper' when discussing the neglect of the contents of Nostell's library; see *Fabricating the Antique*, p.22.

At the same time, the prevailing emphasis on polite behaviour also extended to a concern with the manner in which actions were performed, and in turn to things and thus, as Lawrence Klein has pointed out, how they 'became associated with taste, fashion and design'.<sup>23</sup> The way in which this association could become commercialised is shown in Tobias Smollett's novel *The adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* of 1753. Smollett satirises the character of the Count, an unscrupulous dealer who becomes so successful that he could persuade his admirers that 'a barber's bason was an Etrurian Patera'. As a result it 'has become fashionable to consult the count in everything relating to taste and politeness' so that 'not a plan was drawn, not even an house furnished without his advice and approbation'. This advice is sought by both upholsterers and 'other tradesmen', who are sent by their employers to 'learn his choice, and take his directions', suggesting in practice a close relationship between leaders of polite taste and commercial life, transgressing the traditional hierarchies of taste. This relationship is exemplified in naming a paper design after him: 'to such a degree did his reputation in these matters excel, that a particular pattern of paper-hangings was known by the name of Fathom'.<sup>24</sup>

However, efforts were also made to define polite taste as separate from the kind of commercial associations Smollett satirises. Critiques of commerce spawned by the need to promote models of politeness, spread through a growing periodical literature, are the background against which the growth in paper-hangings needs to be examined. For example, in 1766, the surveyor and writer John Gwynn (1713-1786) bemoaned the state of the polite arts, in a country where, as he saw it, 'If a magnificent edifice is to be erected, a common builder, little if anything superior to a carpenter or bricklayer, in

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<sup>23</sup> Lawrence Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, 45:4 (December 2002), 869-898 (p.874).

<sup>24</sup> Tobias George Smollett, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, 2 vols, London, 1753, I, in ECCO [accessed 9 November 2007].

point of taste or knowledge, is consulted, instead of a regular architect'. Similarly the historical painter's role in the decoration of the interior, where his works offered what Gwynn calls 'grandeur', was being rejected: 'Instead of being required to give his assistance, his part is usually supplied by a paper hanging maker and two or three workers in stucco'.<sup>25</sup> Although Gwynn is contrasting reality against an ideal, of an architect controlling the decoration of the interior, paper hangings maker's imitation of high art forms and finishes *was* problematic, since it challenged the criteria of what Copley calls 'genuine aesthetic judgement', which sought to distance 'the art' (i.e. painting) from commercial life.<sup>26</sup> However, according to Copley, periodical literature also promoted another idea, in my view equally applicable to paper-hangings, the idea that taste is cultivable, and expressed equally in relation to all the arts, even the mechanical, 'useful arts'. Paper-hangings therefore have to negotiate these tensions between polite taste and commercial life.

What then was the significance of these notions of the polite to paper-hangings, where, as discussed below, even supposedly contrasting and contradictory styles could be combined in the same paper, whilst classical motifs and models could be used for lavish papers in modest homes?

One key example of someone who tries to resolve tensions between standards of taste and commercial culture in relation to wallpaper was John Baptist Jackson. Jackson was a printer who had studied with in Italy, returning to England in 1752 where he set up a factory in Chelsea to produce papers printed not in distemper, but in oils. These included both reproductions of Old Master paintings after Marco Ricci (1676-1729)

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<sup>25</sup> John Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved, illustrated by plans to which is prefixed A discourse on publick magnificence*, London, 1766, pp.61-63 in ECCO [accessed 9 November 2007].

<sup>26</sup> Copley, 'The Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Polite Culture', p.21.

and repeating patterns (3.6, 3.7). Jackson's account of his manufacture of 'New invented Paper Hangings, printed in Oyl' given in 'An Essay on the Invention of Engraving and Printing in Chiaroscuro [...] and the Application of it to the Making Paper hangings of Taste, Duration and Elegance', published in 1754, provides a means of investigating how one manufacturer sought to resolve the tensions between high art and printed wallpaper.<sup>27</sup>

Jackson's account was written to promote his papers printed in oils, and to discredit the Chinese taste. So his prints would avoid 'gay, glaring Colours[...]that delight the Eye that has no true Judgement belonging to it' in favour of 'true imitations of Nature in Drawing and design. Nor are there [...] a thorough Confusion of all the Elements, nor Men and Women, with every other Animal, turn'd Monster, like the Figures in the Chinese paper, ever to be seen in this Work'.<sup>28</sup> The barbarous, gaudy (and unregulated) gout associated with the Chinese papers discussed in chapter 2 can then be avoided by those who purchase Jackson's schemes, who will escape the moral dangers inherent in 'a thorough Confusion' by applying universal or 'true' standards in their decoration. Jackson's pamphlet also illuminates the issues of reason, judgement and order that are associated with the classical taste. He stated that his prints allowed patrons to demonstrate their taste for the work of classical artists, but at much lesser cost:

Thus the Person who cannot purchase the Statues themselves, may have these Prints in their Place; and may effectually shew his Taste and Admiration of the ancient Artists in this manner of fitting up and finishing his Apartments, as in

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<sup>27</sup> Charles Oman and Jean Hamilton head the section of their introduction on 'The Second half of the Eighteenth Century' with his work, see OH, pp.22-27.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in OH, p.24.

the most expensive. 'Tis the Choice and not the Price which discovers the true Taste of the Possessor.<sup>29</sup>

According to Jackson it was better to show one's taste by using copies of canonical originals than show off by having expensive finishes of any kind. The use of his pictorial prints (3.6) would therefore enable the individual to avoid accusations of ostentation and demonstrate 'true Taste', echoing Shaftesbury's linkage between aesthetic and moral judgements through the study of Classical exemplars of architecture, sculpture and painting, which would enable the viewer to distinguish 'merit and virtue' from 'deformity and blemish', and thereby aspire to 'the character of a man of breeding and politeness.'<sup>30</sup> For Jackson then, his prints would enable the modestly affluent purchaser to copy patrician taste.

In 1784 Joseph Booth claimed that the 'manufactory at Battersea for the purpose of ornamenting rooms with paper-hangings' failed due to Jackson's early death.<sup>31</sup> However, despite Walpole's endorsement, the lack of any surviving examples in situ or references in accounts to the supply of Jackson's prints suggests it is more likely that his values of order and decorum were not shared by consumers.<sup>32</sup> Jackson's pamphlet ended by stating that 'It need not be mentioned to any Person of the least Taste, how much this Way of Finishing Paper exceeds every other hitherto known' but in reality printing paper hangings in oil colours was a commercial failure, despite Jackson's claims that they would not fade, and as noted in chapter 1, distemper printing from wood blocks became a much more successful medium for printing

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.24

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in David Porter, 'Chinoiserie and the Aesthetics of Illegitimacy', p.39.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Booth, *A treatise explanatory of the nature and properties of pollaplasiasmos: or the original invention of multiplying pictures in oils* [London], [1784], p.24, in ECCO [accessed 8 November 2007].

<sup>32</sup> The only evidence is Henry Overton's advertisement of Jackson's 'curious assortment of Paper Hangings printed in oil' of February, 1755, quoted in Tim Clayton, *The English Print 1688-1802* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p.98.

papers. In part this may reflect the lack of unity and awkward repeat evident in his designs for repeating patterns (3.7). However, if he fails by capitulating to tensions between high art and commercial life, how in practice do manufacturers negotiate these problems? There is a further irony here in the case of paper-hangings, since although high art imagery and finishes might serve to differentiate the owner's taste from that of exotic luxuries, in favour of the moral virtues of good taste, yet these consumer goods are the very products which Ware and others perceived negatively as a focus of display and expenditure. It is the evidence for the production and retailing of these products and how manufacturers negotiate the tensions between high art and commercial life that I now wish to examine.

### **3.3 Production & retailing: stucco paper, papier mâché and print rooms**

As noted in this chapter's introduction, it is difficult to identify papers imitating architectural, sculpted or painted ornament in manufacturers' and retailers' rhetoric, since there are no simple categories such as 'India' and 'mock India' paper to distinguish them. Rather, there are references to certain styles, subjects, materials and indeed certain rooms, hitherto largely ignored, and it is these references that can, I suggest, be employed to identify the actual goods produced. In this section I investigate three types of product: firstly 'paper in imitation of stucco' (imitating decorative plasterwork, associated with the Italian *stuccodori* whose work was common in England from the 1720s); secondly papier mâché products; and, thirdly print room schemes.<sup>33</sup> This section begins, however, by outlining the production and

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<sup>33</sup> On the term stucco see Claire Gapper, 'What is "Stucco"? English Interpretations of an Italian Term', *Architectural History*, 42 (1999), 333-343.

retailing of these goods, frequently comparing them with the methods developed by the suppliers of 'India' and 'mock India' papers.

These were the products of an industry which, by the 1750s, had well developed skills in mould making, block cutting and colour printing with distemper colours, skills which enabled manufacturers to move into areas of decoration where consumers had previously turned to other trades, notably those working in wood, plaster or stone.

What were then the key skills needed?

Block cutting was a crucial skill to produce the architectural effects admired by Walpole and his circle, especially for bespoke designs. Gray suggested Wharton approach Bromwich's in his search for a 'Gothick' paper and advised him to:

Send the design hither. They will execute it here, & make a new stamp on purpose, provided you will take 20 pieces of it, & it will come to half or a penny a yard the more (according to the work, that is in it). This I really think worth your while [...] you can proportion the whole better to the dimensions of your room.<sup>34</sup>

Gray also had advice about colour, going on to point out to Wharton that 'I much doubt the effect of colour (any other than the tints of stucco) would have in a gothic design on paper, and here [in London] they have nothing to judge from'.<sup>35</sup> Such papers could be rapidly printed with fast drying distemper colours, and did not require costly hand colouring as in some 'mock India' papers which imitated the techniques of 'India' papers. However, printing in chiaroscuro to imitate plaster or carved surfaces

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<sup>34</sup> 1761, quoted in Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p.236.

<sup>35</sup> Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England*, II, note 4, p.43.

did demand skills in block cutting in order to imitate the three dimensional effects of light and shade. Such designs are usually printed in up to five shades, ranging from white through greys or browns and sometimes black on a grey or buff ground. This did allow manufacturers to make the best use of what was still, in the 1750s, a limited palette. Repeated references to 'dove grey' paper in correspondence from the 1750s onwards may even suggest the prevalence of this colour scheme.<sup>36</sup>

As with the hanging of 'India' and 'mock india' papers', the successful installation of these papers was also reliant on the paper hanger's skill. Just as William Wyndham bemoaned the cost of bringing a specialist paper hanger from London to Norfolk, as discussed in chapter 2, in the same year Lady Luxborough complained to William Shenstone about the cost of the new sort of stucco paper:

The difficulty, and consequently the expence, must be in putting up these ornaments, which [...] must be done by a man whom the Paper-seller sends on purpose from London: but perhaps your ingenuity might avoid that, if you could see any finished.<sup>37</sup>

At a house in Sulgrave in Oxfordshire the paper hangers plainly did not understand how to install dropped repeat, since when they came to hang the stucco paper in the hall which combines chinoiserie and rococo motifs, the motifs were simply hung side by side, rather than alternating to create variety (3.8).

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<sup>36</sup> For example Elizabeth Montagu, decorating her Hill Street house in 1751 refers to 'patterns all kinds of dove coloured paper from Mr Bromedge's shop'; quoted in Climenson, I, p.294.

<sup>37</sup> Letter LIX, February 1751, see Henrietta Knight Luxborough, *Letters written by the late R.H. Lady Luxborough, to William Shenstone Esq.*, London, 1775, p.237 in ECCO [accessed 9 November 2007].



Problems centred on two areas. Firstly, the scale of the repeat. Two stair papers taking as their theme the rediscovery of antique remains, from Boston Manor, Brentford of the 1760s-1780s (3.9), and from 16, Young Street, Kensington of c.1760-65 (3.10). these papers' repeats are vast, in the case of Boston Manor measuring over 2.1 m. This rivals in scale the flocks discussed in chapter 1. Secondly there were difficulties related to the type of space in which the paper was hung, since stair papers had to negotiate turns, changes of level and angled skirtings. Hence when the Boston Manor paper was rediscovered in the early 1960s its hanging methods were criticised as being 'rather haphazard'.<sup>38</sup> However, the paper survived only on the top section of the stair, where the paper hangers were presumably grappling with the problems of a perhaps limited supply of paper with a huge repeat. Close examination also suggests that the hang deliberately echoed the arches of the Jacobean painted dado on the wall, itself imitating the carved balustrade, in the application of sections of paper showing an arch which are close in scale to the dado (3.9).<sup>39</sup> It is likely that the skills of a leading firm such as Bromwich or their successors, Isherwoods, who, as discussed below, supplied paper for the drawing room in 1786, would have been needed to hang such a complex pattern.

I now want to turn to investigate three types of product imitating architectural, sculpted or painted ornament that appear prominent in contemporary rhetoric: firstly 'paper in imitation of stucco'. Perhaps because it could be readily adapted to different architectural styles, and was vastly cheaper than executing decorative plasterwork, this product appeared in the rhetoric of manufacturers and consumers alike. Stucco paper was evidently in demand and brought financial rewards. For example, as noted in

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<sup>38</sup> Donald Insall, 'Discoveries at Boston Manor', letter to *CL*, 2 November 1961, p.1068.

<sup>39</sup> Arthur Oswald, 'Boston Manor House, Middlesex', *CL*, 18 March, 1965, pp.603-07 (p.606). Oswald compared the balustrade to those at Blickling and Hatfield. The paper may have been chosen to complement both the pre existing *trompe l'oeil* painted dado and, in its pronounced vertical elements, the height of the stair.

chapter 1, imitation of stucco is listed above textiles in the products attributed to Thomas Bromwich's financial success in his obituary.

A surviving bill provides evidence that as early as 1749 Bromwich executed a large project, hanging 144 yards of 'stuccoe paper' and borders on a client's staircase, for a total cost of £3.18s. Costing just over 16d. a yard, this was cheaper than the flock, at 1 s.4d. a yard, supplied for the same client's second floor back parlour, but more expensive than a 'green sprig' paper with border hung in a back room on the same floor which cost just 11d. a yard.<sup>40</sup>

Papers imitating stucco seem to have been thought especially appropriate for ceilings, and for hall and stair walls. *The modern dictionary of arts and sciences* explained that 'the paper manufactured for hangings is of several kinds, some being made in representation of stucco work, for the covering of ceilings [sic], or the sides of halls, stair-cases, passages, &c'.<sup>41</sup> However, they were also recommended for eating rooms, not just because they were cheaper than stucco, but, according to a patent submitted by Eckhardts (traded 1780s-c.1800), because they could be installed more quickly and at the same time solve a technical problem:

Eating rooms already stuccoed may, at a small Expençe, receive much additional Embellishment; Rooms, with bare Walls, may have every Beauty, Elegance and Convenience, of a well stuccoed Apartment, and perfectly free

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<sup>40</sup> Bill to Mr Bennett, 19 August 1749, BM,HC 91.7.

<sup>41</sup> *Modern dictionary*, III, p.334. The dictionary's author may even be referring to papier mâché which was thought appropriate for similar sites.

from (the) Echo universally complained of in stuccoed Rooms, at much less Expense, and without wasting the necessary Time for the drying of Stucco.<sup>42</sup>

The question remains of what stucco paper actually looked like. Lady Luxborough described 'the pattern of a common stucco-paper, which is generally a mosaic formed by a rose in a kind of octagon'.<sup>43</sup> 'Mosaic' devices were also used in the 'stone-coloured Gothic paper' hung in Walpole's Refectory, or 'Great Parlour' by 1770. A ceiling paper, block printed with imitation stucco roses set on a background stencilled in imitation of wood, from a fourteenth century house in Faversham, Kent, may well be this type of paper since eight sided vignettes and squares enclose the ornament (3.11).<sup>44</sup> However, papers imitating stucco also employed more fluid rococo style ornament of naturalistic swags, using block printing to suggest the three dimensional shadow of stucco work such as an example from an Essex farmhouse, Earl's Hall (3.12).

It was not just the pattern but also the colours of stucco that were imitated. Gray's assessment of the colours in which 'Gothic' paper might be available, made later in his letter to Wharton about his choice of papers for Old Park, near Durham, reinforces this view:

You seem to suppose, that they do Gothic papers in colours, but I never saw any but such as were to look like Stucco: nor indeed do I conceive that they

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<sup>42</sup> Booklet advertising 'Royal Patent Manufactory', inscr. (rev) May 1793, BM, BC 91.12, p.2. The firm is discussed in chapter 4.3.

<sup>43</sup> Letter LIX, February 1751, see Luxborough, *Letters written to William Shenstone*, p.236.

<sup>44</sup> The fragment and its border was one of a group of papers 'from a fourteenth century house in Kent which was due to be demolished for a development scheme, but which has fortunately been reprieved', letter from Mrs Joan Bygrave, 19, Abbey Street, Faversham to the V&A, 20 January 1959, V&A, RFs.

would have any effect or meaning. Lastly, I never saw any thing of gilding, such as you mention, on paper, but we shall see.<sup>45</sup>

For Gray if ‘Gothic’ papers were not printed in shades of buff and grey to imitate stucco that would lose ‘any effect or meaning’; similarly he rejected the idea that such papers were gilded.

‘Dove grey’, as noted above common in references to paper from the 1750s, is also a common descriptor for stucco, as Caroline Girle’s description of Fawley Court in Oxfordshire in 1771 reveals. Here grey finish stucco was used in the hall, where she characterised the effect in masculine terms as ‘noble’: ‘the hall is a very noble one; round it statues on pedestals, some fine ones large as life. It’s stucco’d of a French grey’. However, it was also used in a key feminine space, ‘the particular apartment of the mistress’, where the effect was seen not as noble, but ‘elegant’: ‘Mrs. Freeman’s own dressing-room (which) must be mention’d as most elegant. The room is dove-color’d stucco, ornamented with pictures.’<sup>46</sup>

The second type of product imitating architectural ornament that appeared prominently in contemporary rhetoric was papier mâché. As noted in chapter 1, papier mâché enabled the trade to expand its supply of decorative components. Study of trade-cards suggests that it was an important product for leading London firms: Masefield’s showroom was depicted as crowded with both medallions and lengths of ornament whilst Wheelley’s claimed to offer ‘a great variety of Papiee Mâché & other Ornaments for Cieilings [sic], Halls, Staircases & c’ (1.10). Other leading paper hangings

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<sup>45</sup> 1761, quoted in Clive Wainwright, *The Romantic Interior: The British Collector at Home 1750-1850* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p.82.

<sup>46</sup> Stucco could however also be peagreen, as in the breakfast-parlour, see *Passages from the Diary of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys*, ed. by Climenson, pp.146-48.

manufacturers also mentioned its supply.<sup>47</sup> By c.1800 stationers were also moving into the supply of this product, such as William Trickett on Snow Hill (3.13). Others emphasised its ability to imitate plasterwork and carving, for example, George Street, a stationer of 60, Gracechurch Street, who styled himself a ‘Machae & Paper Hanging Maker’ advertised that he could match ‘all/Sorts of Furniture, Gerandoles/Freizes & c’.<sup>48</sup> The *Modern dictionary of arts and sciences* devoted three columns to describing its manufacture, emphasising the importance of the correct choice of moulds for successful imitation: plaster was best for complex and embossed designs, whereas for simpler designs wood was preferable and far more durable.<sup>49</sup> Like stucco paper, papier mâché was particularly associated with circulation spaces and for ceilings. This use is well illustrated at Strawberry Hill, where papier mâché was employed by Walpole to decorate the ceilings of the Holbein Chamber and Long Gallery and to create a fretwork pattern all over the ‘Trunk-cieled Passage’, spaces where it survives today.<sup>50</sup> These ornaments were probably installed by Bromwich, whose successors continued its supply.<sup>51</sup>

Lengths of papier mâché could be used as an edging between paper and cornice or dado, easily adapting classical forms such as the egg and dart or key motifs, as well as for reproducing stucco ceiling roses and medallions. It is difficult, even close up, to detect the difference between edging made out of papier mâché from that made out of

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<sup>47</sup> Such as Crompton & Spinnage (BM, HC 91.24), Bromwich & Leigh (BM, HC 91.9), Jones (BM, HC 91.37), Roberts’s (2.5).

<sup>48</sup> Bod, JJC, Booktrade Trade cards 5. Undated, but its Neoclassical oval design with egg and dart border suggests a date of c.1800.

<sup>49</sup> *Modern dictionary*, pp.334-35.

<sup>50</sup> Wallpaper History Society visit to Strawberry Hill, 11 July 2006, led by Anna Chalcraft & Judith Viscari; see Chalcraft and Viscari, *Visiting Strawberry Hill*, fig on p.10.

<sup>51</sup> For example Bromwich & Leigh billed Edward Turnour Esq. £6 6s. 6d. for ‘Ornamenting the Ceiling with Papier Mache’ in 1759, BM, HC 91.11.

carved wood, since it was usually painted rather than left unfinished.<sup>52</sup> It could also be gilded, as illustrated by Crompton & Spinnage's bill for the Queen's House to supply 'fine linen covered with Cumberland and Imperial paper printed 4 times over a fine Verdeterre Blue' in 1763 at a cost of £84. 3s. to decorate three rooms on the ground floor, the King's Dressing Room and an adjoining room, which were finished with over eight hundred feet of gilded papier mâché border at a cost of £76. 1s. 8d.<sup>53</sup> More rarely it could be silvered, a finish which has recently been recreated in the Chinese drawing room at Temple Newsam in Yorkshire (3.14).<sup>54</sup> The use of such finishes is hardly indicative of the restraint and frugality associated with standards of taste.

Part of papier mâché's appeal was its ability to solve practical problems; for example, by concealing joins or cracks in plasterwork, as Luxborough wrote from Barrells in Warwickshire to William Shenstone in 1752; 'My hanging-paper is arrived, and the cracks of the celing have been filled. The papier mâché is not yet come, but is bespoke'. She had sought Shenstone's advice on the bed-chamber's decoration as she did not know 'where to get the paper ornaments, nor how to have them fixed up: for no person hereabouts has the smallest idea of it'. Shenstone, it seems, suggested Bromwich, who evidently supplied bespoke papier mâché, as well as paper-hangings, with the same opportunities for the reuse of moulds as for reprinting papers from wood blocks.<sup>55</sup> To Shenstone himself, 'a small specimen of the chew'd Paper for Ceilings....'[was] 'pretty, but I think them unreasonably dear', suggesting that such bespoke schemes for ceilings (like that Hertford ordered for her husband's room in the

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<sup>52</sup> For example in the print room at Mersham-le-Hatch for which Chippendale's bill included '180ft. of Papie Machie Border Painted Blue and White £4 10s' in 1767-8, quoted in Christopher Hussey, *English Country Houses: Mid Georgian, 1760-1800* (London: Country Life, 1956), p.182.

<sup>53</sup> annotated typed note, RW Symonds to Ambrose Heal, 18 September 1943, BM, HC.

<sup>54</sup> John Cornforth, 'Picked out with Silver', *CL*, 6 August 1992, pp.54-55. Cornforth illustrated three papier mâché ceilings including one supplied by Crompton and Spinnage for a bedroom at Dunster Castle in Somerset in 1758, see Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, figs 255-257, p.194.

<sup>55</sup> Letters LXXX-LXXXII, June/July 1752, see Luxborough, *Letters written to William Shenstone*, p.236.

wood, discussed in chapter 1) were expensive not only to install but to purchase in the first place.

A third type of product that appeared in contemporary rhetoric was materials for print rooms. These demanded particular skill to create a successful scheme out of the individual components. Print rooms, which became popular in the 1750s, consisted of separate prints with cut out or integral borders pasted onto a wall, which had been previously hung with a stained paper (i.e. plain paper with a coloured ground).<sup>56</sup> As Walpole noted, his 'little parlour' at Strawberry was hung with stone-coloured Gothic paper onto which J.B. Jackson's Venetian prints were pasted. Although print rooms schemes have been studied extensively, their origins are much debated. They are often seen as the preserve of aristocratic women. As long ago as 1948 Jourdain claimed the fashion had its origins in France, citing a letter from Mademoiselle Aisse in Paris in 1726 describing the 'new passion for cutting up coloured engravings' and pasting them onto sheets of pasteboards to be varnished and made up into screens and wall hangings. She attributed the introduction of the fashion in Britain to the Earl of Cardigan, quoting Walpole's 1753 description of his bed-chamber as 'hung with yellow paper and prints, framed in a new manner, invented by Lord Cardigan; that is; with black and white borders printed'.<sup>57</sup> In fact, as noted in chapter 2, Lady Cardigan's dressing room was hung print room style with 'India' prints a decade earlier. However, more recently, Malcolm Jones has drawn attention to a description of the practice of cutting out black and white as well as coloured prints and arranging them on the wall dating from 1674, by the author of cookery and household management books, Hannah Woolley (c.1623-after 1674). What is significant for my

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<sup>56</sup> As noted in chapter 1 the device of hanging stained paper in advance sought to avoid the imposition of taxation. Sometimes the paper was also grounded in situ.

<sup>57</sup> Margaret Jourdain, 'Print Rooms', *CL*, 10 September 1948, pp.524-25.

study about Woolley's instructions is that as well as advising a background of marbled deal panelling, she claims that prints to create 'fine stories', 'Gardens and Forests' and 'Landskips' can all be purchased from 'a Shop that is well stored', such was the choice already available.<sup>58</sup>

What has not been studied to date is the role of the paper hangings trade in the creation of print rooms. However, there is evidence to suggest a closer relationship between the paper hangings trade and print room schemes than scholars' focus on print sellers has suggested.

Print sellers devised and supplied print room schemes, including borders and ornaments, alongside the supply of fine art prints. This is reflected in the rhetoric of the print seller Robert Sayer (1725-93) who took over Overtons and ran a supply network encompassing provincial, colonial and overseas markets from his premises on Fleet Street. In his 1766 'New and Enlarged catalogue' Sayer described how his sets of 'fine prints' could be used to form collections in the 'cabinets of the curious', to make furniture 'elegant and genteel' when framed and glazed or to 'be fitted up in a cheaper manner, to ornament rooms, staircases & c. with curious borders representing frames, a fashion much in use, and produces a very agreeable effect'.<sup>59</sup> Sayer's and Bennett's 1775 catalogue advertised trophies, border, festoons, vases and drops amongst the 'Decorations for *Print Rooms*' which the firm claimed were 'elegantly engraved on upwards of Eight-hundred Copper Plates, containing every ornament necessary for fitting up print rooms'.<sup>60</sup> This led Gilbert to speculate that Chippendale may have obtained the elements used for a print room at Mersham-le-Hatch from Sayer's printshop, since this elaborate scheme consisted not just of prints and borders, but also included busts (perhaps supported on fictive pedestals, which are also listed), masks,

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<sup>58</sup> Malcolm Jones, 'How to Decorate A Room with Prints, 1674', *Print Quarterly*, 20:3 (2003), 247-249. I am grateful to Malcolm Jones for drawing my attention to this article.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Antony Griffiths, 'A Checklist of Catalogues of British Print Publishers c.1650-1830', in *Print Quarterly*, 1:1 (1984), 4-22, p.9

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Clayton, *The English Print*, p.138.



vases, baskets, with no less than eight sheets of chains, rings, knots and festoons used to link the elements together.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, Stephen Calloway has argued that the vast majority of borders and other ornamental elements for print rooms supplied between the 1740s-60s were the work of a small group of London engravers, including François Vivares (1709-80) and Thomas Major (1720-99) all of whom had links with France.<sup>62</sup>

However, some manufacturers did address this market: Roberts's advertised ornaments ('Flower pots and vauzes') alongside the paper hangings he sold wholesale and retail from his warehouse on St Albans Street, Pall Mall (2.5). Regional suppliers also were also involved; for example in Exeter the bookseller and stationer Jane Pring advertised 'all Sorts of Maps and Prints for Adorning of Rooms. And Sta[ir] Cases; great variety of Paper Hangings for Ro[oms]'.<sup>63</sup> This suggests that she was supplying prints, even those suitable for the more tricky space of the stair, as well as paper hangings.

In conclusion, I have argued that the production and retailing of English papers imitating architectural, sculpted and painted ornament did follow some of the same routines, and involved some of the same firms, as those developed to supply other types of paper-hangings. However, new spaces associated with architectural and sculpted ornament, notably the stair, had to be mastered in order to successfully hang large-scale complex repeats rather than create the effect of a continuous pattern from single panels of 'India' or 'mock India' paper, or a small scale geometric print. Manufacturers' involvement in print room schemes also implies there was a close relationship not with textile producers, but with print sellers. The models used were also very different, and their subtle colouration was far from the 'barbarous gaudy

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<sup>61</sup> Gilbert, p.229. Details of the account are quoted in Hussey, *English Country Houses: Mid-Georgian*, pp.182-83.

<sup>62</sup> Stephen Calloway, 'Engraving Schemes', *CL*, 18 April 1991, pp.102-05. A page of 'Picture Frames for Print Rooms' by Vivares is illustrated in Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, fig 272, p.206.

<sup>63</sup> Bod, JJC Booktrade Devonshire temp sequence.

gout' associated with chinoiserie. The next section moves on to consider the significance of these models, examining the subject matter adopted, in particular the relationship to stylistic labels.

### 3.4 'Modern' and gothic designs

This section attempts to relate manufacturers' rhetoric to known examples, questioning many assumptions about the relationship between commercial paper-hangings and high art. I also argue that it is the material's flexibility that allowed paper hangings to accommodate a wide variety of materials, styles and subject matter. As in the stucco papers discussed in the previous section, many of the more ambitious designs discussed here were printed in tones of grey and buff, offset with white and black, echoing a vaguely antique monochrome taste. However, although study of the designs of this group of papers has often emphasised the role of classical models, contrasting these to 'India' papers, I argue that producers combined classical designs with elements of the gothic and chinoiserie to create innovative 'fancy' papers and bespoke schemes. These more ambitious types of paper therefore transgressed hierarchies of taste, either by claiming to replace painting or by using styles such as the gothic to subvert classical models. This section also examines another 'non-classical' style, the rococo, employed not for the production of high art forms, but on commercial products. Indeed, Snodin argues that the contemporary label 'modern' referred to a British (rather than French) rococo style, signifying what he calls 'a significant break with ancient classical norms'.<sup>64</sup> The examples discussed in this section suggest that

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<sup>64</sup> *Design and the Decorative Arts*, ed. by Snodin and Styles, p.188.

anxieties about the association of the 'modern' or rococo style with France were outweighed by its commercial adaptability.

One producer who was successful in supplying ambitious designs in a range of styles was the upholster and paper hangings manufacturer William Squire (traded c1760-86). By the end of 1760 he had taken over 'The large Manufactory for Making Paper-Hangings' of Mr. Whittle, near the church in Old Street, as well as selling from his own warehouse in the Poultry. Squire, whose trade card shows the arms of the Upholders company, advertised that he has purchased all Whittle's materials and 'new Prints, in various Patterns', suggesting he had acquired the business both to enlarge his print range and expand his manufacturing base. Squire also highlighted that he could supply 'Merchants, for Exportation, Country Shopkeepers, and others' with goods 'at very low prices' and also sent out samples.<sup>65</sup> A 1764 'Invoice of Sundries Sent to America' suggests he was indeed successful in supplying a range of stock for export. It included:

8 Pieces Feston Gothic Stuco	
8 Nickolls [?] Do	2.8.0
24 Dozn.Stoco Borders @6d	0.12.0
10 Paintings of Ruins of Rome at 7/s	3.10.0
I Room: 9 Ornaments of Pannels@ 2/6	1.2.6
6 Tripoly's [Trophies] 3/	0.18.0
I Picture of a Philosopher for door piece	0.5.0
48 Sheets Top & Bottom festoons 5d	1.0.0

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<sup>65</sup> Trade card, BM, BC 91.27, ill. Ambrose Heal, 'Paper-Stainers of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries', fig 8 p.260; *London Evening Post*, 18 December 1760, in Burney [accessed 2 April 2009].

Squire's bill identified his stock in three ways. Firstly, decorative elements were singled out by reference to materials, such as a stucco border and a bespoke papier mâché ceiling. Secondly, Squire employed subject matter to identify antique subjects, such as trophies and figurative paintings of classical ruins and a philosopher, the latter intended for an over-door. Finally, he made use of stylistic labels, notably identifying lengths of festoons as 'Gothic Stucco'. His invoice can, I suggest, be used to examine both how other manufacturers used such labels to identify stock, and to analyse examples of actual papers which employ architectural elements as components in a range of different styles and surface finishes, in order to suggest what these goods may have looked like and how they may have been intended to have been hung.

Labels linked to material, such as the 'Stucco Borders' and the papier mâché ceiling listed here, were one of the simplest means to identify designs imitating plasterwork or carved architectural elements. The price (£6 6s) of this bespoke papier mâché ceiling reinforces the point made in the previous section that they were expensive purchases. Mrs Delany describes 'Mr Dufour' as 'the famous man for paper ornaments like stucco' whose premises in St Paul's churchyard, in the heart of the city's print selling district, she visited in 1749 to commission a ceiling rose for the Duchess of Portland's dressing-room at Bulstrode.<sup>67</sup> Four years later, in December 1753, a papier mâché ceiling was being installed in the same room, perhaps to complement this ceiling rose. Mrs Delany wrote to her husband from Bulstrode complaining that:

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<sup>66</sup> 'Invoice of Sundries Sent to America', BM, HC 91.52 (facsimile of wrapper). I am grateful to the staff of the Prints & Drawings Study Room for locating this item.

<sup>67</sup> *Autobiography*, II, p.532. Cornforth suggests this was the Huguenot frame maker Joseph Dufour (1737-57), see *Early Georgian Interiors*, p.193. He may have been William Duffour's predecessor, see *DEFM*, p.258.

We are all in disorder at present. The Duchess's dressing-room all unfurnished to have a *papier- mâchée* ceiling put up; but we hope it will be finished tomorrow, and then we shall be very busy in setting it in order again.<sup>68</sup>

As noted above, Squire also uses subject matter to identify paintings to be incorporated in what appears to be two room schemes. In 1752 the *Covent-Garden Journal* was claiming in an article on the 'perfection' which paper manufacture had arrived at that 'Our painted Paper is that is scarce distinguishable from the finest Silk; and there is scarce a modern House, which hath not one or more Rooms lined with this Furniture'.<sup>69</sup> By the early 1760s skills in painting were seen as essential for those wishing to work for paper hangings makers, a trade described as one 'lately much improved, and may still be carried to a higher degree of perfection'. This trade required 'a boy of genius, who has learnt to draw, and has a taste for painting; and as they now make landscapes, ruins and sea-pieces, as the ornaments for chimney-pieces, some knowledge of perspective is also necessary'.<sup>70</sup> The qualities required of a painter, including skills in the handling of paint and mathematical organisation of space, were seen as essential to produce these types of goods. It is also significant, I argue, that the goods highlighted here are paintings for the wall above the chimneypiece, a site which, as Malcolm Airs has pointed out, was beginning to be treated as a separate element, citing Isaac Ware who recommends that in a hung room the frame should be separate from the chimneypiece, and therefore not part of the carving of stone or wood.<sup>71</sup> Paper hangings makers were clearly setting out to rival painters' control of this part of the wall. For example, Roberts's advertised 'Landskips for & over chimneys' and in

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<sup>68</sup> *Autobiography*, III, p.260.

<sup>69</sup> Entwisle, *LH*, p.29

<sup>70</sup> Collyer, *The parent's and guardian's directory*, p.207.

<sup>71</sup> Book VI chapter XXVII, quoted in Malcolm Airs 'The Woodperry House Chimney Piece' in *Baroque and Palladian: The Early Eighteenth Century Great House, Proceedings of a conference held at Oxford University Department for Continuing Education (OUDCE)*, ed. by Malcolm Airs (Oxford: OUDCE, 1996), pp. 47-51 (p.49).

around 1792 Davenports paper hanging manufactory in St Albans Street included 'Landscapes for and over Chimneys' in their trade card.<sup>72</sup>

These are new products for paper hangings manufacturers, some of whom were at pains to single out specific types of painting in order to align this commercial product with high art traditions, perhaps as part of an attempt to escape the censure of critics of politeness. For example the paper hanging maker Robert Stark on Ludgate Hill claimed that he 'Likewise Ornaments Halls, & Stair-cases, with Landskips, Ruins, Figures & c./ on Paper & Canvas, in the Genteelest & best manner on ye most Reasonable Terms'.<sup>73</sup> Stark then could execute paintings on canvas to further rival the work of painter-stainers, and what is more he depicted 'figures' not just landscapes, although it seems the highest genre, history, was absent from Stark's range of painted products. However, although Stark deliberately highlighted painted schemes in his output, like Squire, he also printed products (4.12), suggesting that all these high end manufacturers continued to supply less exclusive goods alongside painted products. Stark's claim to offer 'Reasonable Terms' and his stress on the gentility of his schemes also implied that he was sought to reassure his clients that purchase of these products would not result in any loss of propriety. This may be linked to the firm's claim to hang 'Landskips, Ruins, Figures & c' not just on the chimney-piece, already deemed a suitable site for painted and sculpted ornaments, but on the walls of the hall and stair. It is however possible that they gained experience in handling this space through the supply of repeating prints: a bill to Mr. Vezean in 1782 included lining paper ('finest unstapd Elephant), 36 yards of 'festoon flock' and accompanying borders, a quantity which may relate to the stair (3.15).

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<sup>72</sup> BM, BC 91.8.

<sup>73</sup> Trade card, BM, HC 91.53, 1765-75.

Like Squire's bill, manufacturers' trade cards also sometimes used stylistic labels, often to further differentiate suitable designs for the hall and stair. What is significant about these labels is that, despite the theoretically superior status of the antique and its associations with the entrance hall, it is styles such as the gothic, chinoiserie and rococo which are associated with these spaces. For example, as noted in chapter 2 Roberts's advertised the supply of 'Papier machee ornaments for Ceilings, Stair Cases, Halls, Temples, Summer Houses, & c. in the Chinese [sic], French or Gothick taste' (2.5). Architectural ornament in papier mâché could then be produced to suit a chinoiserie, French (i.e. rococo), or gothic scheme, and was deemed suitable, as noted above, not only for ceilings and circulation spaces in the home, but also for garden buildings such as the temple and summer house (echoing Hertford's description of the ceiling for the room in the wood) as well as in the stair and hall, although there is no mention here of antique taste.

Although Squire's bill does not identify the rooms for which the schemes were intended, his advertisement of 1760 highlighted his supply of papers for the stair, since he claims that 'Several new Designs for Staircases, & c., are lately finish'd, far Superior to any hitherto exhibited'.<sup>74</sup> The 'Feston Gothic Stuco' paper may therefore have been intended for a hall and stair. Moreover experience in the difficulties of hanging complex patterns on the stair may have led to the firm's specialisation in hanging, since by 1774 Squires is listed trading from the Poultry in the city as a paper hanger only.<sup>75</sup> Other evidence also links such designs to this area of the home. For example, Chippendale's bill to Sir William Robinson for papers at Sir William's new town house at 26, Soho Square, in 1760 included '30 Pieces of Cathedral Gothic

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<sup>74</sup> *London Evening Post*, 18 December 1760.

<sup>75</sup> *The new complete guide to all persons who have any trade or concern with the City of London, and parts adjacent*, London, printed for T.Longman, J.Rivington, Hawes, Clarke and Collins and others, [1774?] in ECCO [accessed 8 March 2006].

paper' and 20 dozen borders for the back staircase at a cost of nearly £8.<sup>76</sup> It is tempting to link this pattern name to Walpole's stair paper, which was based on a design taken from Worcester Cathedral, although there is no evidence for this.<sup>77</sup>

However, this example does indicate an apparent association between gothic paper and the hall and stair, as at Strawberry Hill, although the visual effects achieved by using stucco paper with stained glass, effects associated with the gothic, were not unique either to Strawberry or to the hall. They seem to have been particularly associated with garden buildings. For example, when Caroline Girle visited Lord Orkney's seat at Taplow in 1766 she described a gothic root-house positioned above the Thames as 'exceedingly pretty' and compared it with "'Straw hall' in our woods, only the inside is Gothic Paper resembling stucco; the upper part of the windows being painted glass give a pleasing gloom'.<sup>78</sup> What is also significant here is that, like the room in the wood at Richens Park, these products are deemed appropriate in a garden building, and, one that evoked the gothic taste.

The question remains of what Squire's 'Feston Gothic Stucco' paper might have looked like, and how it might have been combined with the en-suite borders and paintings of ruins. Some sense of the effects of a complex scheme may be gained from study of the south stair of the Ancient High House, Greengate Street, Stafford, hung with papers in the 1760s (3.16).<sup>79</sup> This late sixteenth century house occupies a prominent position on the town's main street. It was acquired in 1758 by the son of a mayor of the town,

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<sup>76</sup> Gilbert, p.141. Sir William appears to have worked with Thomas Dade of Compton Street as clerk of works on the design of numbers 25 & 26, see Treve Rosoman 'A Chippendale Wallpaper Discovered', *CL*, 14 November 1983, p.1501. Other papers supplied for 26, Soho Square are discussed in chapter 1 section 6.

<sup>77</sup> Other patterns were however named after Strawberry; see the discussion of sprig papers in chapter 4 section 4.

<sup>78</sup> *Passages from the Diary of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys*, ed. by Climenson, I, p.115. Taplow Court was subsequently remodelled by William Burn, see <http://www.sgi-uk.org> [accessed 2 April 2009].

<sup>79</sup> Wells-Cole, *HPH*, cats 39 & 40, ill. pp.33-34.



Brooke Crutchley (d. 1777), a successful local apothecary who became apothecary to the gaol in 1756 and married the sister of the local MP. Crutchley, who was himself elected mayor in 1774, was among those who raised a subscription to create the first infirmary in Stafford, becoming a member of the infirmary's board which met weekly after its opening in 1766. His involvement in this project and in local politics may be the reason he acquired this prominent address and began to modernise its decoration.<sup>80</sup> He seems to have been responsible for the extensive use of paper to update the house's timber panelled interior in the 1760s, concealing an outdated architectural framework under a newly fashionable product.

Both distemper prints and flocks (3.16, right) were hung at the house. The staircase, which extends from the ground to the second floor, gave access to Crutchley's apartments on the south side of the house. A stucco paper was used as a border around vertical 'figures' and horizontal 'landskips', pasted directly over the lathe and plaster construction.<sup>81</sup> The vertical 'figures' are of two types, one representing the goddess Flora (3.17), the other a pagoda, set within an architectural framework where classical pilasters support gothic tracery, and entablatures are punctuated by gothic trefoils (3.18). This recalls the designs of the pioneer of the rococo, Batty Langley (1696-1751), in its mixture of creative elements. The figures recall contemporary porcelain figure groups, a point Cornforth noted in 1986, suggesting Bow or Chelsea as a source, whilst the framing papers may be what are often classified as ceiling papers, but which were in practice hung more flexibly, whether from choice or by necessity.<sup>82</sup> The landscape panels, formed of two pasted sheets, seem to have consisted of several designs. One is

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<sup>80</sup> Fiona Sheridan, *The Ancient High House: take a walk through history* (Addax Media Ltd ><http://www.addaxmedia.com><, 2001), p.10; Ray Lewis, *From High House to Baker's Oven* (Stafford, author's publication, 2004), pp.11-12.

<sup>81</sup> This stucco paper resembles that from Clandon (4.23), whose possible use as borders to tapestries in the Palladian room before 1778 is discussed in chapter 4 section 5.

<sup>82</sup> John Cornforth, 'Archaeology and Wallpaper', *CL*, 26 January 1984, pp.218-19.

printed with a pastoral scene of a man and boy, another a hunting scene with deer framed by columns, urns and a seated figure.

Other printed papers may also be associated with the stair. One is composed of views of gothic architecture - a moated castle with sailing ship and a tower set in a wooded landscape- interspersed with a vignette of male figures wearing a loosely 'medieval' style of dress, printed in white and browns on buffs no longer on the wall but survives at the house (3.19, right). It may well have provided an alternative to the landscape panels on the stair, since it is similar in dimensions. It was found underneath another roller print of c.1840, of which only a fragment survives, which represents a fan vaulted interior illuminated by six light windows through whose tracery light (moonlight?) falls onto the tiled floor, suggesting the continued appeal of the style at the house (3.19, top).

The Stafford papers, I argue, support Brooks' claim that the vocabulary of the gothic, derived from historical examples, provided an alternative to classicism.<sup>83</sup> The stair scheme also has similarities to Walpole's approach at Strawberry where architectural propriety was ignored, since the Stafford stair papers are hung to suggest, rather than accurately represent, a façade composed of architectural ornament framing plaster niches. Accuracy was then not just compromised by the combination of architectural styles in a single design, but often too in terms of papers' scale and proportions. Clive Wainwright claimed that 'the whole Walpole circle patronised Bromwich' but, as Michael Archer has pointed out, the firm's products evidently did not satisfy Gray's desire for authenticity. Gray explained to Wharton that:

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<sup>83</sup> Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, p.87.

On rummaging Mr Bromwich's and several other shops I am forced to tell you, that there are absolutely no papers at all that deserve the name of Gothick, or that you bear the sight of. They are all what they call fancy, & indeed resemble nothing but ever was in use in any age or country.<sup>84</sup>

Gray suggested that Wharton should select his own design source instead, copying a detail either from a print (he recommended Dart's *Canterbury* or Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, the latter illustrated by Hollar) or from an actual building local to Wharton, Durham Cathedral.<sup>85</sup> This not only echoes Bentley's use of the engraving from Worcester Cathedral for Walpole's stair paper, but also, I suggest, reflects contemporary developments in topographical prints.

Firstly, there is the desire to 'collect' representations of the past as part of what Lucy Peltz has called 'a crisis in national and cultural identity.' Topographical prints such those used at Stafford offered viewers cross references to what Peltz calls 'bits of distant reality', but for paper hangings manufacturers they also offered different viewpoints on buildings which could be used to create patterns which fed into this desire to 'keep the past in sight'.<sup>86</sup> Taste for the nationalistic connotations of the gothic may also have been felt to be particularly relevant to this site, the hall of a sixteenth century house. This taste is reflected in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1739 where an anonymous writer contrasted 'an imperfect imitation of an Italian *Villa*' with the

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<sup>84</sup> Wainwright, *The Romantic Interior*, p.98; Michael Archer, 'Gothic wallpapers, An aspect of the Gothic Revival', *Apollo*, 78 (August 1963), 109-16 (p.111).

<sup>85</sup> Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p.236.

<sup>86</sup> Lucy Peltz 'Aestheticizing the Ancestral City: antiquarianism, topography and the representation of London in the long eighteenth century' in *The Metropolis and its Image: Constructing Identities for London, c.1750-1950*, ed. by Dana Arnold (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp.6-28 (pp.9-10 & 14).

‘venerability’ of ‘those hospitable *Gothick* Halls, hung round with the Helmets, Breast plates and Swords of our ancestors’.<sup>87</sup>

Secondly, topographical prints were seen as more commercially led than works of art, so again were more readily adaptable by the trade. Indeed the fashion for customisation of topographical prints by the owner may also be reflected in the landscape panels of the Ancient High House. For example, in one panel the hunting scene has been replaced by a pagoda cut out from a vertical panel and collaged on, again suggesting a desire for greater variety (3.18, right).

The scheme did not just imitate the finish of stucco in its use of greys and whites, but also its motifs and subject matter. Moreover it does not only mimic sculpted niches, but also contemporary ceramics, raising the issue of inter-materiality which is explored further in chapter 4. This scheme then challenges easy distinctions between styles, since the papers combined taste for the Chinese, the gothic and the antique.

The paper from the parlour of 1, Amen Court, London from the late 1760s recently reprinted and hung at Temple Newsam (3.20) also combined rococo and gothic motifs in another hybrid scheme whose form may be close to the ‘Feston Gothic Stucco’ to which Squire refers. A flowering urn and landscape scene was set within a complex repeating pattern of gothic ogee arches in order to lead the eye around the room, using two vertical elements side by side to create four different motifs. This design evidences a further connection to the ceramics industry, since John Cornforth suggested the motif of the hut with trees was derived from printed ornaments adapted for use in ceramic decoration, wood carving and cotton printers, reinforcing my argument that

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<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Emma Hardy, ‘Fresh Fashions from London’, *WHR*, 1996-97, 12-18 (p.17).

manufacturers looked to commercial products, as well as high art, for their sources.<sup>88</sup> However, this taste was combined with the stucco palette that seems to have been characteristic of gothic papers. It seems simpler versions of this 'festoon Gothic' were also produced, as evidenced by a paper of c.1800 from the basement of a house in Alresford in Hampshire. The pattern consists of a small scale gothic trefoil arch, printed in darker colours that simulated the effects of perspective admired by Walpole and Gray (3.21).

Similar issues are raised by papers with classically derived patterns, which often reject the rules and conventions of classicism, echoing Gray's reference to the opposition between accuracy and invention in gothic papers. The motif of the repeating arch was also employed for classical style designs, the so-called 'pillar and arch' papers, such as an unused panel from another house in Bourton-on-the-Water, The Old Manor, attributed by Sugden and Edmundson to Bromwich or Spinnage (3.22).<sup>89</sup> The survival of a paper from Norwood House, Kent, of c.1760 suggests that actual classical style buildings nearer to home were also deemed suitable pattern sources (3.23). This paper takes as its motif the facade of classical style buildings, including the Radcliffe Camera in Oxford, to create a small-scale (the dropped repeat is only 8 cms) pattern. It is almost a 'fish eye lens' view, the block printing of the circular railings appearing to distort the viewpoint and enhance the buildings' form.

The flexibility and scope for invention that, according to Crown, are key elements in the appeal of the rococo, are also, I wish to argue, demonstrated by a scheme now known only from photographs, the painted panels from the upper hall at Harrington

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<sup>88</sup> Cornforth, 'The Triumph of Pillar and Arch', p.75.

<sup>89</sup> SE, frontispiece.

House, also in Bourton-on-the-Water.<sup>90</sup> Harrington, attributed by Andor Gomme to William Townesend, was rebuilt in what David Verey labels 'regional-Palladian-style' for a local lawyer, William Moore (d.1768) in c.1740 (3.24).<sup>91</sup> The elaborate plasterwork ceilings and Venetian window which lights the stair on the garden front are thought to date from this period, although the decoration of the upper hall is said to have been put up at the time of Moore's widow's, Lady Harrington's, third marriage in 1786 (3.25-3.28).<sup>92</sup> When the paper was restored in 1891 evidence was found dating the paper to 1788, so it seems likely that it was installed in the late 1780s.<sup>93</sup> As will be seen, unlike the printed papers and panels hung by Brooke Crutchley this was a bespoke scheme, like the paintings Squire listed in his bill of exports. Indeed, elements in the Harrington decorations have been compared to another scheme supplied by a London merchant to Stephen Van Rensselear (1742-69) for the hallway of his manor house in Albany, New York in 1788.<sup>94</sup>

Previously attributed to J.B. Jackson, the Harrington decoration is on a much larger scale than that at the Ancient High House. It consists of a pair of singeries enclosed by rococo style foliage, hung either side of the central window (3.28), while the two long walls were each filled by a trio of panels consisting of a pair of grotesques with central figure groups flanking different landscape views of classical ruins and urns (3.26, 3.27). These panels, set within rococo style scrollwork were, according Nancy

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<sup>90</sup> Photographs taken in the 1920s depict the scheme before its removal from the wall, see McClelland, *Historic Wall-papers*, pls. 146-149; *Pattern and Design*, ed. by Lambert, cat 2.4; NMR, Red boxes.

<sup>91</sup> Andor Gomme 'Craftsmen-Architects or Reptile Artizans' in *Baroque and Palladian*, ed. by Airs, 13-38, p.18; David Verey, *Gloucestershire: The Cotswolds* (London: Penguin, 1989), p.130.

<sup>92</sup> HF Holidays, *A History Of Harrington House, Bourton-on-the-Water*, n.d. I am grateful to Tia Marcos for this reference.

<sup>93</sup> See NMR, BB79/4828: 'painted in white wash on paper dated 1788'; 'Restored by K ...Coruzaci Cheltenham/1891'.

<sup>94</sup> 'The Van Rensselear Hall' in *Period Rooms in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. by John P. O'Neill (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 197-203; Edna Donnell, 'The Van Rensselaer Wall Paper and J. B. Jackson: A Study in Disassociation', *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, 4:1 (February 1932), 76-108.

McClelland, printed in 'green on a pinkish ground'.<sup>95</sup> In fact the scheme was painted, although tax stamps found on the reverse of the panels when they were removed from the wall indicated they were taxed as wallpaper, so supplied ready painted by a paper hangings manufacturer.<sup>96</sup> This reinforces Stark's and others' claims to be moving into the area hitherto occupied by painters.<sup>97</sup>

Like Brooke Crutchley's stair, the overall effect of the Harrington scheme is rococo, albeit a rococo which is flexible enough to accommodate imitation of painting and stucco, and combine elements from antique and French sources. Contemporary taste for the cult of the ruin is demonstrated in the landscapes of classical ruins and urns. These reflect the large scale painted views of ruins, executed in situ by Italian artists, which survive for example in the Dining Room at Shugborough (c.1748) just outside Stafford.<sup>98</sup> A further classical element consisted of a pair of trophies hung on the window wall (3.28). Trophies carry masculine connotations, since they are associated with martial values: values apparently in opposition to those of commodities such as paper-hangings.<sup>99</sup> However, the 'trophies' from Harrington are not the tools of military victory, but rather celebrate architectural success by depicting male and female figures representing architecture.

The role played by the print trade in the dissemination of rococo designs, including designs derived from French sources, is also indicated by the Harrington scheme. As Edna Donnell has pointed out, the grotesque panels are based on engravings after

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<sup>95</sup> McClelland, *Historic Wall-papers*, pl. 146. It seems she saw the scheme in the 1920s.

<sup>96</sup> NMR BB79/4820 tracing of stamp 'PAPER J'. The then owner, J.A Fort, claimed he found the date 1786 on the back of the paper; quoted in SE, p.68.

<sup>97</sup> Bill head, 1765-76, BM, HC 91.53.

<sup>98</sup> Guy Evans, 'Cultured Elegance: English 18<sup>th</sup> century scenic wallpapers', *WHR* (2001), 28-30.

<sup>99</sup> I have not found any surviving schemes which uses trophies alone although drawings by Jackson for 'Trophies of Art, Science and War' survive in the V&A album dated 1738, see OH, cat. 1020, p.344.

Watteau, whilst the trophies derive from a Huquier engraving after Charpentier.<sup>100</sup> The scheme then combines antique sources associated with reason and order with rococo elements reflecting the taste for the work of foreign, particularly French, craftsmen and artists. However, the grotesque panels employ identical ornament to that used in the Chinese panels hung in the parlour at Hampden House (2.35); the difference is that, whereas at Hampden the central scenes are of Chinese figures, here the European figure groups are retained. Given the probable date of the Hampden scheme (c.1758) the possibility exists that the Harrington panels are in some way indebted to these. Certainly, the Chinese panels at Hampden must have been hung and perhaps even supplied by an English firm (in all likelihood Bromwich, as suggested in chapter 2), so the possibilities of the design would have been known, and could even have been supplied as a model to the Canton workshops by an English printer who later circulated it for domestic manufacture.<sup>101</sup> This argument is strengthened by the association of the grotesques, in a reversed form of the original dated 1761, with a London printer, John Ryall at Hogarth's Head, Fleet Street.<sup>102</sup>

Papers imitating architectural and sculpted ornament are then by no means exclusively classical in style or form, but adopt the vocabulary of other styles too, notably the gothic. Even when classical motifs and materials are adopted, imitation in printed form often distorts scale and materials, since these schemes play with easy divisions between the high art and the decorative, architecture and two dimensional imitations, as on Brooke Crutchley's stair. Papers also challenge the dominance of antique precedents in their appropriation of rococo styles and forms, which similarly ignore architectural propriety and often provide the over-riding framework for these schemes.

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<sup>100</sup> Donnell, 'The Van Rensselaer Wall Paper', figs.17-19, 22, 23.

<sup>101</sup> The inclusion of singeries in the Harrington scheme reinforces this view of a close relationship to chinoiserie.

<sup>102</sup> *Pattern and Design*, ed. by Lambert, cat. 2.4c.



This suggests that the commercial appeal of this ‘modern’ style is, as Crown suggests, allowing ‘artisan-artists’ to determine artistic fashion and practice.<sup>103</sup>

Moreover, even consumers decorating a provincial Palladian-style house, such as the Moores at Harrington, installed a bespoke scheme undermining the very basis of polite taste by employing *painted* paper hangings which, whilst they incorporated scenes of classical ruins and trophies, also imitated rococo style stucco and printed ornament. Cornforth pointed out in his final study of the period that, rather than emphasising the search for fundamental truths in the architecture of antiquity, studies of the interiors of Palladian houses needed to consider the changing relationship between new ways of life, new rooms and new furnishings, and it is these relationships that I now wish to examine.<sup>104</sup>

### 3.5 Stair and print room papers

This final section examines the links between the choice of papers printed with architectural, sculpted or painted ornament and the spaces in which they were hung, notably the hall and stair. Building on this approach, it considers what connotations of class and gender papers may have carried to contemporaries, in particular by discussing repeating patterns depicting the rediscovery of antique remains. These patterns, I argue, at once celebrate and yet undermine the role of classical sculpture and architecture. I also return to the question of print rooms and ‘print room papers’, questioning the former’s associations with female, aristocratic consumers and arguing that ‘print room papers’ represent a further undermining of the rules of polite taste.

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<sup>103</sup> Crown, ‘English Rococo as Social and Political Style’, p.270.

<sup>104</sup> Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p.3.

A further tension when discussing these paper hangings imitating high art and antique models is the way in which antique taste is often gendered as male, in opposition to the feminine associations of luxury and superficiality often, as discussed in chapter 2, linked to exotic taste. Such gendered divisions are, I suggest, not easy to negotiate when it comes to interiors associated with high art forms. Recent studies have also argued that the notion of politeness is enacted not through the company of other men but through the company of women, and that refinement and moderation are demonstrated above all in the social spaces of the home.<sup>105</sup> It was thus in these social spaces, spaces where effeminacy could undermine manly characteristics, that the paper hangings discussed in this chapter were installed.

As already noted, such papers were often hung in the hall and on the stair. Why was this so? In the provincial homes considered in the previous section stair papers seem to either have been part of a deliberate attempt to update the interior or to enhance the fashionable exterior. However, did the same motivations apply for consumers in more urban homes? Saumarez Smith suggests that the vertical division of the town house, with two rooms on each floor and the staircase as the principal means of access meant expense was often lavished on it.<sup>106</sup> Surviving papers and accounts do suggest that papering the stair was a largely urban fashion. Such sites also lent themselves to hanging large-scale designs where the pattern could repeat more than once.<sup>107</sup>

In early eighteenth-century London, as Elizabeth McKellar has observed, the site of the stair in terraced houses meant it was often internally top lit, so it also offered the

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<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity*, pp.4-5.

<sup>106</sup> Saumarez Smith, p.78.

<sup>107</sup> Richard C. Nylander, Elizabeth Redmond and Penny J. Sander, *Wallpaper in New England* (Boston: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1986), p.48.

opportunity for a hang uninterrupted by window openings or pier glasses. McKellar also points out that such terraces consisted of a brick and wood shell decorated with applied ornament which was cheap and easy to produce, so 'perfectly suited to a consumer economy geared towards the continual renewal and replacement of products'.<sup>108</sup> I suggest that wallpaper lent itself to this renewal, and papers imitating antique subject matter and ornament were especially suited to the classical style in which these terraces were built, as well as allowing for consumer choice in internal decoration.

A dramatic example of this practice is the stair paper from Boston Manor House. The initials MR and the date 1623 which appear on the heads of the down pipes (3.29) are those of its builder, the widowed Lady Mary Reade (d.1658), who also fitted out the interior with a series of dramatic plasterwork ceilings and over-mantels. The house was renovated in the 1670s when it was acquired by a successful London merchant, James Clitherow (1618-82). His descendent, Ann Clitherow (d.1801) carried out further improvements in 1786. Her 'Calculation of the Expence of new fitting up my Drawing room' included spending on stucco work, painting and carpentry on the staircase (3.30). Seddons, by the last quarter of the century the largest firm in London, supplied furniture for the drawing room, whose redecoration included a paper supplied by Isherwoods, the successors to Bromwich's on Ludgate Hill, for the considerable sum of £17.6s.6d.<sup>109</sup> No trace of the drawing room paper survives, but a stair paper and ensuite border were found on the top flight of the staircase in the 1960s, although it

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<sup>108</sup> Elizabeth McKellar, *The birth of modern London, 1660-1720* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), chapter 8 especially pp.164-172, 184.

<sup>109</sup> Janet McNamara, *Boston Manor Brentford* (Houslow: Heritage Publications, Leisure Services, 1998), p.20. Payments for the staircase included £11.7s.5d. for stucco work, £2.2s.6d. to the painter and £3 to the carpenter, totalling £16.9s.1d, LMA ACC 1360. I am grateful to Janet McNamara for this reference.

seems certain it extended over all three flights in the eighteenth century (3.9, 3.31).

Indeed, it is possible the paper may date from the 1760s rather than the 1780s.<sup>110</sup>

As noted above, Squire's bill included a set of paintings entitled 'Ruins of Rome', but in this paper design, I argue, the presence of texts and figures combines to highlight how printed papers also responded to taste for the 'cult' of the ruin and the importance attached to classical education. The design, I suggest, accords with Frank Salmon's model of transposing actual ruins into fictitious contexts provided by drawings. Salmon has traced the ways in which drawings by Robert Adam's circle, influenced by the work of Piranesi, prioritised the ruin as 'an object and architectural intervention' over archaeological objectives, using devices such as visual selectivity, the transposition of actual ruins into fictitious contexts and a 'generic vocabulary of Roman architectural forms' in 'ruins' which were entirely invented.<sup>111</sup> The pattern reflects this taste, since it shows an entire classical landscape peopled with 'objects': fragments of classically derived architecture and sculpture. These include a ruined temple faced with Corinthian pilasters, fallen columns, an obelisk, a sphinx on a plinth and two figures reading an inscribed tablet above an arched waterspout. Imitation is not just projected through the choice of subject matter, since the paper also seeks to imitate the effects of different surfaces. Printed in six colours (greys, browns and white) on what has discoloured from a white to a cream ground, the design makes very careful use of colour to give depth to the scene by using stronger shades on the front of the temple and to highlight details, such as dressed stone.

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<sup>110</sup> The survival of the same paper in the entry (the stair hall) to the Lady Pepperell House, Maine, hung by Mary Hirst, Lady Pepperell, after 1760 but destroyed in 1945, suggests that the pattern was available in the 1760s, see Nylander, Redmond and Sander, *Wallpaper in New England*, cat. 5b, ill. p.52. A floral design (perhaps even an India paper) is visible below a detail from the 'ruins' paper photographed during restoration in 1961, so this scheme may have been intended to update the stair, see Insall, 'Discoveries at Boston Manor', p.1068, central fig.

<sup>111</sup> Frank Salmon, *Building on Ruins: The Rediscovery of Rome and English Architecture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.43-44.

The theme of education in the classical world, a theme Coltman regards as central to eighteenth-century perceptions of the antique, is also reflected in the two male figures in contemporary dress who are shown attempting to decipher an inscription, indeed one may be instructing a pupil. Both gesture at the letters T.RI, perhaps a reference to a tribune, in Roman society a magistrate who defended the rights of the plebeians (3.32).<sup>112</sup> In many ways this paper embodies the imitation of the antique, since it takes as its subject the rediscovery of classical remains, combining the visual and the textual in a design that literally instructs the viewer. Although I have found no exact source, some elements, notably the sphinx on a plinth with the jagged tree above, and the paired male figures, echo the capriccio of Istrian and Dalmatian remains which formed the frontispiece to Robert Adam's *The ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia* published in 1764.<sup>113</sup>

Why then were scenes showing the rediscovery of antique remains thought appropriate subjects for paper hangings? On the one hand, the antique taste was supposedly employed to distance the user from the ruinous path of excess and self-indulgence. Yet this paper's vast and complex repeat conveys not neatness, but 'shew', which may, however, have been thought more appropriate to the hall and stair which are not so tightly bound into hierarchies of decoration as other spaces in the home. The appropriation of the subject matter of high art for printed reproduction in two dimensions also challenges the very basis of antique taste in the study of classical sculpture and ruined remains. Guy Evans has argued that they were simply cheaper than painted views and allowed the gentry, professional and merchant classes to share

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<sup>112</sup> I am grateful to Rachel Taylor for this reading. The tablet is inscribed EQ.I/T.RI/DEUS/CC.

<sup>113</sup> Harris, *The Genius of Robert Adam*, pl.102, p.69.

in the example of the classically educated nobility.<sup>114</sup> These designs may also have enabled what Hornsby labels ‘the cultural programme of the oligarchy’ to reach a much wider group.<sup>115</sup> J.B. Jackson’s claim that the staircase could accommodate ‘full length’ statues in printed form suggests that paper was indeed intended as a substitute for displays of antique sculpture: ‘Stair-Cases in every Taste as shall be most agreeable, (can be) fitted up with the utmost Elegance. No figure is too large for this Invention, Statues and Other objects may be taken off full length, or any size whatever’.<sup>116</sup>

However, a second design depicting ruins, found on the first floor landing at 16, Young Street, Kensington (3.10, 3.33, 3.34), challenges this view. It was probably hung by the Holborn cabinet maker John Richards who occupied the house from 1760-73. Richards’ described the house in his will as ‘the most Convenient house in Kensington as at a Great Expense I made it so’.<sup>117</sup> Again, the paper is vast in scale and depicts ruined remains including a tempietto, jointed Corinthian columns and an obelisk, which tower over a pair of figures. But the figures in this paper are not educated viewers of the classical world but figures associated with pastoral ideals: a young man, who is seated as if listening to an older male figure, and a swineherd.<sup>118</sup> Textual elements are combined with the visual in the letters ‘R IPIA’ that are inscribed in a column base (3.33). Here pastoral and classical elements are combined in a design that set tiny figures against vast decaying ruins to suggest the ephemerality of all human things. However, these fragments are not the pure antique scheme they appear,

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<sup>114</sup> Evans, ‘Cultured Elegance’, p.30.

<sup>115</sup> *The Impact of Italy: The Grand Tour and Beyond*, ed. by Clare Hornsby (Rome: The British School at Rome, 2000), p.9.

<sup>116</sup> Jackson’s own surviving printed panels, block printed in oils were probably intended for over-doors or print rooms due to their scale.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Rosoman, p.38.

<sup>118</sup> Cornforth suggested it was close in feeling less to other papers depicting ruins than to an English textile, Robert Jones’s ‘Pastoral Scene’, a printed cotton of c.1760 which combines ruins with figures and animals derived from a Berghem etching of 1652, see ‘History from London Walls’, *CL*, 19 November 1992, pp.52-53 (p.53).

since the paper and egg and dart printed border were combined with dado and frieze papers which reproduced gothic mouldings (3.34). Moreover the choice of stair paper may not only suggest Richards' own social aspirations, but his desire to attract a fashionable clientele since, as Rosoman notes, a number of upholsterers and cabinet makers bought or took over leases on London houses which they redecorated and let out for high rents during the Season.<sup>119</sup> This eye catching and ostentatious stair paper may therefore have been chosen to attract this kind of rental.

Indeed, papers employing architectural ornament were not confined to the hall and stair but were also found in other spaces of sociability such as eating rooms, alluded to above in relation to Eckhardts' patent. There is some evidence to support the argument put forward by Cohen that new spaces of sociability such as the parlour and drawing room presented opportunities for the transgression of what she calls the 'boundaries of gender and propriety' in terms of display or ostentation. For example, as early as 1752, Mrs Delaney recommended her husband hang a stucco paper rather than have a stuccoed finish in his parlour: 'If your parlour is stuccoed (though I think I should rather hang it with stucco paper)'.<sup>120</sup> Her comments imply that imitation was thought preferable to the original, in the parlour at least. This preference might be related to the shift Cornforth identified by the early 1750s from the common parlour as an everyday living room to a separate sitting room.<sup>121</sup> Even drawing rooms, which, according to Cornforth, were more richly furnished than parlours, could seemingly accommodate stucco papers, as Philip Hussey's family portrait of about 1760 suggests (3.35). Here two designs of classical colonnades are combined in a first floor urban (and probably Irish) room, perhaps a front parlour or drawing room, which is hung with paper from

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<sup>119</sup> Rosoman, p.38.

<sup>120</sup> *Autobiography*, III, p.76.

<sup>121</sup> Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p.38.

cornice to skirting allowing three complete repeats to be seen. The main paper incorporates a tempietto within columns and arches, but on the chimneybreast wall a paper consisting of dramatically receding arches enclosing figures was hung.<sup>122</sup> This scheme is far from the restrained classicism advocated by Shaftesbury, since the use of paper (and other commodities such as the floor coverings and window treatments) is nothing short of lavish, suggesting that, as Cohen argues, boundaries of gender and propriety were transgressed in terms of ostentatious display in such spaces. The portrait also aligns the sitters with the taste for a new commodity that not only imitates, but also undermines, high art forms. The wall's function as a surface for display of fine art was also, I argue, challenged here, since the very painting that depicted these goods was replaced by mere paper hangings. Yet at the same time the wall was decorated not with a unique work of art, but with a design whose effect is derived from the use of the repetition of multiple, classical components. What is more the colonnade design both replicated and subverted classical rules, since the design used no clear system of orders. This echoes the model of the paper from 1, Amen Court (3.20), with rococo and gothic elements replaced by classical devices.

Finally, I want to return to the relationship between print rooms and 'print room papers'. Studies of print rooms have largely focused on style and subject matter rather than on examining the social practices that took place within these spaces and their eighteenth-century functions. In section 3, I outlined the involvement of print sellers in the creation of a print room. However, their creation is also gendered as feminine and 'amateur', and compared to activities such as feather work, paper cut outs and shell work. They are also associated not with the urban house but with the country house, in part due to the prominence accorded to Lady Louisa Connolly's scheme at Castletown

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<sup>122</sup> The combination of two designs used on the stair at the Ancient High House in Stafford was therefore seemingly not unique.



House, Co. Kildare, executed after 1768, and Mrs Delany's references to the creation of another Irish scheme.<sup>123</sup> Many interiors, such as that created c.1801 by Elizabeth Ayliffe (d.1822), wife of George Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont, at Petworth in Sussex, are categorised as dressing rooms, although print rooms also functioned as dining rooms and sitting rooms.<sup>124</sup> The conventional notion of the 'accomplished woman' as feminine other who could appreciate only the mechanical aspects of the visual arts through copying, in contrast to the intellectual appreciation of high culture accessible to the male connoisseur, is challenged by these schemes which evidence more positive female contributions.<sup>125</sup>

Critics of female participation in the arts claimed that it led to the feminisation of a culture that should embody masculine values. In this way they conveyed, according to Brewer, strong anxieties about the conduct of men.<sup>126</sup> How then might men who created print room schemes be seen? Walpole, a key proponent of the gothic, a style based not on reason and order but on emotional viewing and on the imagination, employed Jackson's classical prints in his home, pasted over a gothic paper.<sup>127</sup> Such a scheme would seem to fit Brewer's model of effeminacy based on the gentleman collector who prioritised emotional effects over order and reason in his decorative schemes. However, Nathaniel Curzon, first Baron Scarsdale (1726-1804), who rebuilt Kedleston in Derbyshire to designs by Robert Adam and who was an enthusiast for the antique, evidently also felt such a scheme was suitable for his dressing room which in

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<sup>123</sup> Saunders, pp.83-84.

<sup>124</sup> At Petworth the dressing room is now concealed under later panelling. I am grateful to Sophie Chessum for this information.

<sup>125</sup> Ann Bermingham discussed the construction of the accomplished woman in 'Elegant females and gentleman connoisseurs', p.505.

<sup>126</sup> Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, p.80.

<sup>127</sup> Snodin, 'Strawberry Hill: The construction of the Gothic Interior'.

1769 was 'hung with green paper, and coloured prints upon it', using what appear to be hand coloured prints which would have shown to advantage on the green ground.<sup>128</sup>

Readings based on style and subject alone can lead to inaccurate representations of eighteenth-century social practices within a space: this is evidenced by study of the print room at Uppark, West Sussex (3.36). Gill Saunders has suggested that the style of arrangement and subject matter suggest it was a man's room. She evidenced this by reference to the severely formal hang, with no linking swags or other decorative embellishments, and the choice of prints after Italian, Spanish and Flemish Old Masters.<sup>129</sup> However, the evidence that Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh's (d.1774) payment in 1774 was made to 'Mrs Vivaro for Prints', suggests that purchasers, like Sir Matthew and Lord Scarsdale, may have left the choice and arrangement of prints up to the (female) supplier, who used a set of room dimensions supplied by the client to work out the scheme.<sup>130</sup> Recent conservation found that the scheme carefully separated genre and religious scenes on each wall and was embellished with printed frames, rings and bows in imitation of three-dimensional hanging systems. This supports the argument that all the components were supplied to fit the room, rather than purchased separately by the client. However, the additional of two Huet trophies, purchased from Regniers Print Shop in Long Acre, also suggests that designs could also be modified on site, perhaps by the purchaser.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Quoted in Swynford- Jenkins, 'Furniture in Eighteenth-Century Country House Guides', p.116.

<sup>129</sup> Saunders, pp.84-85.

<sup>130</sup> F. Gotto, *Report on the Uppark Print Room*, unpublished MS for The National Trust, 2002, Appendix A (copy at Uppark). The original account was lost in the Uppark fire in 1989.

<sup>131</sup> Mrs. Regnier also supplied prints to Lady Louisa Conolly, see The Knight of Glin and John Cornforth, 'Castletown, Co.Kildare', *CL*, 10 April 1969, pp.882-85 (p.883).

These elements contrast with the trompe l'oeil painting of the potted flowering plants collaged onto the dado (3.36, detail).<sup>132</sup> These have traditionally been attributed to Sarah, Lady Fetherstonhaugh, only daughter of a wealthy Middlesex merchant whom Sir Matthew married within a year of inheriting the Fetherstonhaugh title in 1746 and purchasing the estate of Uppark.<sup>133</sup> The design of the dado appears to dilute what Saunders perceives as the masculine formality of the room. Mary Rose Blacker has identified the species of plants (only one of which repeats) and points out that they are accurate paintings of actual species, which, according to contemporary diaries and letters, were displayed in pots in rooms such as dressing rooms.<sup>134</sup> Hannah Woolley's description of how to decorate a room with prints specifically recommends 'coloured' prints of figures as suitable for 'Flower-pots for Closets', suggesting this was a well developed practice.<sup>135</sup> The usage of this room as a male dressing room in the early twentieth century also distorts its function in the eighteenth-century, when it formed the link in a suite of three small rooms in a newly created family mezzanine, and whose entrance is centred on the stair axis, giving the decoration of the Print Room particular prominence. Close study of print rooms schemes such as this do then suggest that their label as female, amateur products needs to be treated with caution.

However, by the mid 1760s paper hangings manufacturers were themselves producing papers imitating entire decorative schemes, the so-called 'print room papers'. These papers do not in fact just imitate prints, I argue, but also stucco frames and ornaments, and even ceramic medallions, enamels and botanical specimens hung on the wall. The imitation of such schemes in paint and distemper printing may have been another way

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<sup>132</sup> Allyson McDermott 'A 20<sup>th</sup> century Phoenix rises from 18<sup>th</sup> century ashes, Part 1: Red flock and flower pots', *WHR* (1995), 24-28 (p.27).

<sup>133</sup> Christopher Rowell, *Uppark Restored* (London: The National Trust, 1996), pl.31.

<sup>134</sup> Mary Rose Blacker, *Flora Domestica: A History of Flower Arranging 1500-1930* (London: The National Trust, 2000), p.132.

<sup>135</sup> Jones, 'How to Decorate A Room with Prints', p.248.

in which print sellers' dominance was challenged. Chloe Archer has even suggested that these 'ever cheaper wallpapers, creating a generally similar effect, made print rooms seem unnecessarily wasteful of time and effort' and led to a decline in the creation of print rooms from scratch.<sup>136</sup> As ever, price is clearly a factor, since a 'ready made' length of paper could be hung in a fraction of the time it took to arrange, cut out and collage prints and ornaments onto a wall hung with a coloured ground paper. However, from their dates, it appears that, as with the 'mock India' papers, these papers are being produced at the same time as print room schemes are being executed, refuting the idea that their production led to a decline in the creation of print rooms from scratch. What then might have been their appeal?

What is clear from the surviving examples of these papers is that they appealed to a range of patron groups, since they have been found in the country as well as town houses. Surviving papers of this type from Doddington Hall in Lincolnshire, of c.1760, may be associated with the improvements carried out for Sir John Hussey Delavel by Lincoln builders, the Lumby brothers. These papers suggest that the high art form of the print room is being challenged here, not just through the commercial technique of distemper printing with wood blocks, but in the choice of sources. One yellow ground paper depicting not just prints, but also more commercial wall decorations, including stucco work, ceramics and enamelling, also survives at the house in a blue ground version, and was hung on the first floor corridor and probably in a closet in the north turret too (3.37, left). This point is reinforced by the evidence of the sources for the subject matter of another blue ground paper (3.37, right), since the scene of lovers on a bench relates to a print (*L'Amour*) by or after C.N.Cochin the younger (1715-90) of c.1745 which was published by Vivares and also used on Bow and Worcester

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<sup>136</sup> Chloe Archer, 'Festoons of flowers...for fitting up print rooms', *Apollo*, 130 (December 1989), 386-391 (p.391).

ceramics.<sup>137</sup> Cornforth believed that the papers at Doddington were related to the papier mâché frames and trophies purchased for the house, perhaps from Peter Babel in 1766.<sup>138</sup> The ornaments printed on the Doddington papers were therefore intended not only to imitate stucco, but also papier mâché ornaments reproducing the effect of stucco. Cornforth also thought it likely that the papier mâché ornaments were hung over the Drawing Room flock, so the model used for these papers is therefore not a print room at all, but a wall decoration composed of paper hangings and papier mâché.<sup>139</sup> Like the ‘mock flocks’ discussed in chapter 1, and the ‘mock India’ papers discussed in chapter 2, what these papers are is imitations of imitations, but here it is not flocks or Chinese papers that are being imitated, but, in a single design, a distemper printed paper and three-dimensional papier mâché ornaments.

These papers also avoided the kind of strict categorisation by genre (and perhaps moral message) seen in surviving examples such as the Uppark Print Room, which deliberately set out to imitate high art. However, another Doddington paper, which may date from the end of the eighteenth century, provides evidence that such papers also sought to satisfy demands for the gothic, since it used the device of shaded gothic tracery to divide and link two alternating scenes, which show visitors gesturing to gothic ruins set in a rural landscape (3.38). Gill Saunders points out that this design may have been intended for cutting into individual scenes to be collaged onto the wall ‘in print-room style’<sup>140</sup>, echoing the opportunities for customizing designs discussed above in relation to the Ancient High House.

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<sup>137</sup> Michael Snodin, *Rococo: Art and design in Hogarth's England* (London: Trefoil Books, 1984), cats. 018, 019, p.250; Wells-Cole, *HPH*, cats. 43, 44, p.35. The issue of three-dimensional objects as sources for papers is explored further in chapter 4.

<sup>138</sup> John Cornforth, ‘Putting up with Georgian DIY’, *CL*, 9 April 1992, pp.54-56.

<sup>139</sup> The paper remained on the wall until the 1950s and a copy hangs in the drawing room today, [http://www.doddingtonhall.com/Audio Tour](http://www.doddingtonhall.com/Audio%20Tour) [accessed 2 April 2009].

<sup>140</sup> Saunders, p.85.

Just as 'mock India' papers such as the Berkeley House scheme discussed in chapter 2 enabled exotic luxury to reach the walls of a Gloucestershire tradesman's town house, so the surviving unused fragments from the Old Manor, Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, from the late 1760s suggest taste for imitation of classical ruins and sculpted allegories could be manifested on the walls and ceilings of Gloucestershire gentry's houses. The ceiling paper is printed to imitate stucco in the form of not only classical architectural ornament (the egg and dart border) but also figurative sculpture (3.39). It took as its subject the arts: music, poetry, painting and sculpture, with sculpture being represented by a male sculptor carving a female bust, who was intended to appear as if looking down at the room's occupants and which faced a male subject depicted on the canvas of Painting (3.40). This paper on the one hand embodied the special status of the polite in society, by taking as its subject taste for the high arts of painting and sculpture. On the other hand by representing its subject matter mechanically it permitted polite taste to become available to all, not just those who were educated in its distinctions and boundaries.

Two papers evidently intended for use on the wall are also related to the ceiling paper, although, as they are also unused fragments, it is unclear where in the Manor the patterns were hung, and if they were hung together. A single panel printed in chiaroscuro on a dramatic yellow ground (3.22) was seemingly intended to be hung in the same fashion as the papers depicted in the Hussey portrait.<sup>141</sup> The unused fragment of a 'print room paper' from the same site (and probably supplied by the same firm) survives as a half repeat, printed in subtle greys, brown and white, which serves to contrast with the yellow ground (3.41).<sup>142</sup> Here, imitation stucco frames and swags are

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<sup>141</sup> According to the donor, Mrs Simpson Hayward, this was one of five lengths in 1926, see V&A RFs.

<sup>142</sup> Both fragments have the same tax stamp. Sugden and Edmundson attributed them to Bromwich or Crompton and Spinnage, see SE, caption to frontispiece. It was this paper ('the medallion paper') that

combined with trophies of musical instruments, reinforcing the musical elements in the ceiling paper. A ceiling paper imitating sculpted allegories, and a wallpaper imitating stucco or papier mâché, are therefore appropriating elements from both high art and commercial products. In the 1920s Mrs Simpson Hayward, the then owner of the papers, recalled that 'some of the spaces in the design...(were) occupied by old portraits of her ancestors in papier mâché frames', suggesting that three and two dimensional imitations were integrated in at least one actual scheme, in the manner Cornforth suggested at Doddington.<sup>143</sup>

### 3.6 Conclusion

What these papers do show is that the dominance of high art forms and the classical model of decoration associated with the culture of politeness was being undermined. Hierarchies of materials were subverted in a number of different ways by papers imitating architectural, sculpted and painted ornament. Paper hangings and papier mâché did not just copy materials that were already successful on the wall and ceiling, such as stucco, paint and carved ornament; they also disrupted hierarchies, especially through their use of certain architectural elements, from the arch to built structures, as 'objects' to create repeating patterns. Nor was it simply a case of imitating the effects of three dimensional finishes such as stucco; rather it seems that these commercial products were challenging the place of other materials on the wall and the role of other groups - painters, stuccoists and print sellers - in supplying these decorations.

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Mrs Simpson Hayward asked advice about dividing in 1926, 'the pattern being 1 yd 7 in long'. However, in the end she donated it with the 'ceiling' and 'classical' papers, V&A RFs.

<sup>143</sup> SE, caption to pl. 39a.

Papers' use of mechanical printing methods also offered particular challenges to the decoration of the stair, a site where the high arts of architecture, painting and sculpture had always been dominant. These works of art were replaced with a far more ephemeral material which threatened to usurp the very imagery and finishes which they reproduced mechanically, and indeed undermine the culture of politeness which sought to distance itself from commercial life.

For consumers, however, there is evidence that these designs offered particular opportunities to customise interiors, both newly created ones and indeed interiors that were no longer seen as fashionable and up to date. Unlike the papers discussed in chapter 2, it is less the appeal of 'barbarous gaudy gout' than the ability to evoke the effects of different styles that seems to have underpinned their appeal.



## Chapter 4 *'New and Fashionable Paper Hangings'*: Prints and panelled schemes c.1770-c.1800

### 4.1 Introduction

### 4.2 In search of the 'new and fashionable'

### 4.3 The English maker: a partial eclipse?

### 4.4 Design and workshop practice at the end of the century

### 4.5 Arabesques and borders

### 4.6 Conclusion

#### 4.1 Introduction

I am going to do up a small room above stairs for my sanctum sanctorum, in which I intend to have everything to myself, and retire in it to paint, read, or write, let alone who will be in the house. In the first place I had it painted, part of which I was obliged to do myself, and I have got a very pretty white spotted paper with a glazed ground for four pence a yard (so it won't ruin me) and a festoon of roses in orange colour and green to go round the top, with a border of some of Adam's patterns to go down the seams. <sup>1</sup>

At first glance this extract, from a letter written by Caroline, Countess of Portarlington (1757-1851) to Lady Louisa Stuart in December, 1781, has much in common with Lady Hertford's letter with which I opened chapter 1. Firstly, the extract raises the issue of the relationship between room function and the choice of papers. Like

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Clark, I, p.185.

Hertford, the author is writing to her sister about her plans for decorating a private space, here at Dawson's Court, as an escape from sociability and physical discomfort elsewhere in the house. In her description, Portarlington is equally keen both to avoid accusations of excess on grounds of price, claiming that the paper 'won't ruin me', and to reinforce the connotations of decorum in her choice of pattern which, like Hertford, she characterises as 'very pretty'. For these female consumers then, propriety and appropriateness to the function of the space seem to be the key factors governing their choice. It is also clear that, like Hertford, Portarlington has confidence in what are evidently her own decorating decisions.

However, the extract also raises a number of issues concerning the fashionable and the new particular to the period after c.1770 with which this final chapter will be concerned. Firstly, Portarlington's description evokes two fashionable but apparently opposing styles. On the one hand she hung a patterned paper, onto which vertical borders in the arabesque style ('Adam's patterns') were pasted, topped with a cornice height frieze, to create a vertical panelled effect which evoked the architectural order associated with Neoclassicism, albeit the more decorative manifestation of this style associated with the architect Robert Adam (1728-92). On the other hand, Portarlington's description of the paper's surface finish and her choice of a floral frieze in bold colours highlights the appeal of more naturalistic motifs ('a festoon of roses') associated with the picturesque.

A second issue raised here concerning the nature of the fashionable and the new is how these styles are manifested through product innovation. Portarlington's scheme combined an all over 'spotted' or pin ground paper (2.31) with two new categories of printed products, stiles (vertical borders) and a horizontal (perhaps cut-out) frieze. This

demonstrates that a wider range of printed components was now available than the more usual patterned paper with a narrow border to conceal the trimmed edges. These new products were seemingly desirable for both their functional and aesthetic effects: stiles concealed the joins in the paper, as well as dividing up the wall into vertical panels, an effect reinforced by the 'festoon' frieze which finished the scheme at cornice height, again concealing edges as well as unifying the room visually. Other female aristocratic consumers also thought such a scheme desirable; amongst the papers supplied by Chippendale to Lady Heathcote for the Front Drawing Room of a house in Brook Street in 1800 are listed '12 pieces of blue Satin wreath and pillar paper' at 12 shillings a piece and two and a half pieces of 'Yellow paper for stiles' at 8 shillings per piece.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Portarlington's account implies that newness is associated with innovations not only in style and product types, but in printing techniques and palette. It was not just the ability to print with distemper colour or imitate grisaille effects that was highlighted, but rather, by the early 1780s, innovations in reflective finishes in paper ('a glazed ground') in contrast to the matt printed stiles and frieze. Palette was also important, notably the use of an unusual shade, orange, to contrast with green in the frieze, an effect also seen in an elaborate floral stripe paper of 1791 (4.1). Like Lady Heathcote's choice of yellow on blue with a satin finish, this suggests a desire for bold colours and reflective finishes.

Thirdly, Portarlington's account reveals a shift in the relationship between supplier and consumer. Whereas Hertford focused on the process of choice, Portarlington has little to say on how she chose and purchased ('I have got') these papers. In what I argue in

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Wells-Cole, *HPH*, p.46.

this chapter was an increasingly diversified market, the supplier could have been a manufacturer or a retailer, in the form of a specialist in paper hangings or other trades. Furthermore, unlike Hertford, Portarlinton has not just made the decorating decisions here, but has been actively involved in the scheme's execution, carrying out some painting, albeit seemingly from necessity ('part of which I was obliged to do myself'), and perhaps also cutting out the 'festoon of roses'. This may not be as unusual as it might be thought, since a similar process is shown in a watercolour dated 1816 where three young female consumers are staining paper and fixing up a border (4.2).

Finally, Portarlinton's scheme involves a complex layering of different products, styles and finishes, in order to create an individualised interior. As already noted, like Hertford's closet this room was intended as a private space away from the more public areas of the house, but the account also highlights a new concern with interiority.

Portarlinton characterises the room as a 'sanctum sanctorum', an inner sanctuary to which she can 'retire' in order to carry out solitary pursuits including painting, writing and, crucially, reading. Related to this development is a new awareness of the messages interiors might convey about the owner's taste. There is a clear shift here from mid century descriptions noting cost and source to those highlighting personality, such as Portarlinton's. As Saumarez Smith points out at the end of his survey of design in the eighteenth century, by this date most levels of society were conscious of the interior as 'a theatre for the display of personality, as well as for the accumulation of possessions'.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike the papers discussed in chapters 2 and 3, the papers considered in this chapter are not united by a single style. If they have any overall unity it is a greater emphasis

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<sup>3</sup> Saumarez Smith, p.207.

on products' fashionability and on their appropriateness to a modern way of living.

The next section therefore examines some of the key trends in design which impact on the paper hangings trade in the final decades of the century.

In the third section I challenge claims for the decline of the industry, arguing that during the two decades from 1774 to 1794 there is evidence of growth as well as new partnerships and specialisations. I also examine the issue of competition from foreign makers, arguing it is manifested less in an increase in imports than in innovations in other aspects of business, using the example of the firm of Eckhardts. Finally, I consider the issue of competition from other trades, notably house painters and paper hangers, examining manufacturers' use of branding and retail display to reinforce their role as suppliers of the fashionable and the new.

The fourth section of the chapter examines the designs and colour-ways produced, considering how far they evidence this desire for the fashionable and the new. I argue that, whilst designs at this period draw on familiar sources such as textiles, they also reflect the wider commercial popularity of patterns and colours in other trades, such as ceramics. This section also considers the relationship between British and French manufacturers and argues that, although few actual French papers survive in England, taste for French papers was accommodated within the English industry through developments in design.

Building on the evidence of the taste for French models, the final section considers the evidence, by the end of the century, for the use of arabesques panels, all over patterns and borders in the principal spaces of sociability, in particular the drawing room.

## 4.2 In search of the 'new and fashionable'

The central contention of this chapter is that the later eighteenth century was characterised by the desire to foreground the fashionable and the new. As Vickery has noted, the term 'fashionable' could be applied both to a loose conformity to prevailing modes and the more exact possession of the latest model of the season.<sup>4</sup> By the 1770s, paper was no longer in demand simply because it was a new invention, offering a cheaper copy of more expensive wall finishes; rather it needed to rework contemporary trends in design both to maintain its place and to stimulate growth. In this section, I identify the key elements of different styles which were adapted commercially in paper hangings. I examine emerging styles such as Neoclassicism, particularly as manifested in the interiors of Robert Adam (1728-92), as well as the taste for French designs and the picturesque. The section also considers some new ways of living that had an impact on the trade.

Although Neoclassicism has been studied in relation to other designed objects, notably ceramics, its role in relation to the English paper hangings trade has been largely overlooked. Despite its associations with severity, the style was not exclusively antique in either form or content; nor was it just confined to architecture, but also manifested in highly decorative interiors which engaged with new ideas of comfort, variety and flexibility. The paradox here, as Hilary Young has pointed out in his study of Wedgwood, is that the increasingly industrialised society of the 1770s and 1780s should have sought to express its ideals of progress in the imagery of classical art. Echoing Adrian Forty's thesis, outlined in chapter 1, Young points out that the appeal

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<sup>4</sup> Vickery, 'Neat and Not Too Showy', p.214.

of classical prototypes in this period 'lay in their fusion of modernity with Classicism', which allowed the middle and upper class to 'feel at ease' with the march of progress.<sup>5</sup>

What aspects of Neoclassicism are then significant to the paper hangings trade, and do they allow papers to fuse classicism and modernity in a similar way? Antiquity offered a distinct model for wall decoration: the grotesque. The grotesque was derived from engravings of decorations of the Domus Aurea, Nero's enormous underground palace in Rome, and other dwellings excavated around Rome at the end of the fifteenth century. These were in turn transformed into Renaissance 'grotesque' decorations, the best known of these being Raphael's pilaster decorations in the Vatican Loggie, which inspired eighteenth century prints (4.3, left). Although the grotesque is based on classical motifs and ordered in a symmetrical framework, it also recalls the Northern strapwork tradition of Cornelius Bos (1506-56), and is meaningless and disorderly (4.3, right).

However, from the mid eighteenth century, there is a shift in attitudes to the grotesque. Vicky Coltman claims that this shift was due largely to the excavation from 1748 onwards, and the subsequent removal, of painted grotesques from the villas at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Coltman discusses the way that wall decorations excavated at these sites were sawn apart to produce multiple paintings on plaster, which were framed as 'individual master-pieces', rather than shown as part of an interior scheme. She also points out that the status of these panels as classical artefacts was nevertheless problematic, since there were simply too many for them all to be categorised as 'master-pieces'.<sup>6</sup> Using terms reminiscent of the criticisms of chinoiserie schemes

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Hilary Young 'From the Potteries to St Petersburg: Wedgwood and the making and Selling of Ceramics', in *The Genius of Wedgwood*, ed. by Hilary Young (London: V&A Museum, 1995), pp.9-20 (p.13).

<sup>6</sup> Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique*, p.98.

discussed in chapter 2, contemporaries characterised these schemes with reference to what Coltman labels the ‘aesthetic excesses of the foreign cultures of India, Arabia, and in particular, China’. Thus, Mr Freeman in 1751 compared Roman painted grotesques to ‘such Chinese borders and ornaments, as we see painted upon screens’.<sup>7</sup> The vocabulary with which a more distant exotic had been categorised was thus reworked for artefacts which might have been expected to embody the simplicity and order of classicism.

The problematic status as high art of ‘fragments’, objects which form part of what Katie McAfee has called ‘unclassical’ territory did, however, contribute to the form’s ability to be readily assimilated into this commercial vocabulary.<sup>8</sup> The preface to Samuel Foote’s *Taste* of 1752, written by David Garrick, sums up this uneasy relationship between the desire for antiquity and its effects on the demand for ‘antique’ goods. The forger declares:

Be not deceiv’d, I here declare an Oath,  
I never yet sold Goods of foreign Growth;  
Ne’er sent Commissions out to Greece or Rome;  
My best Antiquities are made at Home.  
I’ve Romans, Greeks, Italians near at hand,  
True Britons all- and living in the Strand.  
I ne’er for Trinkets rack my Pericranium,  
They furnish out my Room from Herculaneum.  
But hush-

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.103.

<sup>8</sup> Katie McAfee, ‘Collecting the “unclassical”’, unpublished paper delivered to *Classical Collections and British Country Houses and Gardens*, The Open University, 12 December 2008.



Should it be know that English are employ'd,  
Our Manufacture is at once destroy'd;  
No matter what our Countrymen deserve,  
They'll thrive as Antients, but as Moderns starve-<sup>9</sup>

According to Foote, the trade in antiquity is therefore founded on deception, the irony being that, far from being furnished with antique goods from Herculaneum, dealers supply goods that are modern and made in London. This ambiguity is one that paper hangings were well placed to exploit, since antique models in wall decoration, at once classical and modern, were taken up by commercial manufacturers, especially, as discussed below, in France. Both grotesque ornament and sections of excavated painted wall were already two dimensional, vertical and rectangular in form, designed for use on the wall and thus readily applicable to printing by commercial trades such as paper hangings manufacturers. This, I suggest, rendered the panels more easily adaptable to commercial production. Designs were also accessible, in the form of large scale coloured prints such as the etchings of Giovanni Ottaviani (1735-1808) and Angelo Campanella (1746-1811). based on archaeological excavations these also created new, supposed archaeologically correct, models (4.3, left).

This kind of fusion between classical sources and modern forms of decoration was also seen in the interiors of contemporary architects, notably Robert Adam. Although paper hangings were hung in his interiors, there is no evidence that Adam, like Chippendale, himself designed paper. However, three aspects of his work were, I argue, especially significant to the trade. Firstly, there was Adam's reinvention of the grotesque, in the

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted by Peter Stewart in '“There is no Truth to be Expected from Catalogues”: Cataloguing the Ancient Sculptures of Wilton House', unpublished paper delivered to *Classical Collections and British Country Houses and Gardens*.

form of panelled decorations divided by pilasters both of which are patterned with arabesque ornament. This arabesque was composed of decorative motifs, often contained within lunettes, medallions or plaques, and vases or anthemions arranged on a vertical axis, surrounded by symmetrical patterns of scrollwork and bouquets of flowers and branches issuing from other elements.<sup>10</sup> It reflected, on the one hand, the fanciful nature and symmetrical arrangement of the grotesque and, on the other, contemporary taste for lighter colours and naturalistic motifs.

Related to the arabesque is Adam's much debated 'invention' of the Etruscan style.<sup>11</sup> This consisted of a much smaller number of ornaments than the arabesque, arranged in a more open composition as medallions suspended from arabesque niches, painted in a characteristic palette of terracotta and black on a sky-blue ground, seen for example in the painted scheme for the Etruscan dressing room at Osterley, devised by Adam c.1776. Eileen Harris argues that the scheme was distinguished by colour not ornament, noting that the ceiling was derived both from Etruscan vases in Sir William Hamilton's (1730-1803) collection published in four volumes starting in 1767 and also from 'antique' plaques in black basalts with Etruscan red-burnt ground manufactured by Wedgwood from the same date.<sup>12</sup> What made these Wedgwood products relevant to paper hangings was the way that the firm's catalogue highlighted the plaques' flexibility, suggesting they could be used for inlays, tablets, pictures and also for ornamenting 'the Walls of apartments', which arguably implies that it was the

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<sup>10</sup> *Vasemania: Neoclassical form and ornament in Europe*, ed. by Heather J. McCormick, Hans Ottomeyer and Stefanie Walker (New Haven and London: Published for the Bard Graduate Center in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture, New York and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, by Yale University Press, 2004), p.148.

<sup>11</sup> Eileen Harris investigates Adam's claims in relation to Derby House, acknowledging that he is not the only pioneer in this area, see *The Genius of Robert Adam*, p.290-93; whilst Kerry Bristol defends the role of James Stuart as the originator of the style, see 'The Painted Rooms of "Athenian" Stuart', *The Georgian Group Journal*, 10 (2000), 167-79.

<sup>12</sup> Harris, *The Genius of Robert Adam*, p.179.

manufacturer, rather than the architect, who initiated this application.<sup>13</sup> The Etruscan style was then a fusion of modernity with classicism from the start.

A second aspect of Adam's work relevant to paper hangings was his use of a lighter palette, in particular coloured or 'tinted' grounds. However, Ian Bristow contends that Adam was neither the first who employed antique ornament, nor the first who used 'tinted' (light coloured) grounds, arguing that it is only from 1765 onwards that Adam turned to tinted *walls* picked out in gilt. Bristow attributes the former to the tradition of history painting on ceilings in the 1740s, developed by James Stuart (1713-88) and Sir William Chambers (1726-96) in the late 1750s and 1760s, and the latter to Lady Luxbrough's use of a pale yellow ground for papier mâché ornaments at Barrells, discussed in chapter 2. So although the fashion for coloured grounds in papers may well be related to architects' use of tinted walls, it was also a practice with which this trade was already familiar, suggesting it also may have commercial origins.

However, according to Eileen Harris, Adam's decoration was not just concerned with surface but used 'to articulate, focus and define a room'.<sup>14</sup> Each room in a sequence could thus be distinguished by its colour and surface decoration, a trend that was perhaps seen most clearly in Adam's emphasis on the decoration of the drawing room. This third aspect is significant for the schemes discussed in this chapter, since the evidence suggests that, by the end of the century, papers were moving out of the closet or dressing room and inwards from the stair to be accepted not just in the lesser family apartments, but in the principal space of sociability, the drawing room. This emphasis on the drawing room raises a number of issues concerning the way in which decorative choices needed to accommodate the needs of differing users and functions. On the one

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.291.

<sup>14</sup> Harris, *The Genius of Robert Adam*, p.8.

hand, there is the issue of the room's association with women. Colin Cunningham, whose observations on the gendering of the dressing room were debated in earlier chapters, also considers the role of the drawing room in Adam's work. Cunningham believes there is no 'separate' accommodation of the interests of women in Adam's designs for drawing rooms, rather a recognition of differences in behaviour, citing Adam's description of the Duke of Northumberland's drawing room at Syon House, Middlesex, as 'finished in a style to afford great variety and amusement; and is, for this reason, an admirable room for the reception of company before dinner, or for the ladies to retire to after it'.<sup>15</sup> This then was a multi-functional room which, as Susie West has suggested in relation to the library, was being actively used by different generations and by both genders, not just for female practice associated with sociability.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand there is the idea that the drawing room's decoration should eclipse that of others, since as Eileen Harris notes, also in relation to Syon, it was ranked highest in a 'properly ordered' apartment, and was expected to be the 'most spectacular' room of all, exceeding the show of the vestibule.<sup>17</sup>

It was not only classicism and modernity that impacted on Adam's work. In a style that was arguably more 'charmingly decorative' than 'intellectually exacting' Adam's interiors encompassed the use of colour and decorative effects, using a range of media (such as stucco, coloured tints, gilding) to achieve the effect of 'movement'. As Julius Bryant has highlighted, 'movement' is a love of contrasts in light, shade and shape, which seeks to apply the aesthetic concepts of the picturesque from painting and landscape gardening to architecture.<sup>18</sup> Although the picturesque taste, like taste itself, is a slippery term which could include scenery deemed wild and 'Sublime', its

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<sup>15</sup> Cunningham, 'An Italian house is my lady', p.70.

<sup>16</sup> Susie West, 'Time and memory in eighteenth century private libraries, then and now', unpublished paper delivered to *Classical Collections and British Country Houses*.

<sup>17</sup> Harris, *The Genius of Robert Adam*, p.76.

<sup>18</sup> Julius Bryant, *Robert Adam 1728-9: Architect of Genius* (London: English Heritage, 1992), p.26.

emphasis on the appreciation of the English landscape, and its associations with informality, are trends to which naturalistic patterns are closely related, as I argue below. Just as the Chinese papers discussed in chapter 2 reflected European taste for the Chinese style garden, so too the desire for 'variety' and the 'juxtaposition of different styles' and, especially, 'letting plants grow naturally' are all aspects of the picturesque. These features, as I will show, are reflected to different degrees in the design of papers.<sup>19</sup> There is a further issue here, and that is the relationship to the surrounding landscape, since some of the schemes discussed in this chapter are in rooms that depend for their visual effects on the relationship to the surrounding landscape, including one in an Adam designed house, Moccas Court (4.24).

There was then a tension between the taste for lighter colours and naturalistic ornament associated with the picturesque, and the need to contain this within the framework of Neoclassicism, a tension reflected in some of the designs discussed in this chapter. A further aspect of this was what Saumarez Smith has called 'the appetite for all things French', an appetite embodied in the decoration of Carlton House on Pall Mall from 1783 onwards, for the Prince of Wales, later George IV (1762-1830), led by a team of French decorators under the architect and designer Henry Holland (1745-1806). Horace Walpole visited in 1785 and reported that:

You cannot call it magnificent; it is the taste and propriety that strike. Every ornament is at a proper distance, and not too large, but all delicate and new, with more freedom and variety than Greek ornaments; and, though probably

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<sup>19</sup> Michael Symes, 'Gardens Picturesque and Sublime', in *The Picturesque in late Georgian England: Papers given at the Georgian Group Symposium, 22 October 1994*, ed. by Dana Arnold, (London: The Georgian Group, 1995), pp. 21-27 (p.21).

borrowed from the Hotel de Condé, and other new Palaces, not one is not rather classic than French.<sup>20</sup>

This style is then seen as 'borrowed' from the hotels of Paris. Walpole highlighted its 'delicate and new' effects, perhaps a reference to the extensive use of white and gold on the plaster and woodwork. Whereas some interiors at Carlton House were characterised by the severity of classicism, others manifested 'freedom and variety' in the ornaments, for example in the mouldings in the ballroom that, he had earlier observed, appear 'to be entwined with foliage and flowers after nature'.<sup>21</sup> Yet Walpole maintained that it was still decorated with 'taste and propriety', implying that such a style was suitable to a Prince's palace, echoing Hertford's and Portarlington's concerns with a scheme's suitability to social rank and gender.

What was also significant is that at Carlton House different devices, including colour, motif or theme, were used to give each room an individual identity. The use of varied colours in different rooms was noted as early as 1756 by the painter and diarist Joseph Farington (1747-1821) who attended the opening reception at Norfolk House and observed that 'every room was furnish'd with a different colour, which used to be reckon'd absurd'.<sup>22</sup> However, by the 1770s, it had become highly significant for paper hangings, which were well placed to apply commercially this desire for variety in pattern, colour and texture, a desire reflected in Portarlington's scheme.

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<sup>20</sup> Saumarez Smith, pp.199-200.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.200.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Ian Bristow, 'The Use of Colour by Adam and his Contemporaries', in *The Later Eighteenth Century Great House: Proceedings of a conference held at Oxford University Department of Continuing Education (OUDCE), 10-12 January 1997*, ed. by Malcolm Airs (Oxford: OUDCE, 1997), pp.146-155 (p.153).

At the same time as the desire for varied treatments opened up opportunities for paper hangings, it also focused attention on the material's problematic relationship with the high arts, an issue also discussed earlier, in chapter 3. Focusing on France, David Irwin has argued that the very success of manufacturers and retailers of paper hangings in offering designs inspired by Neoclassicism presented a threat to the high arts, since wallpaper's increasing popularity, 'it was felt, supplanted the architect's role as interior designer and that of the painter as a muralist'.<sup>23</sup> This view in part reflected the employment of artists as designers for leading French firms, an issue discussed below; however it also highlights a wider point, the way in which the maturing industry in Britain was challenging existing designers for the control of wall decoration. Although architects such as the Wyatts and Adam ran large commercial practices offering complete schemes of interior decoration, suggesting a desire for greater control of the decoration of the interior on the part of the architect; however, others such as Soane ran practices on more traditional lines. Furthermore, as discussed below in connection with Moccas, collaboration between consumer and retailer could sideline the role of other trades in producing bespoke designs for the wall. Availability of less exclusive designs also challenged the role of the architect, since cheap, repeating designs using new reproductive technologies offered, as argued in chapter 1, an easy means to fit out interiors.

The problematic relationship between architects and paper hangings' tradesmen can also be illuminated by examining the relationship with the high arts in English trades which have been more extensively studied, such as ceramics manufacture.<sup>24</sup> Here Ann Bermingham's essay on Wright's *The Corinthian Maid* and its significance to

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<sup>23</sup> David Irwin, *Neoclassicism* (London: Phaidon, 1997), p.244.

<sup>24</sup> The relationship with cabinetmakers is also touched on in section 4 of this chapter in the discussion of Thomas Chippendale's design for the gallery paper at Harewood.

Wedgwood offers some useful points on the relationship between 'the fine arts and other forms of artistic practice'. Bermingham explores the issue of the distinction between craft and decoration, 'utility' and 'ornament', in relation to another kind of decorative component, jasper plaques. In order to be considered 'ornamental', she argues, Wedgwood's plaques needed to 'take on some of the characteristics of art', yet these were rejected by architects who were reluctant to introduce into Neoclassical buildings sculptural decoration that did not look like natural stone, and also fearful of the effects on their own status as 'artists' of supporting a manufacturer in 'a vulgarisation and even feminization of the Neoclassical taste'.<sup>25</sup> Similar fears, I suggest, are likely to have attended the use of papers which could reproduce the effects of carved stone and painted effects, but could also 'vulgarise' these by altering scale and colour or by introducing naturalistic motifs. Is there any evidence for such fears?

One architect who paid close attention to developments in the trade was Henry Holland.<sup>26</sup> In 1796 the architect and designer Charles Heathcote Tatham (1772-1842) wrote from Italy to Holland, his employer, on whose behalf he was collecting and drawing fragments of antique decoration and ornament.<sup>27</sup> Tatham describing a 'cabinet' in Naples decorated by Wilhelm Tischbein (1751-1829), the editor of Hamilton's *Collection of Engravings from Ancient Vases*, devoted to Hamilton's second vase collection. Tatham describes to Holland what he calls 'this new and tasty method of fitting up rooms':

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<sup>25</sup> Ann Bermingham, 'The Origin of Painting and the Ends of Art: Wright of Derby's *Corinthian Maid*' in *Painting and the Politics of Culture*, ed. by Barrell, pp.135-65 (pp. 147-48).

<sup>26</sup> Holland's involvement in schemes using papers may also have included Kempshott Park and Mount Clare, discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Riddell, 'C.H. Tatham', *Grove Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com> [accessed 15 June 2009]



Referring again to internal decorations, I had almost forgot a modern invention set on foot by a Man at Naples of the name of Tischbein, who has published certain prints, bordures, hangings and such like, in the etruscan style, precisely copied from Sir Will.m Hamilton's Vases and adapted to small Rooms and Cabinets, he has himself fitted up a room as a specimen with which I was so much pleased, that I procured specimens of the ornaments with their prices, you can scarce imagine how successful and new such ornaments appear - they are used in the way or our modern paper hangings, & are suited as well to the walls of a room as to the whole furniture throughout [...] the bordures are for panelling etc, (as I have sent you a scrap) and the figures are destined for the centre of the pannells in a wide field of dark colour.<sup>28</sup>

In Tatham's account Tischbein is portrayed as exploiting the commercial appeal of the very prints he has published. Moreover, as Coltman notes, he had effectively set up a showroom (in fact a cabinet constructed for the Imperial Ambassador) to model his scheme. This appears to have been a panelled scheme, since it includes 'bordures' intended 'for panelling'. Tatham also says that 'the ornaments' are 'used in the way of our modern paper hangings', implying this practice is neither a new or a continental style.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Vicky Coltman, 'Sir William Hamilton's Vase Publications (1766-1776): A Case Study in the Reproduction and Dissemination of Antiquity', *JDH*, 14:1 (2002), 1-16 (p.6).

<sup>29</sup> Indeed Tatham's description echoes the rhetoric of the print seller Robert Sayer, discussed in chapter 3.

### 4.3 The English maker: a partial eclipse?

The story of the English paper hangings industry in the last quarter of the century has been narrated in the past as one of an industry under threat. Entwisle argued that the original paperhanging makers' influence was waning, and attributed this to two factors: firstly the government's decision in 1773 to allow the import of foreign papers, and secondly the growth in the role of the paper hanger and housepainter, resulting in 'the partial eclipse of the English maker'.<sup>30</sup> In this section I examine these claims, arguing that connections with an earlier generation of makers were valued. New firms continued the production and marketing techniques used by earlier makers as well as developing new methods of presenting and branding their goods. I argue that it was less the import of foreign papers than continental influences manifested in other ways that were significant. Whilst acknowledging the increasing role of trades such as house and ornamental painters in supplying and installing paper hangings, I also present evidence that paper hanging makers, stationers and upholders succeeded in maintaining their involvement in the trade.

What evidence is there for what Entwisle called the waning influence 'of the original paperhanging makers'? Although new firms do emerge, directory entries suggest firms such as Wheeley's and Crompton's were in business from the 1760s through to the 1790s (Appendix 3), and that evolving partnerships as well as increased specialisation within the trade are far more significant developments. This expansion as well as the survival of successors to earlier makers, do counteract Entwisle's claims to a decline.

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<sup>30</sup> E.A. Entwisle, *The Book of Wallpaper* (Bath: Kingsmead Reprints, 1970), p.77.

This argument is reinforced by the rhetoric on trade cards and billheads, which suggests that those coming in to the business were in reality anxious to emphasise their links to earlier, successful makers. Joseph Knight also took care to point out on his billhead that he was the 'Successor to the late Mr. Masefield' at 427, The Strand.<sup>31</sup> Why were such links deemed so important? One reason, as noted in chapter 1, was the value placed on a successful firm's design archive. A second reason must have been access to the firm's client list, and on the value accorded to repeat business. Although this is an issue which requires further investigation, it does seem from Vickery's research on the Trollope Letter Book that clients returned to the same firm, often years later.<sup>32</sup> This tendency is also evident at the top end of the market. For example John Griffin (1719-97), Baron Braybrooke of Braybrooke, purchased goods over a thirteen-year period from both 'Mr Brumidge' and Bromwich's successors, Isherwood and Bradley, for Audley End in Essex.<sup>33</sup>

As noted above, Entwisle claims one reason for 'a partial eclipse of the English maker' was the growth in paper imports, and changes were certainly made in the regulation of imported papers from 1773 through to the 1790s. These regulations have been seen as evidence that competition from imported paper (both from China and from France) threatened the industry. Although the 1712 Act had introduced a duty by weight (8 shillings per ream) on imported 'painted paper', such products were, however, excluded from the 1d per square yard (raised to 1 1/2 d in 1714) tax levied on home produced stained paper. It was not until 1773 that the same levy was extended to imports, to be raised again in 1787.<sup>34</sup> Dagnall maintains these moves were a response

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<sup>31</sup> BM, HC 91.38, bill to Mr. Mitchie dated 4 January 1788. Possibly the Joseph Knight apprenticed to Thomas Dobyns in 1752, recorded as an upholder in 1759, see *DEFM*, p.519.

<sup>32</sup> Vickery, "Neat and Not Too Showy", pp.201-22.

<sup>33</sup> J.D. Williams, *Audley End: The Restoration of 1762-1797* (Chelmsford: Essex County Council, Record Office, 1966), pp.35-36 & p.55. See BM, BC 91.16; BM, HC 91.34, 1788.

<sup>34</sup> Dagnall, *The Tax on Wallpaper*, pp.7-8.

to worries about foreign competition, particularly from France, and I want to test this claim by examining how far these worries reflected reality.

English manufacturing was certainly fearful of the effects of French superiority in the design of luxury goods. As Mimi Hellman has argued in relation to eighteenth-century French furniture, this superiority is closely linked to the mythology that credited the French both with a superior sense of 'tasteful embellishment, and graceful living', and identified the nation as 'unrivalled practitioners of the art of politeness'.<sup>35</sup> Protectionist measures put in place against this perceived threat included the Anti-Gallican Association, founded in 1745 to encourage English trade & 'to oppose the insidious arts of the French Nation', its aim being 'to promote British manufacturers to extend the commerce of England and discourage the introduction of French models and oppose the importation of French commodities'.<sup>36</sup> The attitude was fuelled by anti-French sentiment reinforced by a series of wars throughout the eighteenth century, including the War of Austrian Succession (1743-48) and the Seven Years' War (1756-63) culminating in the Napoleonic Wars that followed the French Revolution (1793-1802).

However, for much of the eighteenth century it was English papers that were sought after on the continent, not the other way around. 'English papers' are singled out in lists of *tapisserie* retailed in Paris and elsewhere from c.1750-80.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Jean-Baptiste Réveillon (1725-1811), who was to become a leading manufacturer, began his

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<sup>35</sup> Mimi Hellmann, 'Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century France', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 32.4 (1999), 415-445 (p.423).

<sup>36</sup> Clive D. Edwards, *Eighteenth-century Furniture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p.157.

<sup>37</sup> For example the trade cards of Antoine Girard, Stationer at Four Corners World, Lyons, 1760-80 (3686.1.75.146) and Tardieu, Wallpaper Merchant and Stationer, Rue du Tournon, Paris, c.1770 (3686.18.44), Waddesdon Manor trade card collection, [www.waddesdonmanor.org.uk](http://www.waddesdonmanor.org.uk) [accessed 5 November 2007].

career as an importer and retailer of English goods.<sup>38</sup> In the 1760s, Madame de Genlis reported the spread of Anglophile taste among Frenchwomen, in particular for robes à l'Anglaise and English papers: 'They even relegate to storage their magnificent Gobelin Tapestries to put English blue paper in their place'.<sup>39</sup> The paper she had in mind was almost certainly blue ground flock, but it was not only flocks that were admired and sought after. Stripes of varying combinations of widths appear in satirical prints from the 1780s (4.4), and Anthony Wells-Cole suggests printed stripes were also popular abroad; for example, in the 1770s, the Château of the Bishops of Dax at St-Pandelon was being decorated with printed floral papers arranged in vertical bands, some made by an Irish man who set up business in Bordeaux in 1772, others possibly English papers supplied by him.<sup>40</sup>

Demand for English skills in paper manufacture was reinforced by some English firms who opened businesses in France, for example Arthur et Grenard, later Arthur et Robert (1789-94), whose successors, Robert et Cie, were employing four hundred workers by 1795.<sup>41</sup> French manufacturers also made efforts to reproduce their effects. In so doing, they were, according to Peter Thornton, taking advantage of the hiatus in imports resulting from the Seven Years' War to consolidate their businesses, including introducing 'British know-how' by bringing workmen over from England and making duty payable on imported British papers once the war had ended.<sup>42</sup> This claim is supported by manufacturers' rhetoric, which purported to not only to rival English single colour flocks, but to eclipse them, by producing flocks in more than one colour.

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<sup>38</sup> Joanna Banham, 'Artistry for the bourgeoisie', review of the exhibition 'Arabesques: French Hand Printed Wallpapers' held at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, 1994, *WHR* (1993/4), 39-40 (p.40).

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Entwisle, *LH*, p.32.

<sup>40</sup> Wells-Cole, *FFF*, p.37.

<sup>41</sup> Bernard Jacqué, 'Luxury Perfected: The Ascendancy of French Wallpaper 1770-1870' in Hoskins, pp.56-75 (p59).

<sup>42</sup> Peter Thornton, *Form and Decoration: Innovation in the Decorative Arts, 1470-1870* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998), p.173.

For example, the 1756 trade card for Didier Aubert, a merchant and engraver on the Rue St Jacques in Paris, 'Gives notice that he has discovered the true methods of making velvet paper or English papers in the style of Damask & Utrecht velvet, in one or many colours'.<sup>43</sup> The growth of the French industry rapidly gathered pace, perhaps encouraged by the American War of Independence (1778-83), which restricted British exports, and by 1788 there were forty eight wallpaper manufacturers in Paris, seemingly eclipsing the numbers manufacturing in London. They became especially well known for their arabesque designs, production of which peaked between 1789-92.<sup>44</sup> This popularity was again highlighted by Madame de Genlis who in 1802 reported that taste for luxurious arabesque papers was a 'ruinous luxury', as costly as Gobelins tapestries.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the popularity of French-produced arabesques in France and elsewhere in Europe, the demand for English papers in France does not appear to have been matched by English demand for French papers. I have found no examples of English trade cards from this period which advertise the supply of French papers, unlike imported 'India' papers which *are* frequently highlighted in trade cards. References to supply are also scant: Robson & Hale (traded c.1790-c.1820) supplied '6 pieces Medallian French Paper', to Lady Spencer at Althorp but is unclear if this was a paper in the French style or an import.<sup>46</sup> Limited surviving examples (discussed below) of French arabesque papers in England at this period imply either that import tariffs were successful in reducing imports, or that French imports were simply never very popular. However, in 1925 MacIver Percival claimed in his article 'Wallpapers of the Sheraton

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<sup>43</sup> 3686.1.64.121, 1756, Waddesdon Manor Trade Card Collection.

<sup>44</sup> Jacqué, 'Found in the USA: French wallpapers from a Surrey House', *WHR* (1993-94), 3-4.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Howard Coutts, 'Extravagant and ruinous luxury', *WHR* (1995), p.47.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in SE, p.85.

Period' that French wallpapers were 'constantly' advertised in books and periodicals, so advertisements may form a fruitful future avenue of enquiry.<sup>47</sup>

The effects of foreign competition were manifested in other ways, not always as detrimental to the industry as Entwisle claimed. Some suppliers set up businesses in London of whom James Duppa (traded 1794-c.1804), listed on Lombard Street as a paper hanger and paper hangings warehouse in the 1794 Directory, may be one. Duppa's business was evidently extensive, and included exports, since in the following year he supplied eleven patterns and borders, included 'Sattin Grass' with 'Laurel Border' for the drawing room, to Lady Skipwith for the decoration of Prestwold Plantation, Clarksville, Virginia. Lady Skipwith had asked her London agent for patterns of different 'qualified' papers, with prices, declaring that:

We do not mean to go to the length of India Paper, only plain English and Irish. I am very partial to papers of only one colour, or two at the most - velvet paper I think looks too warm for this country.<sup>48</sup>

Others went into partnership with English makers, for example Eckhardts & Co. According to Lysons' 1811 *Environs of London* Anthony George Eckhardt (1771-98) and his brother Frederick were originally from Holland.<sup>49</sup> They may have been associated with the Mr Eccard who, von Heineken claimed, was making paper-hangings of his 'particular invention' and 'which appear as if worked through with gold and silver', which were 'fabricated with much taste, and are not dear', in The

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<sup>47</sup> MacIver Percival, 'Wallpaper of the Sheraton Period', p.299.

<sup>48</sup> Richard C.Nylander, 'An Ocean Apart: Imports and the Beginning of American Manufacture' in Hoskins, pp.124-25 & fig 169.

<sup>49</sup> Rev. Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London, vol II: Middlesex* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1811), pp.88-89.

Hague in 1768.<sup>50</sup> According to Thomas Faulkner, ‘a manufacture of stained paper, stamped after a peculiar manner, the invention of Messrs. Eckhardt’s’ was established on the site of the Chelsea porcelain works in partnership with a Mr. Woodmason in 1786, later moving to occupy a former school [Old Whitelands House at Black Lands].<sup>51</sup> Woodmason was evidently associated with innovation, although not always positively in contemporary eyes, since in 1788 the Ladies of Llangollen [Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Sarah Ponsonby] refer to a visit to the Barretts at Oswestry ‘who showed us various patterns they had received from London, of Woodmason’s new invented paper. Never more disappointed. Dingy. Wholly deficient in colour, lustre, and effect’.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps it was the absence of these qualities that led Woodmason to seek an association with Eckhardt’s, rather than the other way around, or perhaps Eckhardt’s were simply following the path of other English makers by setting up partnerships.

Eckhardt’s was one of a new type of supplier.<sup>53</sup> By 1793 they were sufficiently well established to be included in the list of subscribers to Thomas Sheraton’s *The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer’s Drawing Book*, but by 1796 two of the three brothers involved in the firm were bankrupt. Analysis of the firm’s output offers insights into how the ‘waning’ influence of earlier makers is paralleled by the growth of firms who both adopt some earlier commercial techniques, and bring in new ones, some continentally inspired.

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<sup>50</sup> Although Johann Beckmann questioned this claim, both firms were known for their papers with metallic finishes, see *A history of inventions and discoveries*, 2 vols, London, 1797, II, p.16 in ECCO [1 November 2007].

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Faulkner *An Historical and Topographical Description of Chelsea and its Environs*, (London: [n.pub], 1810), pp.34-35; Lysons, *The Environs of London*, II, pp.88-89.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Entwisle, *LH*, pp.54-55.

<sup>53</sup> E.A.Entwisle, ‘Eighteenth Century London Paperstainers: the Eckhardt Brothers of Chelsea’, *Connoisseur* (American edition), 142 (March 1959), 74-77. Entwisle discusses the debates around the date of the firm’s origins.



The firm was evidently well aware of the commercial value of self-promotion. The stress placed on their royal patrons reinforced the exclusivity of their costly products. Eckhardts styled themselves as a 'Royal Patent Manufactory', which was also 'under the patronage of Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal'. However, their use of these strategies was neither new nor unique. Ceramics manufacturers such as Wedgwood were adept at using royal connections, so too were other English paper hangings makers. For example Robson and Hale, successors to Sigrist, styled themselves 'Paper Hanging Manufacturers, Decorators, and Painters in Distemper/To his Majesty, Their Royal Highnesses the/Duke of York, Prince Saxe-Cobourg' (4.5).<sup>54</sup>

What is different about Eckhardts was not the use of patents to stress the novelty of their products, but the kinds of innovations they offered. Firstly, they offered innovations in finish, particularly metallic effects.<sup>55</sup> The firm's 'Patent Silver Damask varnished Linen, and Paper' presumably related to a patent received by Francis Eckhardt in 1793 to print linen and cotton in imitation of 'damask, lace and other silk stuffs, for hangings and other furniture for rooms'.<sup>56</sup> The firm claimed that the materials' production demanded 'great Labour, Perseverance, and Expençe', and it was evidently a lengthy process since the hanging was first brushed with size, before printing with gold size, onto which 'real fine silver leaves' were laid before varnishing.<sup>57</sup> As well as stressing these luxurious finishes, Eckhardts emphasised this material's durability, pointing out that it was varnished to prevent damp, and resistant to the problems of smoke discolouration, since they could 'stand without the least

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<sup>54</sup> BM, HC 91.46.

<sup>55</sup> As early as 1758 Dossie described the use of 'smalt' to give a bluish shiny surface, see Brenda Greysmith, *Wallpaper* (London: Studio Vista, 1976), pp.74-75.

<sup>56</sup> Patent no.1954, quoted in 'Wallcoverings', Clive Edwards, *Encyclopaedia of Furnishing Textiles, Floorcoverings and Home Furnishing Practices* (London: Lund Humphries, 2007), p.237.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Entwisle, 'Eighteenth Century London Paperstainers: the Eckhardt Brothers of Chelsea', p.74.

diminution of Their Lustre' for more than two years.<sup>58</sup> This suggests that, even at the end of the century, paper's practical qualities were still an important part of its commercial success.

Like the innovations in finish, the engraving process was also protected by patents: in 1792 Anthony Eckhardt, a FRS, took out a patent for 'laying a special composition on paper and other materials, for receiving copper plates.'<sup>59</sup> In an 1839 lecture J.G. Crace claimed that the firm's copper plates were 'engraved with designs of great finish and beauty', and that more than fifty young girls were employed in hand finishing processes.<sup>60</sup> The subtle effects achieved by hand colouring are very evident in the large scale floral design attributed to the firm, evidently aimed at the top end of the market (4.6).

Secondly, Eckhardts advertised 'Papers, on a new principle, in a diversity of beautiful Patterns, & of all Prices'. This diversity is reflected in a detailed bill for Eckhardts' work at Shugborough in Staffordshire, remodelled by the architect Samuel Wyatt (1737-1807) for Sir Thomas Anson, later 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Anson (1767-1818). Totalling £390, the bill included the supply of 'Varnished Silver Linen on a Salmon Ground' with moulded gilt borders for the Red drawing room.<sup>61</sup> By contrast, in a bedroom (latterly known as 'Lady Lichfield's Boudoir') grey matt moiré paper was hung in panels and picked out with a cut-out floral border.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Booklet advertising 'Royal Patent Manufactory', inscr. (rev) May 1793, BM, BC 91.12, pp.1-2.

<sup>59</sup> MacIver Percival, 'Wallpaper of the Sheraton Period', p.300. This Eckhardt also took out patents for mechanical furniture, see *DEFM*, pp.265-66.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Eric Entwisle, 'Decoration for Georgian Walls: Early English Wallpaper Makers, *CL*, 27 September 1973, pp.883-886 (p.884). This later description is reinforced by Sarah Harriet Burney's first hand account discussed below.

<sup>61</sup> Gervase Jackson-Stops, *Shugborough, Staffordshire* (London: The National Trust, 1980), pp.17-18.

<sup>62</sup> John Martin Robinson, *Shugborough, Staffordshire* (London: The National Trust, 1989), p.78.

A final aspect of their business was the ability to supply and install complex schemes, such as dropped repeats and panels and stiles (4.7, 4.8). As has previously been argued by Mary Schoeser, this practice originated in papers, rather than in textiles where the cloth was hung straight across. Schoeser points out that by the 1770s Spitalfields weavers were complaining there was no market for damasks, suggesting they were being replaced by paper hangings.<sup>63</sup> It is therefore, I suggest, significant that this paper has been attributed to Eckhardts, since they may have moved into the manufacture of paper hangings to overcome this downturn in business.<sup>64</sup>

In marketing panels and stiles Eckhardts rhetoric was careful to emphasise such schemes' flexibility, claiming that 'by painting the Stiles a different Colour, 'or changing the Pannels' the consumer could be reassured that the scheme 'will appear as a total new Room.' Central here is the idea that panels are interchangeable and that stiles can be repainted to create a scheme in a different room, or even a different house. According to Eckhardt's there were other advantages, since:

Agreeable to the present Taste of Decorations, being adjusted chiefly in Pannels, the most costly of their Articles, if at any Time soiled, either by Accident, Smoke of London, or other Situation, can be taken down, cleaned, and replaced, with the Brilliancy of the first Day, at a very trifling Expence.<sup>65</sup>

The outlay on costly panels could then be offset by these renovations, something it was far more difficult to do with repeating patterns pasted directly onto the wall. Although this service of cleaning and replacement is not new, since, as discussed in chapter 2,

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<sup>63</sup> Mary Schoeser, 'The Octagon Room at Danson: evidence for restoration with wallpaper', in *New Discoveries, New Research*, ed. by Hidemark, pp.70-87 (pp.73-74).

<sup>64</sup> An attribution discussed by Wells-Cole in *HPH*, cat 45, p.35 & p.38.

<sup>65</sup> BM, BC 91.12, p.2.

Bromwich carried out repairs to India paper at Kenwood, it parallels the repair services offered by ceramic manufacturers and implies that an ongoing relationship with the client was another aspect of the way in which manufacturers sought to reinforce their position.

Innovations in finish, products and flexibility are then some of the innovative aspects of Eckhardts' business. However, their bankruptcy suggests that financing such costly and exclusive products was a risky venture, perhaps because of its emphasis on hand finishing.<sup>66</sup>

To return to Entwisle's second claim, for the growing role of the house painter and paper-hanger, this does seem to be substantiated by the evidence for the supply and hanging of paper in the final quarter of the century. By the 1790s paper hangers were a sufficiently well established trade for journeymen to be campaigning for increased wages. Whereas *The Observer* reported in May 1796 that paper-makers and printers had failed in their attempt to raise the prices of their work, the journeymen paper hangers were proposing to charge for hanging borders under a certain price, work for which they had previously not made a charge although they were paid between 18d and 1s per piece hung, depending on its quality. Perhaps this is also evidence that borders were being more extensively used. The paper also expressed its surprise at the sums paper hangers could earn, claiming that a journeyman in the trade could earn on average over nine months of '*fifteen shillings per day!*' and that '*many of them frequently eighteen or nineteen shillings!!*' which the paper went on to point out was 'a

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<sup>66</sup> Entwisle claims that the firm was taken in the 1800s by Nathaniel Hinchcliff, who manufactured papers 'more readily adapted to the commoner and more economical methods of production', see 'Eighteenth Century London Paperstainers: the Eckhardt Brothers of Chelsea', p.77. However, Faulkner describes the business as being 'carried on' at the Chelsea waterside site by Bowers & Co, later Harwoods. Faulkner also claimed that the Black Lands works continued as a stained paper manufactory for Cooke & Co (Faulkner, *An Historical and Topographical Description of Chelsea*, pp.35-36).

sum considerably larger than the pay of a Lieutenant-colonel in the Army', who also had to pay for his commission.<sup>67</sup>

By the early nineteenth century, groups who had hitherto not been involved in the trade, including suppliers of both essential and more decorative domestic services such as house and ornamental painters, plumbers and glaziers, were advertising their readiness to supply and hang paper.<sup>68</sup> Rosoman has suggested that there was an especially close relationship between paper hangings and the supply of transparencies.<sup>69</sup> Transparencies were painted, printed or stencilled designs on thin paper that admitted light, which were used to continue a wall decoration over glazed surfaces. Stubbs' trade card of c.1800 is typical in format and content, listing the supply of transparencies together with stained glass, paper hanging and the execution of other painted effects at their premises, 29, St. James's Street (4.9).

These developments may well explain the declining role of stationers, noted in chapter 1, few of whom who are involved in paper hanging by the 1790s. For example, when the paper hanging manufacturer and stationer Bartholomew Tombs on the Golden Square came to advertise his firm in c.1794, he not only claimed he had 'the Honor to Acquaint the Nobility, Gentry/& the Publick, that he has a great Choice of Paper Hangings', but added that these were 'Manufactured on the Improv'd Principles' and stressed his role in fitting up rooms 'IN A STYLE ELEGANT AND NEW'.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps this emphasis on fitting up was intended to try and stem the decline in business

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<sup>67</sup> *The Observer*, 5 May 1796, p3, Proquest Historical Newspapers, The Guardian & Observer Online, <http://www.proquest.umi.com> [accessed 2 April 2009]

<sup>68</sup> For example M. Martin & Co, Plumbers, Glaziers, Ornamental Painters, & Decorators of Regent Cottage, Regent Street, who also advertised themselves as Paper Hanging Manufacturers, BM, BC 91.19

<sup>69</sup> Rosoman, p.55.

<sup>70</sup> BM,BC 91.28

brought about by competition from firms who could offer a range of household decorating services.

There is also evidence that upholders still played a role in supplying papers. For example, Chippendale supplied and hung both India and distemper-printed papers for Edwin Lascelles (1712-95), first Lord Harewood, at Harewood House in Yorkshire. The paper commissioned for the gallery demonstrates that architects and tradesmen could collaborate to create bespoke schemes, reflecting similar trends in the manufacture of luxury objects in ceramics from the 1760s onwards.<sup>71</sup> However, Chippendale did not just offer a unique design, discussed in the next section, but also the skills to successfully hang that design. The installation was lengthy and expensive: Chippendale's man, Reid, arrived at Harewood on 12 July 1776 and spent the next day 'preparing for papering the gallery'. Two days later he went to Leeds to buy paper for the job, presumably under-paper, from Griffith & Wright.<sup>72</sup> This may reflect Lascelles' wish to use materials available locally (whether stone or paper) where he thought them adequate, but where he considered the outlay justifiable high quality London-made goods were purchased, since he maintained that 'this place furnisheth the completest artists'.<sup>73</sup> Alternatively, Armitage may have had London connections, which would perhaps explain Chippendale's willingness to purchase from him for such an important job. This example shows how both metropolitan and regional suppliers benefited from the growing use of paper even in the grandest spaces.

However, it was not just the quality of the goods they supplied that ensured upholders' continuing role in paper supply, but also their skills in hanging. Reid spent almost

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<sup>71</sup> See Hilary Young, *English Porcelain 1745-95: Its Makers, Design, Marketing and Consumption* (London: V&A Studies in the History of Art and Design, 1999), p.96.

<sup>72</sup> Gilbert, p. 203 and day work book, pp.218-19.

<sup>73</sup> Mary Mauchline, *Harewood House: One of the Treasure Houses of Britain* (Ashbourne: Morriand Publishing, 1992), pp.98-99.

eight days in July hanging the under-paper in readiness for the paper and borders' arrival. Although the manufacturer of the paper is unknown it was London made, since it was sent by coach to Leeds, where the goods were delayed; Reid recorded he spent almost a week at the beginning of September 'In waiting for the paper & c. coming'. When it did finally arrive, it took eighteen days of his time to install the complex scheme in the vast space (over seventy-six feet long and twenty-one feet high).<sup>74</sup>

The other crucial change counteracting a story of decline in the late eighteenth century, I argue, was in retail display. There is evidence that leading manufacturers sought to identify themselves more closely with their products, and here innovations in the environment in which goods were seen played an important role. No longer did consumers simply visit a warehouse to pick out a pattern from stock as Hertford had done; rather they were offered the opportunity to view products in room settings. For example, in c.1803 Buzzards on High Holborn advertised their 'Manufactory And Exhibition Rooms For Paper Hangings Looking Glasses Candelabras & c'.<sup>75</sup>

By contrast, Eckhardts physically separated the sites of manufacture and display, with a factory at Old Whitelands House, Kings Road, Chelsea & exhibition rooms at a fashionable address: 8, Old Bond Street. However, the printed booklet which promoted their 'Royal Patent Manufactory of painted Silk, Varnished-Linen, Cloth, Paper' of c.1780, goes a step further than Buzzards' trade card, by outlining the rooms' function of educating the consumer:

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<sup>74</sup> Gilbert, p.219

<sup>75</sup> BM,BC 91.1. Edward Canon on High Holburn is styled a papier mâché manufacturer in 1774 and a 'Paper Hanging and Looking-glass Warehouse' in 1784. The business continued after 1793 as Cannon & Buzzard who traded as carvers, gilders and paperhangers at 109, High Holborn from 1793-1829, see *DEFM*, p.143.

That the Public in general may form some Judgement themselves of many modes of disposing of the different articles mentioned Messr Eckhardts and Co have opened A SET OF ROOMS, at No.8, *Old Bond Street* fitted up In a Variety of Forms where the Effect may at once be seen; and which, from the Novelty of their Manufactory, they think necessary.<sup>76</sup>

This evidence implies that it was the ‘novelty’ of the firm’s products that necessitated the need for a showroom, and that developing the ability to choose from what a manufacturer deemed new and fashionable is an essential part of being able to exercise taste. Admission was also controlled. The showroom was open from 10am to 3pm, but tickets were issued ‘in order to render the Exhibition as convenient as possible to the Nobility and Gentry’. In addition, the booklet stated that after 3pm ‘attendance can alone be given to particular orders’. Manufacturers therefore attempted to control access to these spaces, and here they were not alone, since ceramics manufacturers including William Duesbury also issued trade cards close in format to admission tickets to attract the custom of ‘the Nobility, Gentry and Public in General’ to their showrooms as early as the mid 1770s.<sup>77</sup> This reflected not only the admission procedures to access displays of high art, such as the Royal Academy, but also to cabinet makers such as Seddons, whose premises were also open to visitors.

However, it was not just through showroom visits that Eckhardts sought to identify themselves with their products; this firm also allowed consumer access to their factory to view manufacturing taking place. A letter of Sarah Harriet Burney, half sister of Frances (Fanny) Burney, describes a visit that she made with family friends in 1792:

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<sup>76</sup> BM,BC 91.12, p.3.

<sup>77</sup> Young, *English Porcelain 1745-95*, p.169.



I went about ten days ago to see Mr. Eckardts manufactory with the Farquhars; he gave us tickets to go to Lord Dovers for whom he has been fitting up two rooms. I never saw any thing so beautiful as the paintings, & ornaments are. We saw all the children at work, & while we were in their room, an engine was playing which changed the air in five minutes, & entirely carried off the smell of the paint, which might else be very prejudicial to them. This contrivance keeps them all in health, & they really look quite fresh, & strong.<sup>78</sup>

Such a visit seems then to have involved viewing both finished products and hand painting processes, thereby reinforcing these products' associations with high art, as well as the firm's care of their young workforce. It also brought an opportunity to obtain access to an even more exclusive display space: tickets to see actual rooms recently executed for clients, in this case Baron Dover's house at Hill Street, Mayfair.<sup>79</sup>

Moreover, at least one tradesman conceived his home as a display space for his products. By 1792 John Middleton's colour manufactory and paper hanging warehouse on St Martin's Lane was successful enough to supply paper to William Jones the Elder (d.1805) of Clytha Castle, Gwent, who purchased ceramics from Wedgwood and furniture from Mayhew and Ince in the same year.<sup>80</sup> Middleton was known as an importer of French papers, but his success presumably derived from technical innovations as well, since in 1813 a John Middleton presented his ideas to the Society of Arts for conveying paper over the printing table, and applying greater pressure to

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<sup>78</sup> Quoted in *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, ed. by Lorna Clark (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1997), pp.1-2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, note 12, p.4.

<sup>80</sup> See Rosoman, p.56; Richard Haslam, 'Clytha Castle, Gwent I', *CL*, 8 December 1972, pp.1718-1721 (p.1719); Personal accounts of William Jones, 18 June 1792, 'Jn. Middleton's bill for paper & c. £38.14.9', Gwent RO D43.211. I am grateful to Katie Arber for this reference.

blocks to improve the printing of dark grounds.<sup>81</sup> As discussed in chapter 1, an address on St Martin's Lane also suggests ready access to the artists, craftsmen and patrons who congregated there.

His success meant that, by the mid 1790s, Middleton could afford to commission a portrait of himself and five members of his family, which is thought to show a mixed-use space above his premises (4.10). Eleanor John has pointed out that in this portrait the representation of the interior has what she terms 'a realism and specificity quite different from the treatment of interiors in conversation pieces of the first half of the eighteenth century'. She argues that it not only documents the tastes of the middling level of society (for example in the choice of good quality and fairly fashionable items of furniture), but is also 'indicative of the attention that was paid to the decoration of the home'.<sup>82</sup> The interior presents not only an effect of spaciousness and light, as John argues, but also, I argue, gives prominence to Middleton's business as a colour-man and supplier of paper hangings, an effect reinforced by the book to which Middleton points which may be a colour sample book. The space was depicted with largely clear walls, giving prominence to the paper which has been stained (coloured) in situ (probably in blue verditer) and the single painting hung over the fireplace, a landscape by J.C. Ibbotson, one of Middleton's clients. The single colour walls contrasted with the boldly patterned border printed with what appears to be a foliage motif in orange and yellow on a green ground, perhaps an example of Middleton's imported French products. A border was used around the room at dado and ceiling height and also articulated the marble chimneypiece, an effect repeated on the chimney board.

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<sup>81</sup> Entwisle, *LH*, p.71.

<sup>82</sup> *Home and Garden: Paintings and Drawings of English, middle class urban domestic spaces 1675-1914*, ed. by David Dewing (London: Geffrye Museum, 2003), cat. 14, p.42.

Nor was the idea of such a display space on the first floor confined to London; Wells-Cole has suggested that the layers of paper recovered from an upstairs room in a house in Northgate, Wakefield, occupied by the cabinet-makers and furnishers Wright & Elwick, discussed in chapter 1, may represent showroom patterns in the form of two blue ground papers with borders which he dates to the 1760s and 1790s respectively.<sup>83</sup>

Another method that manufacturers employed in order to identify themselves with their products was the stamping of papers. As discussed in chapter 1, stamps on paper hangings are a notoriously problematic area, but it does appear that towards the end of the century it became more common to stamp articles with the supplier's mark. Once again Eckhardts was at the forefront of new developments, since they claimed that 'Every article painted or printed by them, will be stamped with the Mark of the Manufactory', although no actual examples have been traced.<sup>84</sup> It may therefore be significant that Harwood & Co., who took over Eckhardts original Chelsea site, are known to have stamped their goods.<sup>85</sup>

These developments, in the organisation of production, retailing, distribution and hanging of paper do, I argue, put the idea of an industry in decline into question. Rather, they present a picture of an industry seeking to maintain a place at the centre of trades involved in the decoration of the interior, and one revitalised by the adoption of innovations from other trades. What does seem clear is that paper hangings' supply and installation was not just being controlled by manufacturers or stationers, but by those involved in other aspects of decoration. A further shift was in types of product, with costly and complex schemes demanding showroom installations to demonstrate to

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<sup>83</sup> Wells-Cole, *FFF*, p.37.

<sup>84</sup> BM, BC 91.12, p.3.

<sup>85</sup> According to John Cornforth one EH, ASC paper is stamped by the firm, see 'History from London Walls', *CL*, 19 November 1992, pp.52-53 (p.53). The firm also supplied papers to Clandon.

the consumer their correct usage. How the supply of these new products was related to issues of design is the subject of the next section.

#### **4.4 Design and workshop practice at the end of the century**

This section identifies the designs, colours and finishes that were desirable in the closing years of the century. It argues that whilst certain designs reflect the fashion for Neoclassical finishes, colours and divisions of the wall, these are frequently modified by a taste for greater informality and naturalistic patterns associated with the picturesque. Whilst acknowledging the continued importance of textiles as a design source, I also put forward evidence for a hitherto ignored pattern source, contemporary ceramics, which allowed papers to reflect a desire for novelty, that is goods in, or advance in, current fashions. Firstly, I want to return to the issue of the perceived superiority of continental skills in design, arguing that contemporary rhetoric is not always supported by the evidence of papers and pattern sources.

Concern about a perceived association between continental products, design skills and commercial success was a particular issue for the cabinet making and textile trades. In cabinet making, what was seen as the derivative and inferior nature of British design was highlighted in 1803 by Sheraton who criticised manufacturers for ‘foolishly staring after French fashions, instead of exerting ourselves to improve our own, by granting suitable encouragement to designers and artists for that purpose’.<sup>86</sup> Other criticisms concerned the French ability to reproduce naturalistic effects. The calico

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<sup>86</sup> Edwards, *Eighteenth-century furniture*, pp.157-58.

printer Charles O'Brien's complaints about the quality of English printing centred on this issue, since he claimed that:

Persons of taste and judgement in drawing, painting, ornament, & c. rarely find anything worth of their notice in the best execution of the best full chintz patterns, as being far behind a tolerably decent imitation of nature by painting, tapestry, weaving, needlework, or even paper printing (which by the way is now in a rising state).

O'Brien gave as his example of this 'rising state' 'a French pattern of roses, which at a proper distance has the effect of a painting'.<sup>87</sup> French paper hangings are then seen as superior to English printed cottons in their ability to depict naturalistic effects. Key to this superiority is the artist's role, since O'Brien also claimed that 'In France, paper printing, in many respects, throws English calico printing to a great distance; but it is there made worth employing first-rate artists as designers'. This reinforces French superiority in design since they are employing not pattern drawers (ironically one of O'Brien's own roles) but 'first-rate artists'. O'Brien's claims need however to be treated with caution; his advertisement at the end of his book mentions his firm's supply of 'Paper-hangings of exquisite designs and adequate execution (chiefly foreign)', suggesting that he had commercial reasons for promoting the superior design qualities of 'foreign' paper hangings.<sup>88</sup>

This perceived superiority has been reinforced by more recent commentators. For example, Thornton claims that, after the Seven Years War (1756-63) French paper

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<sup>87</sup> He attributes this pattern to Middleton, presumably John Middleton.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Charles O'Brien, *The callico printers' assistant*, 2 vols, London, 1789-92, II, p.270 in ECCO [accessed 8 March 2006].

manufacturers furthered their position, gaining the greatest advantage from paying skilled and often independent designers for new patterns. He cites the name of Réveillon as synonymous with fine wallpapers, claiming that 'if only' more attention had been paid to producing 'truly appealing' designs an English manufacturer might be remembered in this way.<sup>89</sup> The leading French manufacturer, Jean Baptiste Réveillon (1725-1811), certainly stressed the role of design when describing his workshops in 1780, listing designers and engravers as his first class of employees, 'who are really my collaborators rather than my employees' and painters as a separate class, together with 'A very distinguished artist [who] agreed to become associated with my workshop' and five designers of varying degrees of seniority amongst his three hundred employees.<sup>90</sup>

However, the evidence of trade cards' suggests that English manufacturers were not as unaware as commentators implied of the value of design. For example, Buzzards' trade card highlighted the importance the firm attached to the role of design, since it represented a female figure sketching, whilst the text emphasised the firm's role in supplying 'ornamental designs'.<sup>91</sup>

It would also be wrong to think that no 'first rate' designs were produced for English paper makers. For example, the paper for the gallery at Harewood House in Yorkshire supplied by Chippendale was also designed by him, and formed part of the remodelling of the interior by Robert Adam. Chippendale charged £3.3s in September 1776, for 'Designing and making a Drawing at Large with the proper Colours for the paper maker' for the gallery. Unlike architects, cabinet makers usually provided

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<sup>89</sup> Thornton, *Form and Decoration*, p.173.

<sup>90</sup> Quoted in Bernard Jacqué, pamphlet to accompany the *Arabesques* exhibition held at the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, 1994.

<sup>91</sup> BM,BC 91.2

drawings free, and Gilbert suggests that the fee charged for this design is evidence that it was intended for another firm to make up.<sup>92</sup> The scheme comprised 41 pieces ‘of the Antique Ornament with Palms & c. on a fine paper with a pink Ground-the pattern cut on purpose and printed in various Colours’ at a cost 30s. per piece, totalling £61.10s., and three pieces of an accompanying border, again printed from bespoke blocks, costing a further £4.10s.<sup>93</sup> The cost and the need for a large measured and coloured drawing to ensure successful manufacture implies it was a complex design, but perhaps also that paper makers themselves did, as O’Brien claimed, lack the skills to create an original design to complement a particular interior. Here it is significant that the pattern was ‘of the Antique Ornament with Palms & c.’, supporting Wells-Cole’s argument that it was insistence on stylistic unity which required bespoke papers to match the Neoclassical style interior, in this case the more decorative ornament devised by Adam.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, Gilbert has concluded that Adam regarded Chippendale as the most accomplished exponent of Neoclassical furniture in London, and I suggest this may also have extended to his designing paper hangings in this taste.<sup>95</sup>

There were other methods whereby foreign design skills were incorporated into paper hangings. Clive Edwards argues that the taste for French furnishings in cabinet making was met in a number of direct and indirect ways, through imports evading duty, through the use of continental products as models and through the employment of immigrant labour. The latter is seen too in the ceramics industry, since Young point out that Nicholas Sprimont (1716-1771) employed continental modellers at Chelsea. Did these practices extend to the paper hangings’ trade? The example of John Sherringham, a decorator in ornamental paper hangings, of Great Marlborough Street,

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<sup>92</sup> Gilbert, p.95.

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Wells-Cole, *HPH*, p.45.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4

<sup>95</sup> Gilbert, p.98.

Chelsea (traded 1786-1802) suggests they did. According to Megan Aldrich, Sherringham brought Jean Jacques Boileau (fl. c.1788-1851), who supervised the decorative work at Carlton House, over from France.<sup>96</sup> Sherringham is also known to have visited Paris at the end of the 1780s, and Nicholas Thompson has suggested he bought up some of the Réveillon's factory's stock when it went into liquidation in 1789, after the French Revolution, later selling it on for example to the Amyands at Moccas.<sup>97</sup>

The question remains as to whether papers employed continental products as models. The key design which might have been imitated by English paper hangings makers was the arabesque. Firms such as Arthur et Robert (1789-94) and Réveillon were especially well known for their designs combining the grotesque format with more naturalistic elements such as rococo floral bouquets or chinoiserie motifs to form the arabesque (4.21). Indeed, Arthur et Grenard, and their predecessors, Arthur et Robert, possessed prints both of Raphael's decorations in the Vatican Loggia and publications on the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii.<sup>98</sup> In the arabesque panels of these manufacturers the sombre tones of the classical models are replaced by a lighter palette and more naturalistic elements, derived from rococo ornament, arguably producing a fusion of modernity with Classicism.

Is there any evidence of the use of the arabesque in English papers? Two papers attributed to Sherringham, one a dropped repeat of arabesques with fanciful buildings, the other a border from Mount Clare, Roehampton (designed by Holland), do seem to

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<sup>96</sup> Megan Aldrich, 'The Georgian Craces, c.1768 to 1830', in *The Craces: Royal Decorators 1768-189*, ed. by Megan Aldrich (London: John Murray for the Royal Pavilion, 1990) pp.3-32. Edward Croft-Murray also claims Boileau was one of a number of artists who hand-finished papers for Eckhardts, see *Decorative Painting in England 1537-1837*, II, p.172.

<sup>97</sup> Nicholas Thompson, 'Moccas Court, Herefordshire-II', *CL*, 25 November 1976, pp.1554-557 (pp.1555-556).

<sup>98</sup> Bernard Jacqué, 'Found in the USA', p.3.



support Entwisle's claim that the firm produced its own arabesque designs.<sup>99</sup> A set of panels attributed to Eckhardts (4.8) also incorporate motifs familiar from arabesques, such as fantastical classical figures and imitation drapery, described as painted en grisaille 'with silvery grey-green satin'. However, some vertical panels included rectangular tablets depicting 'Scottish Border landscapes and horses', whilst 'scenes from ritual and domestic Greek life' appeared in other panels. Perhaps this was a deliberate attempt to respond to arabesques' limited popularity in Britain, incorporating picturesque landscapes featuring familiar architecture where it would be more usual to find classical scenes.

However, another aspect of arabesque designs proved more adaptable in the stiles and borders format. This may also have been inspired by French models, since Bernard Jacqué's researches have revealed the popularity of *papiers en feuilles*, papers in the form of medallions ready to be cut out, used with borders and pilasters against plain papers to create panelled schemes in the 1790s.<sup>100</sup> However, I want to argue that when Portarlington characterises her choice of stiles by reference to Robert Adam she had in mind a vertical border printed with motifs derived from the arabesque, used to create a more flexible (and cheaper) panelled effect. This view is reinforced by a parallel example from textiles, a block printed vertical length of cotton printed c.1804 at Bannister Hall in red and black on a yellow ground with plaques and medallions of classical figures, vases and gryphons set within scrolling arabesque ornament.<sup>101</sup>

It was not only pattern but also colour, in particular the distinctive palette of the Etruscan style, seen in interiors such as the Etruscan dining room at Osterley, devised

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<sup>99</sup> See Entwisle, 'Decoration for Georgian Walls: Early English Wallpaper Makers', figs 6, 7.

<sup>100</sup> Bernard Jacqué, 'From 'papiers en feuille' to 'décor': the industrialisation of decoration, in *New Discoveries, New Research*, ed. by Stavelow-Hidemark, pp.8-10

<sup>101</sup> VAM T.50-1956, ill. Peter Floud, *Victoria & Albert Museum English Printed Textiles 1720-1836*, (London: HMSO, 1960), p.132; discussed on p.5 & p.11.

by Robert Adam in the 1770s, which was adapted to papers for more modest interiors, such as a small-scale geometric print from 47, Manchester Street, Marylebone (4.11). Dating from c.1795-1805, it is not so much the star pattern as the colour which is distinctive; printed in orange and black on a grey and white ground this, Rosoman has suggested, recalls the fashion for this style of decoration.<sup>102</sup> A taste for vibrant combinations of greens, and turquoise on a dark ground are also evidenced in papers attributed to Robert Stark (4.12).

Design models were much more commonly taken from other, two-dimensional, materials. Contemporary references to papers imitating stonework highlight a desire to imitate the finish as accurately as possible, reflecting Neoclassical concerns with archaeological accuracy. In 1797 Beckmann described them as ‘Among the most elegant hangings of this kind’ since they ‘imitate so exactly every variety of marble, porphyry, and other species of stones, that when the walls of an apartment are neatly covered with them, the best connoisseur may not without close examination be able to discover the deception’.<sup>103</sup> Such papers may have been intended for hanging on the dado, where, ironically, they would have been less closely inspected than papers hung at eye level. Not only were these papers vastly cheaper than stonework, they were also cheaper than painted imitations; for example, in 1788, Coleby’s of Piccadilly were advertising that they executed imitation of ‘Porphyry & Granite’ and ‘White Veined Marble’ at 4 shillings per foot, whilst ‘Dove marbles’ cost a further 4 shillings more.<sup>104</sup>

Papers’ traditional association with textiles also offered models. By the late 1770s grisaille prints were being combined with multi-colour prints, as in a surviving unused

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<sup>102</sup> Treve Rosoman, ‘The Historic Wallpaper Collection’, in *English Heritage Collections Review*, ed. by Julius Bryant, 3 (2003), 106-110 (p.107).

<sup>103</sup> Beckmann, *A history of inventions and discoveries*, p.161.

<sup>104</sup> Trade card with list of marbling and graining prices on reverse, C.Coleby of 42, Regent Circus, Piccadilly, BM,HC 90.27.

length from the decoration of the drawing room of Doveton's at Willerton, Somerset for the marriage of Mary Maunder to Andrew Gill in 1776 demonstrates (4.13).<sup>105</sup> Here pastoral vignettes are encircled by vibrantly coloured bouquets of naturalistic flowers and foliage. It is, I suggest, possible that an earlier design was simply updated here by stencilling on colours, rather than printing the flowers and foliage in grisaille to imitate stucco. The naturalistic arrangement of the flowering plants also, I argue, signals the growing appeal of the picturesque.

By the end of the century this taste had extended to other types of design, for example the floral stripe, derived from textile patterns. This type of design combined taste for naturalistic motifs associated with the picturesque with the formal verticality associated with Neoclassicism. A rare surviving frame-marked sample of this type of pattern, dated securely to 1791, combines vertically arranged bouquets of honeysuckle, clematis, and roses alternating with formalised palmettes divided by trelliswork bands against a stippled ground (4.1).<sup>106</sup> A key element of the picturesque garden, the desire to let plants go naturally, is reflected in the placement of the blooms, which are not exotic but native species. The design also used vibrant orange and green colours favoured by Portarlington. A painting of 1791 depicts this type of pattern, perhaps significantly as part of an interior representing ideals of female domesticity where a woman sits sewing, whilst a boy is engaged in reading and a girl plays with a doll (4.14). Similarly, a paper attributed to Eckhardts composed of rococo style garlands which enclosed vignettes of cranes or storks set beside classical urns and shields, softened the formal classical motifs by literally encasing them in naturalistic rococo style ornament (4.7).

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<sup>105</sup> Correspondence with the donor, Miss Welch, and (?) Mrs Hosegood, 1928, V&A RFs.

<sup>106</sup> As noted in chapter 1, framemarks were introduced in 1786 to prevent the 'piece' being lengthened to avoid duty: each end was stamped. This fragment is stamped G/53968/12/58, where G represents the year (1791), 53968 the manufacturer, 12 the length of the piece in yards (12 yards) and 0.58 the width of the piece in hundredths of a yard, see Dagnall, *The Tax on Wallpaper*, fig 10, p.10.

Besides the traditional associations in design between paper and textile manufacture, I would argue that, by this date, paper hangings manufacturers were looking to three-dimensional objects as sources for both new patterns and new colour-ways. Objects such as domestically produced ceramics enjoyed much greater visibility in the eighteenth century than they enjoy today, and provided an alternative pattern source to classicism's prioritising of two-dimensional design. Trailing floral patterns are not only related to textiles, but also to home produced ceramics. Indeed, it is tempting to link an exotic floral pattern attributed to Eckhardts with its site on the former Chelsea works (4.6). Other, simpler designs also reflect parallels with ceramics. For example, a bud design, stencilled in three colours over black printed trefoil foliage, closely resembles contemporary tea ware patterns (4.15, left). Its inscription refers to a London maker, John Boover Brook of Great Queen Street, who would surely have been aware of the output of the Chelsea and Bow factories (1.5).<sup>107</sup> Another design of trailing flowers and foliage is indebted to the taste for English plants and includes ears of wheat and pinks in the design (4.15, right). Gill Saunders has claimed this resembles mid-century embroidery or Spitalfields silk patterns; however, I argue, it also mimics ceramics, since it is executed to imitate the effects of underglaze blue, the addition of blue stencilled colour over the blue print even softening the line to produce the effect of the glaze melting during firing.<sup>108</sup> The same preference can also be discerned in 'sprig' papers such as another fragment from the Rectory, Barnes, printed in blue on blue (4.16). According to Hilary Young, in ceramics sprig patterns were often aimed at the less wealthy section of the market, so perhaps they were thought appropriate for single colour, small scale patterned papers too.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> According to Joseph Haslewood 'Mr. Brooks who was at that time an eminent Paper-Hanging Manufacturer' was married to the actress Mrs. Brooks, who went on the stage to support the family after he became bankrupt by 'misfortunes in business', *The secret history of the green room*, 2 vols, London, 1792, p.323 in ECCO [accessed 9 November 2007].

<sup>108</sup> Saunders, p.45.

<sup>109</sup> Young, *English Porcelain 1745-95*, p.84.

Links with the ceramics trade can also be seen in a border from Stourhead which adopts 'running honeysuckle', a painted border for Queen's Ware in Wedgwood's First Pattern Book, 1769-1814 (4.17). Such models could, however, also attract criticism. Goethe claimed that 'The burgeoning taste of the public' was being 'perverted and destroyed' by 'the English' whose products are 'gaudy' and 'made of paste', and whose aims were overtly commercial, with the result that, as Goethe sees it, 'one gets no more out of this antiquity than from a porcelain bowl, pretty wallpaper or pair of shoe-buckles'.<sup>110</sup> For critics such as Goethe then such products reflect his fears that Wedgwood's imitations of Flaxman's designs would be viewed as art, fears which the production of the border in two media suggests were not shared by manufacturers.

There is also some evidence that papers drew motifs from other artefacts, including cabinetmakers' designs. For example at Calke Abbey in Derbyshire in c.1800 a self coloured vine patterned paper contrasted with the accompanying border, flocked in vibrant Etruscan shades of black with orange highlights on a green verditer ground (4.18). The border recalls the motifs of contemporary gilt-bronze furniture mounts, since it used flock to pick out pairs of lions along the horizontal border as well as for the lion mask heads used to define the architraves. Perhaps the scheme was even intended to complement other furnishings.

Despite the perceived superiority of continental design skills, the 'modern paper hangings' produced in England in the final quarter of the century examined in this section do not adopt continental product models on a wholesale basis. Although limited use was made of the arabesque in the form of large panels, arabesque ornament

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<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, p.xxiii.

was used for a far more flexible and affordable wall decoration, panelled schemes made up of borders and stiles. Whilst continuing to imitate established design sources, such as textiles, papers also innovated by imitating the patterns and colour-ways familiar to consumers from other domestic goods, notably ceramics. Moreover, the patterns discussed here often combined elements of different styles, new and old, and are therefore not easily categorised as Neoclassical, picturesque or indeed rococo in design. This supports the view that it was novelty, not originality, that was valued as part of the desire for the fashionable and the new by this date.

#### **4.5 Arabesques and borders**

As noted above, by the late 1780s, paper was making inroads not only into the closets, bedchambers, dressing rooms and service areas of grand houses but also into the principal spaces of sociability, in particular the drawing room, an apartment associated with women of different generations but also used by both genders. The reasons for the choice of French and English papers in drawing rooms in the last decades of the century are considered in schemes at Clandon Park in Surrey and at Moccas Court in Herefordshire. I argue that their study demonstrates how papers both complemented the architectonic framework and conveyed fashionable taste. I end by briefly discussing the origins of nineteenth century taste for panelled schemes composed of plain papers and borders.

Clandon and Moccas contain two of the few arabesque schemes composed of French papers that survive in Britain. A third scheme, for the Upper Hall at Kempshott Park, Surrey, should also be mentioned; it was described in 1929 as a 'fine old Adam

wallpaper' which had been presented to Lady Fitzherbert by the Prince of Wales'.<sup>111</sup> Kempshott was leased in 1789 by the Prince of Wales, whose schemes at Carlton House demonstrated the French taste and significantly this paper was produced in the early 1790s by a Parisian firm with English links, Arthur et Robert. Moreover, in 1795, plans were drawn up for the house's decoration by Holland who, as discussed earlier, was linked to at least one English manufacturer who employed foreign artists. Did the patrons and tradesmen involved in the schemes at Clandon and Moccas have similar links?

Clandon was acquired by the Onslow family in the 1640s on account of its convenient situation for court and rebuilt by the architect Giacomo Leoni in 1731 (4.19). When the Whig politician, the First Earl of Onslow, inherited Clandon in 1776 he also inherited his father's pension of three thousand pounds a year and set about remodelling the house, including the Palladian Room on the ground floor where an arabesque patterned paper, attributed to Réveillon (*Les Deux Pigeons*), was hung at some point in the 1780s (4.20).<sup>112</sup> This is a difficult scheme to unpick, since it was the subject of major restoration by John Fowler and his team in the late 1960s.<sup>113</sup> What Fowler's work did reveal was that the remodelling of the room was much more extensive than hitherto thought.<sup>114</sup> A set of tapestries of the Seasons was hung in the refurbished room, but did not remain there for long. *Les Deux Pigeons* was available c.1770-80, so this

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<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Jacqué, 'Found in the USA', p.4.

<sup>112</sup> John Cornforth, 'Clandon Park Revisited-II', *CL*, 11 December 1969, pp.1582-586 (p.1583 & fig 3).

<sup>113</sup> Photographs taken in the winter of 1968/9 show the paper removed from the wall and laid out on the floor of a nearby room, see *CL*, 12 December 1974, pp.1881-1882, ill. fig 1, p.1881. The paper's support was also renewed at this date, and it seems some areas were collaged in using fragments of the paper, perhaps found behind the pier glasses, see correspondence between Sybil Colefax and John Fowler, JKA Garrett of The National Trust and Chestertons Surveyors, December 1968- March 1969 (CLA37).

<sup>114</sup> It did not just consist of the installation of a new chimney piece and pier glasses, but rather the proportions of the room were altered by blocking up a door on the East wall and replacing the pair of chimneypieces on this and the West wall with a central chimneypiece on the North wall, previously the site of an elaborate architrave with double doors.

version must have been hung at some point after 1778 since tapestries were recorded in the room at that date.<sup>115</sup>

The choice of this paper raises a number of issues. Firstly, there is the choice of pattern for such a large, high status room. What is most striking today is the all over pattern's informality, enhanced by its dropped repeat: it is as if the arabesque has been set free of the constraints of the narrow vertical panel. This view is reinforced by the absence of classical figures and grotesque forms from the paper, which are replaced by birds, floral motifs, festoons and swags, recalling the rococo. The all over pattern is also highly unusual, since arabesques were more usually supplied in panels, a more flexible form of decoration with much less wastage. Here the particularities of site may be relevant, since the vast rectangular space of this room, with windows on only one wall, lent itself to a continuous pattern with a huge (over 117 cms) dropped repeat which required use of some nineteen lengths. Views out to the garden through the full height windows also enhanced the sense of closeness to the natural world that the pattern, depicting arabesques and birds against a sky blue ground, enhanced. The space also allowed the display of this paper's different techniques and finishes: it is block printed in distemper and then flocked in approximately seven colours on a spotted (perhaps mica dusted) blue (now faded to off white) ground and finished with a gessoed gilt wood file (4.21).<sup>116</sup> This would have created a contrast between the three-dimensional texture of the flock, and the glittering effects of the mica and gilt file. It also enhanced the naturalistic effects, reflecting picturesque taste, in the choice of harmonious colours and arrangement of the blooms.

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<sup>115</sup> May 1778, Inventory Clandon House (CLA 26)

<sup>116</sup> For a description of the paper before Fowler's restoration see H. Avray Tipping, 'Clandon Park III', *CL*, 24 September 1927, pp.434-40 (p.436).



Secondly, there is the issue of the paper's ambiguous origin. English flocks were used extensively on the first and second storeys at Clandon in the 1730s and 1740s. This suggests to me that Onslow may have wished to echo an earlier taste for flocks in this scheme. Direct involvement by the client is reinforced by Bernard Jacqué's claim that both the enormous quantity involved and the quality of the manufacture indicates the paper was produced by Réveillon as a special order during the Onslow's stays in Paris in the 1780s.<sup>117</sup> The choice of a French flock would also support manufacturers' claims that, by the 1770s, they are rivalling the quality of English flock.

However, as Mary Schoeser has recently pointed out, the Clandon paper is a reverse copy of the Réveillon, which may well have been printed in England.<sup>118</sup> This argument is reinforced by the survival of a single width of the same reversed design of c.1785 from a house on Glamorgan Street, Brecon (4.22).<sup>119</sup> It does, however, have a number of significant differences to the Clandon paper: the design was printed in distemper over green (?) flock, perhaps using rather fewer colours which created a bolder and less subtle effect. This has led in the past to it being categorised as English, however, Jacqué considers it is a later version of the Clandon design, by Réveillon himself.<sup>120</sup> If so, it would be evidence of the popularity of French flocks (and this design in particular) further afield than Surrey.

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<sup>117</sup> *Les Papiers Peints en Arabesques de la Fin de XVIII siècle*, ed. by Bernard Jacqué (Paris: Editions de la Martinière, 1995), p.86. Such a method of acquisition would also have enabled the firm (and the Onslows) to avoid heavy duties.

<sup>118</sup> Mary Schoeser, 'The Octagon Room at Danson: evidence for a restoration with wallpaper', note 107, p.195).

<sup>119</sup> V&A RFs. III. C.C.Oman, 'Old English Flock Papers', *CL*, 10 September 1927, pp.xl-xliii, fig 5.

<sup>120</sup> Oman describes it as an 'arabesque design [...] an example of the type of flock wall-papers in favour at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The ground of the paper is cream, whilst the flock has been carried out in an olive green which has afterwards been overprinted in distemper colour', C.C. Oman 'Old Wallpapers in England IV. Later Coloured Papers and Print Rooms', p.222). The attribution to Réveillon is discussed by Wells-Cole in FFF, note 54, p.260.

Thirdly, there is the issue of the choice of a paper and rejection of the earlier scheme employing tapestries.<sup>121</sup> However, it has recently been suggested by Allyson McDermott that a grisaille architectural paper of c.1760 may have been used to ‘frame’ the tapestries (4.23).<sup>122</sup> Perhaps, when the remodelling was carried out and the tapestries hung, the effect was still felt to be too architectural, hence they were replaced within a few years by the arabesque paper which combined more up to date taste for lightness and informality with the three-dimensional effects of flock retained elsewhere in the house.<sup>123</sup>

The choice of papers attributed to Réveillon for the round drawing room at Moccas Court highlights, as at Clandon, the tension between architectural frameworks and naturalistic effects. Situated on this more modest brick house’s central axis, the room was created as part of a new house for Sir George Amyand and his wife, the heiress Catherine Cornewell (b.1752) who married in 1771 (4.24). The house was built at a time when Amyand was making the transition from a successful commercial career, based on the family’s interests in banking and in the West Indies, to the position of a Whig MP and country gentleman. Although Adam prepared designs for the house, it was seemingly built under the supervision of a local architect, Anthony Keck (b.1726). Adam’s designs included a scheme for the decoration of this room dated 1781; his designs for the stuccowork ceiling, frieze, chimney piece and door-cases (and perhaps

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<sup>121</sup> This would also explain the presence of the contemporary green lustring curtains, which are not in keeping with the paper. It has been suggested that the curtains had probably just been acquired and therefore were retained, although the colours were unsatisfactory (CLA, note in file of Guide Book research).

<sup>122</sup> Fragments survive on several wooden panels in store at Clandon. McDermott also suggests the ‘associated pink paint may be significant’, see her report on the Clandon Park wallpaper, 2001 (CLA).

<sup>123</sup> These schemes, on the first and attic storeys, will form part of a future study of flocks by the author.

the gilt over-mantel mirror frame) were carried out, but the wall decoration composed of panels and pilasters decorated with painted arabesques was not executed.<sup>124</sup>

Why then was paper chosen? It has always been assumed that Adam's scheme for the walls was rejected either on the grounds of cost, or due to the difficulties of getting craftsmen to Moccas. However, these claims need to be tested against the evidence of the scheme and its supply. It was still an expensive option, since Réveillon manufactured the rose border, created around 1789, and probably the panels and other elements too (4.25).<sup>125</sup> The papers were, however, less expensive than a painted scheme and probably relate to a payment of £50 made in September 1790 to John Sherringham. The panels may have been part of his purchase of liquidated stock, since an unequal number were supplied, needing substantial modifications on site. Some four panels have been cut and collaged to remove elements in the design, suggesting they were adjusted to fit the awkward dimension of the room with its many narrow panels between door and window openings. Even so, the paper hangers were not quite able to disguise the scheme's lack of symmetry.

A more significant factor in the choice of paper, I argue, was the desire to avoid the architect's complete control of the interior. The idea of a panelled scheme was, however, retained, since it would be difficult to hang a large repeating pattern on the curving walls, nor would such a pattern be seen to advantage on the narrow wall spaces between the bow windows. The choice of panels rather than an all over pattern also enhanced the room's verticality, and complemented the use of pier glasses installed between the windows (4.26).

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<sup>124</sup> Nicholas Thompson, 'Moccas Court, Herefordshire-II', *CL*, 25 November, 1976, pp.1554-557, ill. figs 5 & 6, p.1556.

<sup>125</sup> Bernard Jacqué and Geert Wisse, 'Les Rêves de la Peinture', *Antique Collector*, November 1992, pp.82-85.

It was not just practical considerations that influenced these decisions; aesthetic effects also played a part in the choice of both panels and borders since, I argue, the printed panels combined arabesque and Etruscan style ornament. In the main sections arabesques composed of female allegorical figures and fabulous creatures familiar from Neoclassical ornament (sphinxes, lions, ram's heads) are interspersed with bouquets of flowers, scrolling ornament, baskets of fruit and foliage and birds. However, at the base of the panels (4.27, right) and above the doorframes a quite different motif is used. Here, architectural ornament enclosed scenes of nymphs dancing and carrying sacrifices. These scenes are also printed in a terracotta and black palette reminiscent of Etruscan ornament, discussed earlier, which contrasts with the main panels' arabesques. Similar arabesque panels by Réveillon from the Château du Bourbonnais have Etruscan borders (4.27, left). The choice of rose borders (4.28) at Moccas suggests again difficulties with supply or a desire to soften what was originally conceived as a more austere scheme, reflected in the Etruscan style tablets (4.26).

The sense of profusion and informality generated by more naturalistic patterns may also have been intended to harmonise with the room's traditional function as a summer sitting room, and to enhance the sense of closeness to the landscape generated by the bow form which the picturesque movement favoured (4.24). These give onto grassy terraces leading to a dramatic cliff on the Wye, a river that, thanks to William Gilpin's western tour of 1775, enjoyed a key place in theories of the picturesque since it was in this publication that he both systemised the picturesque as an aesthetic category, and

demonstrated its application to viewing scenery.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, Sir George was a close friend of his neighbour Richard Payne Knight, one of the movement's key supporters, and it may have been his influence that led Sir George both to commission the topographer Thomas Hearne to execute a series of views of the landscape at Moccas in 1790, and also to employ Humphrey Repton to remodel the landscape in the mid 1790s.<sup>127</sup>

Reading this scheme is however complicated by the addition of painted elements.<sup>128</sup> Jacqué suggests the panels were repainted when the scheme was put up, a position reinforced by Véronique de Bruignac-La Hougue who argues that this was done to accommodate the room height.<sup>129</sup> If contemporary with the papers, this suggests a desire for even more up to date form of decoration, since James Lomax has pointed out the similarity between the Moccas paintings and the vogue for Pompeian decoration of the 1770s and 1780s seen in the Dowager Lady Egerton's dressing room (now known as the 'Cupola Room') at Heaton Hall in Lancashire.<sup>130</sup> However, I would suggest that these painted additions were added later, perhaps even in the twentieth century, in order to reduce the area of undecorated ground in line with post-war taste.<sup>131</sup>

At both Clandon and Moccas, paper was both contained within ordered architectural frameworks, and, as at Kempshott, signified the owners' desire to display their

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<sup>126</sup> Susan Rasmussen, 'Let us amuse ourselves with searching after effects. This is the general intention of Picturesque travel', in *Travel by the book* (Birmingham: George Bell Institute, 2006), pp.7-26 (p.10).

<sup>127</sup> Thompson, 'Moccas Court II', p.1556 & fig 8, p.1557.

<sup>128</sup> The panels have been extended in height by the painting of additional sections and details in and around the main design. Four narrower painted panels have also infill expanses of open wall between the main panels on either side of the chimneypiece. The white ground has also been repainted in blue, and the printed panels repainted in cream, perhaps to disguise the cutting and fading of the original blue ground.

<sup>129</sup> Véronique de Bruignac-La Hougue, 'Arabesques and Allegories: French Decorative Panels' in Hoskins, pp. 76-93, ill. fig 104, p.81.

<sup>130</sup> James Lomax, 'The First and Second Earls of Wilton and Heaton House', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 82 (1983) 59-101 (pp.77-79).

<sup>131</sup> This work may have been part of the 1947 restoration by an Italian artist, Paul Machiadi, see *A brief history and guide to Moccas Court* [n.d.].

alignment with the taste for more naturalistic motifs and lighter effects associated with France. Furthermore, the evidence of Clandon suggests that in some families there was a particular taste for the effects which flock paper offered (just as 'India' papers were installed by the family of the Earls of Buckinghamshire at a number of sites), and this may well reflect familiarity with English papers hung as an all over repeating pattern which led the Onslows to reject a panelled paper.

What study of these schemes at Moccas (c.1778) and Clandon (c.1790) suggests is that, far from rejecting arabesque designs as redolent of excess, such designs were thought suitable for grand new spaces of sociability. However, like the schemes created using 'India' paper discussed in chapter 2, these papers were modified to suit the particularities of site and function.

I want to end by returning to another type wall decoration, the use of bold borders and stiles with a frieze, the format favoured by Portarlington. As noted in chapter 1, plain painted papers had been popular since the 1760s, since verditer (blue or green) was thought to form a suitable background to gilt framed pictures, as illustrated in the interior of Thomas Coutts' study (4.29).<sup>132</sup> They were still popular at the end of the century when Pajot des Charmes' manual on bleaching described the qualities of washed and ground 'verdigrease' in terms he evidently felt his readers would understand as 'absolutely equal in colour to that fine English green so highly esteemed, with which the fashionable paper-hangings are printed'.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Lady Mary Coke (1756-74) described a visit to Lady Bute's house in Notting Hill in 1774 where 'Almost all the rooms are hung with light green plain papers which show the pictures to great advantage', quoted in Entwisle, *LH*, p.50.

<sup>133</sup> C. Pajot des Charmes, *The art of bleaching piece-goods*, London, 1799, p.243 in ECCO [accessed 9 November 2007].

This continued popularity is not, I argue, purely a matter of economy. As John Cornforth has noted, verditers 'could be very useful in a range of neo-classical rooms', hung with a gilt filet or a paper border to enhance the room's formal effects, an effect reproduced in a 'baby house' which survives at Kew where green verditer paper was used extensively, including in the drawing room (4.30).<sup>134</sup> This type of scheme seems to be what William Brialsford of Sheffield (traded c.1774-1837) supplied to the Fifth Duke of Devonshire in April 1774, billing the Duke for a 'verditur blue furniture paper and border' together with '32 pieces Rich pea green furniture paper'.<sup>135</sup>

The popularity of decorations composed of borders and stiles with a frieze is evidenced by the inclusion of a drawing room 'of a town house', described as 'done in paper with ornamental borders of various colours' in Sheraton's *The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book* of 1793 (4.31).<sup>136</sup> Stiles and borders of delicate arabesques are used to form large rectangular panels, offset with what appear to be a painted frieze and over-door ornaments, a scheme inspired by the interiors of Carlton House. These fashionable interiors demonstrated, according to Saumarez Smith, Sheraton's interest in a new and 'more French style of interior'.<sup>137</sup> Sheraton had seen the drawing rooms of the Prince of Wales, Duke of York and 'other noblemen', he claimed, however, that he had not followed one but used particulars from each 'to give a display of the present taste in fitting up such rooms'.<sup>138</sup>

By the beginning of the nineteenth century schemes employing printed borders on a plain or painted ground to create architectural effects, a cheaper version of

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<sup>134</sup> John Cornforth, 'Archaeology and Wallpaper', *CL*, 26 January 1984, pp.218-19.

<sup>135</sup> Geoffrey Beard, *Upholsterers and Interior Furnishing in England 1530-1840* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with the Bard Graduate Center, New York, 1997), p.220.

<sup>136</sup> Quoted in MacIver Percival, 'Wallpaper of the Sheraton Period', fig 1, p.297.

<sup>137</sup> Saumarez Smith, p.185.

<sup>138</sup> Ralph Fastnedge, *Sheraton Furniture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), plate 26 'A Plan & Section of a Drawing Room', pl.26, p.91.

Portarlington's stiles and frieze, were becoming popular. Such schemes would have been particularly appealing to urban consumers, who, as noted in chapter 1, needed to update decoration frequently due to changes of occupancy and the effects of pollution. By 1808 Thomas Hall of 85, Cheapside was emphasising on his trade card that he could meet demand for this new type of decoration, advertising a 'Variety of New & Fashionable Paper Hangings, Borders enrich'd Ornaments & Gold Mouldings adapted for plain & Panell'd Rooms' alongside 'Landscape Paintings by the first artists'. Hall also stressed he could supply patterns and workmen alike to 'any part of the Kingdom', suggesting both a desire to maintain metropolitan dominance of supply and hanging, and that demand for such schemes extended beyond London.<sup>139</sup>

The adaptability of these elements allowed them to incorporate a range of stylistic motifs, including not only those derived from arabesques, but also from Etruscan and more exotic sources, and seems to be closely associated with the drawing room. For example in 1796 a panelled scheme was used to convey taste for Etruscan decoration at Putney Hill (4.32). The interior shows a circular sitting room in a modest (but still prosperous) home; the room is decorated in a painted finish hung with stiles in a pattern composed of figurative medallions printed in a distinctive Etruscan palette. As at Moccas, the circular form has perhaps dictated the use of a panelled scheme rather than an all over pattern: motifs are easily adapted as repeating patterns for the stiles and borders, used both to create a geometric panel above the chimneypiece, and to divide the wall up vertically above dado height.

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<sup>139</sup> BM,BC 91.15.



## 4.6 Conclusion

The examples discussed in this chapter do then display the range of decorative options, including all over patterns, panels and panelled decorations created with borders and stiles, which were being employed by the end of the century. Rather than the ‘partial eclipse of the English maker’ the last decades of the century saw new partnerships replacing older, established firms, some of whom had continental links. Changes also took place in retail display, and the business of hanging paper became an area contested by groups supplying other forms of interior decoration. Whilst design models from France were to some extent adopted, other preferences reflect awareness of changes in designed objects, such as ceramics. Where French papers (or English versions of French papers) were hung, their effects were often modified on site by English firms, in a similar manner to the skills needed to successfully hang Chinese paper. Moreover, such papers were being employed in key spaces of sociability, notably the drawing room, where they offered an alternative to textiles and painted finishes.

## 5. Conclusion: The place of eighteenth-century paper hangings

When Margaret Jourdain wrote her article on Chinese papers for *Country Life* in the late 1940s she used a then unfamiliar term ‘paper hangings’.<sup>1</sup> Since then it has been lost again under the relentless march of a more modern (and frequently derogatory) term, ‘wallpaper’. However, in this study I have shown that to eighteenth century producers, retailers and consumers paper hangings were not a derogatory category, but one associated with innovation and modernity.

Paper hangings played an integral role in the growth of consumerism in the eighteenth century. The study has shown how certain influential tradesmen moved into the supply of this new commodity, using skills gained in supplying other materials for the wall, creating a specialist industry that merited new taxation regulations. Technical innovations underwent a shift in the period: skills in printing, handling colour and creating new patterns were all important. However, my study has also shown that it is an hitherto neglected area, evidence of skills in distribution and paper hanging, which was the real key to success. Paper also gave rise to a new class of tradesmen, the paper hangings manufacturer, whose skills in this area enabled the trade to survive despite competition from stationers, upholsters and those involved in supplying other decorative and household goods.

The ability to respond to shifts in the consumer’s taste was also vital to success. Paper could quickly be printed in new designs or new colour-ways, and could be rapidly dispatched to provincial as well as metropolitan suppliers. Demand could also be met for borders against a plain ground or all over patterns, non repeating or repeating

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Jourdain, ‘Chinese Paper Hangings’, *CL*, 1 October 1948, pp.684-685.

papers, textured or reflective finishes The study has also revealed paper's ability to look outside two dimensional ornament, incorporating design sources from not just textiles, but also stucco and ceramics. Wallpaper was both admired (and criticised) for this malleability. By the end of the century it is established as having an integral role in the decoration of the interior.

I have also built a case for the product's significance as a shifting boundary between the genders; in particular its ability to mark out different areas of the home. However, there are no simple divisions here: for example, both men and women hung Chinese papers, and they often collaborated on the choice of papers. It is much more difficult to come to firm conclusions on the spread of wallpaper down the social scale from the examples examined here. However, the evidence, although small, does extend across the social classes showing aristocratic, gentry and even provincial tradesmen using papers on their walls (Appendix 2). What is also clear is that paper is progressing through the house, perhaps even constructing different kinds of hierarchies in keeping with new modes of living, by marking out different levels of sociability. It is also being used to express modernity, even if different styles were used in different rooms to achieve this effect.

The study has also sought to find new ways of linking the sources on paper hangings. Trade cards, bills and descriptions have been brought to bear with analysis of the papers themselves, and whenever possible papers with a known provenance to a site. The industry provides the potential for much valuable new research to be undertaken in this area, bringing paper hangings from the background to the foreground.

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### 3. Conferences and seminars

*At Home*, symposium held at the Geffrye Museum, London, May 2008

*Classical Collections and British Country Houses and Gardens*, held at The Open University, Milton Keynes, 12 December 2008

*Eighteenth Century Directions*, PG student conference held at the University of Birmingham, 11 June 2006

*Literature and the Domestic Interior*, conference organised by the Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior, held at the V&A, 23 October 2004

*Metamorphosis and the Migration of Forms: Exploring the Sculptural Imagination in the Decorative Arts*, conference held at The Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, November 2008

*The Georgian Interior*, conference held at the V&A, 4-5 November 2005

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## Appendix 1: Sample fieldwork sheet

Location:  
Date viewed:  
Sample ref no:

Title:

Date:

Size:  
Size constituent sheets:

Colours:

Technique(s):

Pattern

Excise duty marks?

Drop/width pattern

Provenance:

Illustrated/Literature:

**List of principal sites discussed in the text**

Papers are organised as far as possible by date, unless more than one paper is listed for a site, in which case the earliest is given first. Papers are English, unless otherwise stated.

Where two dates are given the first date is the one for which I have found the best evidence.

In list of country houses all sites were visited except where indicated \*.

\*\* denotes a site visited/investigated, but not discussed in the text

**1. Country houses**

Site	Room	Paper	Supplier/manufacturer	Client	Date
Saltram House, Devon	First floor SE dressing room & screen	Chinese paper		? Sir John and Lady Catherine Parker	early 18C
“	Second floor (N front) Colopies bedroom & dressing room	Chinese papers with English borders	? Thomas Bromwich	“	c.1756
“	First floor SW bedroom	Chinese watercolours with English borders	“	John and Theresa Parker	After 1760, c.1775- 1800
**Salthrop House, Swindon <i>Paper not traced</i>	?Oval room above main entrance	Chinese paper			c.1720- c.1750
*Longnor Hall, Shropshire	Ground floor dining room	English paper in the Chinese style		?Sir Uvedale and Lady Mildred Corbett	Before 1723
Felbrigg Hall, Norfolk	First floor Bow Window dressing room	Chinese paper [rail border] with gold cord	James Paine/	William Windham for Mrs Windham	1751
Strawberry Hill, Middlesex	Hall and staircase	Gothic paper (painted)	Thomas Bromwich	Horace Walpole	1753
**Dalemain, Cumbria	Ground floor drawing Room	Chinese paper & rail border	Thomas Bromwich	Capt Cheyne ?for Edward Hasell	1756
Hampden House, Buckinghamshire	Ground floor parlour and State bedchamber	Chinese papers	?John Linnell/?Thomas Bromwich	John Hampden, First Earl of Buckinghamshire	1758
*Doddington Hall, Lincolnshire	Rooms off corridor (first floor) and in NE Tower	'Print room' papers	?Peter Babel	Sir John Hussey Delavel	c.1760
Blickling Hall, Norfolk	First floor Chinese bedroom, dressing room [and ?powdering room]	Chinese papers and borders	? Gift of Henrietta Howard, Lady Suffolk	John Hobart, Second Earl of Buckinghamshire	1760s
Uppark, West Sussex	Print Room	Prints & ornaments: painted	Mrs. Vivares and Regniers Print Shop (prints etc)	Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh	1774

## Appendix 2

		flower pots (collaged on dado)	? Sarah Fetherstonhaugh (flower pots)		
*Ramsbury Manor, Wiltshire	2 suites of bedrooms and dressing rooms	Chinese papers	Associated with Macartney gift to Coutts, see 59, The Strand (below)		c.1775
Clandon Park, Surrey	Ground floor Palladian room	Arabesque paper <i>Les Deux Pigeons</i>	Attrib. to Réveillon	First Earl of Onslow (?supplier and client)	After 1778
Boston Manor, Hounslow	Stair	'Ruins' paper and border	?Isherwoods	?Ann Clitherow	1786 (or1760s)
Moccas Court, Herefordshire	Ground floor round drawing room	Arabesque panels and borders	Attrib to Réveillon/John Sherringham	Sir George Amyand	1790
**Shugborough, Staffordshire	Red drawing room	Varnished linen	Eckhardts	Sir Thomas Anson	1794
Kempshott Park, Surrey (demolished)	Upper hall	Arabesque panels	Gift of the Prince of Wales/ Arthur et Robert	Lady Fitzherbert	1790s, ?after 1795
**Fawley Court, Oxfordshire <i>Paper not traced</i>	First floor bed chamber	Chinese paper	? Bromwich's successors	?Strickland Freeman	1796- 1821
**Willington Hall, Cheshire <i>Paper not traced</i>	Octagonal ?dressing room	English paper in the Chinese style			
**The Vyne, Hampshire	Ground floor print room		Scheme devised by Elizabeth Chute and her nieces		1815
**Laxton Hall, Northamptonshire	NW Bed chamber& dressing room	<i>Vues de L'Inde</i>	?George Dance/Dufour	George Freke Evans	After 1815
"	NE Bed chamber & dressing room	<i>Les Sauvages De La Mer Pacifique</i>	"	"	"
**Ombersley Park, Worcestershire	Drawing room	Chinese painted silk panels	Furniture by Elward, Marsh and Tatham, after 1802	Dowager Marchioness of Downshire	Prob. after 1815
Temple Newsam House, Yorkshire	Ground floor drawing room	Chinese papers with English borders & papier mâché	Gift of the Prince of Wales, 1806/scheme by ?Morel & Seddon	Isabella, Marchioness of Hertford	1827
Clarence House, Brockwell Park, Lambeth (demolished)	?Drawing room	Chinese paper			Before 1835
**Stratfield Saye, Hampshire	Print rooms		First Duke of Wellington (purchaser and conceived schemes)		After 1833



## Appendix 2

<b>2. London houses</b>					
23, Hill Street	First floor rear; dressing Room	Chinese paper	?Linnell/?Bromwich	Elizabeth Montagu	c.1750
47, Leicester Square (demolished)	First floor front	Flock	? James Paine or ?Sir William Chambers/	Sir Joshua Reynolds	1760-92, ? 1760s
26, Soho Square (demolished)	First floor (front, rear and bedroom)	Flock	Thomas Chippendale/	Sir William Robinson	c.1760
17, Albemarle Street, W.1	Second floor (rear); first floor (rear)	Flock; mock flock			c.1760
1, Amen Court	Parlour	Gothic			Late 1760s
16, Young Street, Kensington	Stair	Classical ruins & gothic borders		?John Richards	c.1760-65
59, The Strand (Coutts Bank)	First floor drawing room	Chinese paper	?Gift of Lord Macartney	Thomas Coutts	c.1794 (or c.1769)
<b>3. Provincial town houses</b>					
'Berkeley House', 31, Long Street, Wootton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire	First floor rear ?bedroom (assoc. with powdering room?)	English paper in the Chinese style with English borders		?William Mayo	c.1740
The Ancient High House, Greengate Street, Stafford	Hall and stair; first and second floor rooms	Hybrid stucco papers;flocks		?Brooke Crutchley	1760s
House at Sulgrave, Oxfordshire	Ground floor hall	Stucco paper in the Chinese style			c.1760s
The Old Manor, Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire	<i>Unused</i>	'Print room' papers & stucco ceiling paper	Previously attrib. to Bromwich/Spinnage		Late 1760s
**House at Wallbridge, Stroud, Glos		'Print room' paper and border		Stroud mill owner	c.1770
House on Glamorgan Street, Brecon		Flocked arabesque panel	English, after Réveillon		c.1785
Harrington House, Bourton-on-the-Water <i>Paper not traced</i>	First floor front: upper hall	painted panels	Previously attrib. to J.B.Jackson	Lady Harrington	Late 1780s (?1788)
House in Alresford, Hampshire	Basement (ground floor?) room	gothic			c.1800

**Preliminary list of London paper hangings tradesmen researched for the thesis, c.1740-c.1800**

Names are arranged alphabetically, except where a name in **bold** is followed by others in light type: this indicates the name(s) in light type may be a successor (s) or partner(s).

Dates are based on the following primary sources: Thomas Mortimer's list in *The Universal Director* (1763), *The new and complete guide* (1774), *Bailey's Directory* (1784), *The London & country printers* (1785), *Boyle's Directory* (1793); Tradecards (tcs) & bills in the British Museum (BM, HC/BC), Bodleian Library, John Johnson Collection (Bod, JJC), Guildhall Library (GL) & Museum of London (ML).

Ambrose Heal's notes in the BM, HC collection (*AH*), Treve Rosoman's appendix compiled 1992 (*R*) and *DEFM* entries have also been listed where they relate to dating.

The list includes stationers, but excludes upholders & cabinet-makers.

<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Trade(s)</b>	<b>Location(s)</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Tradecard/bill</b>
<b>Armitage &amp; Roper</b> , Armitage & Moore (1791; 1793 Stationer & Paper hangers), Rickman Moore (1793)	Stationers & Paper Hanging Manufactory (Stationers & Paper Hanger, 1793)	63 (The Bible & Crown) Bishopsgate Within, and at their manufactory in Petticoat Lane.	1763, 1774; 1793; <i>AH</i> Directs 1768 & 1799; <i>R</i> 1768-86	Bill BM, HC 91.1 177(); tc 91.2
<b>Gough &amp; Moore</b> , Moore & Gough (1784), Wm. Moore (1793)	Paper Hanging-manufacturers (1784 makers)	11, Great Bell Alley, Coleman St & 6, Aldgate Without	1774; 1784; 1793; <i>R</i> 1774-6)	
<b>Ann Biddulph</b>	Stationer, Print Seller and Paper hanger	Gt. Dover St, Borough	Late 18C	Tc GL
<b>Birch &amp; Overy</b> associated with Richard Overy; Birch and Overy (1793)	Paper Hangings Manufacturers (Paper Stainers, 1793 associated with Charles Overy?, paper stainer of Bethnall Green, 1763)	76, Fleet St	c.1784-98	Bill ML 66.94/23, 24 (J.Thomas & Co, 1784)
<b>Blew (Blue) Paper Warehouse</b> associated with Robert Dunbar ( <i>R</i> 1720s-52); Abraham Price ( <i>R</i> c.1690-1750s?)	Paper warehouse	Aldermanbury	<i>R</i> 1691-c.1740s	Tc c.1720; Bill ML 21704/133 (Ab. Price to Robt Hucks, 1740)
John Hall; Abraham Hall	Paper Hanging Manufacturer	Aldermanbury	1763 (John); 1774 (John)	See correspondence between AH and EA Entwisle, 1949

## Appendix 3

			& Son) 1784 (Abraham R 1783-1804)	(BM, HC 91.44- 91.45)
<b>Bowers &amp; Co</b>	Paper Stainer	21, Old Bond St	1793	
<b>Thomas Bromwich</b>	Leather Gilder & Paper Merchant (1744)	The Golden Lion, 35, Ludgate Hill	1742- d.1787; R 1744-60s	Bills: BM, HC 91.5 (Richard Hoare 1742), 91.6 (Mrs Hoare 1744), 91.7 (Mr Bennett 1749); BM, BC 91.32 (A. Stevenson); ML 20/07/05 & A8601/27 (Mrs Hucks, 1748 & 1754)
<b>Thomas Bromwich &amp; Leonard Leigh</b>	Paper stainers; tc manufactory	The Golden Lion, Ludgate Hill	1763; <i>DEFM</i> 1758-65	Handbill BM, BC 91.1; tc BM, HC 91.9; Bills: BM, HC 91.10 (Mr. Bennet 1765) 91.11 (Edward Turnour 1759)
<b>Bromwich, Isherwood &amp; Bradley</b>	Paper hangings manufacturer	The Golden Lion, Ludgate Hill	1774; <i>DEFM</i> 1769-88	Bills: BM, HC 91.8 (Mr.Hall, 1770)
<b>Isherwood &amp; Bradley</b>	Paper-Hanging, carving, Gilding, Looking Glass & Screen Warehouse (tc);Paper hangings manufacturer (1793)	35, Ludgate Hill	1793; R c.1785- 92; Isherwood & Co.1793-1818)	Tc BM, BC 91.16 (1788); Bills: BM, HC 91.34 (Lady Ann Conolly, 1788) 91.35 (Wm Drake, 1792)
<b>G. Britton</b>	Paper hanging manufacturer	107, Bermondsey St	1793	
<b>Jo. Brown</b>	Paper Stainer	45, Cheapside	1793	
<b>John Boover Brooks (previously Samuel)</b>	Paper Hanging Manufacturer	39, Great Queen St, Lincolns Inn Fields	1774;1784; 1785-92	
<b>John Brown</b>	Stationer and Paper-Hanging Maker	45, Cheapside near Bread Street	1794	Bill GL (James Duff, 1794)
<b>Edward Canon (R 1780); Canon &amp; Buzzard (R 1794-1801)</b>	Paper machee manufacturer (1774); Paper hanging and looking glass Warehouse (1784)	109, High Holborn	1780s-1801	

## Appendix 3

Buzzard (John)	Manufactory & exhibition rooms for paper hangings looking glasses etc	109, High Holborn	R 1804-20	BM, BC 91.1
Thomas Cobb	Hanging paper (also paper for printing & writing)	25, Warwick Court, Warwick Lane	R 1797-99?	Tc BM, BC 91.5, BM, Hc 91.14
Joseph Cox	Paper stainer (R also calico printer)	Thomas St, Shad Thames	1793; R c.1786-1812	
James Creswick	Paper Hanging manufacturer (R also pasteboard warehouse)	10, Basing Lane	1793; R 1792-94	
Crompton & Spinnage (1763 Spinnage & Compton)	Warehouse (1774 manufacturers 'To his Majesty')	Charles St, St. James Square; Cockspur St, Charing Cross	1753-late 1760s	tc BM, HC 91.23, tc BM, HC 91.24 c.1769
Crompton & Hodgson	Paper stainer	Castle St		Bill BM, HC 91.19
William Hodgson	Paper Stainer	Bishopsgate	1774	
Benjamin Crompton & son (James by 1793)	Paper hanging maker & upholster (1774) Warehouse (1776) Manufacturer (1793)	Suffolk St Cockspur St (1793)	R 1770-92 (James, 1794)	Bill BM, HC 91.20 (Mr Turner, 1776); 91.22 (Mr Turner, 1769)
Spinnage & Howard; Assoc. with Wm Spinnage, upholster (1770-77), Ann Howard (1783)	Paper Hanging makers & upholsterers	Gerrard St, Soho	1774	
Matthias Darly	Manufactory; Painter, Engraver & Paper Stainer	The Golden Acorn, The Strand	b c.1720-d. c.1779, R c.1760-75	Handbill BM, BC 91.7
Davenport's	Paper Hanging manufactory	St Albans Street, nr Pall Mall	1792	Tc BM, BC 91.8 (Inscr 1792, engraved Darly)
Evan Davis	Paper Stainer; also Stationer & Paper hanger	90, Blackman St, Southwark	1793	
William Demeza(l)	Paper maker, Stationer & Flock manufacturer	75, Whitechapel	R 1783	Tc BM, BC 91.31

## Appendix 3

<b>Dobson &amp; Hayward</b>	Paper makers & Paper Hangers	114, Wardour St, Oxford St	R 1801-12	Tc BM, BC 91.10 (Inscr.1791)
<b>William Duffour</b>	Carver, gilder & papier mâché maker	The Golden Head, Berwick St	DEFM c.1760-84	
<b>James Duppa</b>	Paper hanger & paper hanging warehouse	42, Lombard St	1793; R 1794-c.1804	
<b>Eckhardts &amp; Woodmason (1786)</b>	Royal Patent manufactory & exhibition rooms	Old Whitelands House, Kings Rd, Chelsea & (rooms) 8, Old Bond St	1780s-c.1800	Booklet BM, BC 91.12, inscr. May, 1793
<b>Feilds</b>	Paper Hanging Warehouse	Mill St, Hanover Sq, Pall Mall	c.1791	Tc BM, BC 91.14 Inscr 1791
<b>William Fry</b>	Paper Stainer	3, Ludgate Hill	1774	
<b>Robert Fryer's</b>	Upholstery & Paper Hanging Warehouse	23, Aldermanbury		Tc GL
<b>William Grant</b>	Paper Staining and/or paper hang. Warehouse (1774) Paper stainer (1793)	Nassau St, Soho	1774; 1793	

## Appendix 3

<b>Haden &amp; Son</b>	Paperhanging Maker	St John's St, Smithfield	1763	
<b>Harford's (Samuel)</b>	Paper Warehouse; Stationer & paper hanging maker (1774)	The Eagle, 33, Milk Street, Cheapside	R 1754-72	Tc BM, HC 91.32
<b>Wm Harriman</b>		81, Upper Thames St	1793	
<b>Harwood's (William)</b>	Paper Hangings Manufacturer	21, Old Bond St; Upper Charles St, Portman Sq; 11, Upper George St, Bryanstone Sq, 1798-1820	R 1798-1802, 1811-18, 1819-c.1820	Tc BM, HC 91.33 (c.1813)
<b>Oliver &amp; Harwood</b>	Decorative Paper Hangers	1, Maddox St, Regent St	?	Tc BM, HC 90.80
<b>William Heath</b>	Paper stainer	10, Well Court, Queen St, Cheapside	1793; R 1789-1804, also marble paper maker; 1814-18 fancy paper manuf	
<b>William Hodgson</b>	Paper stainer	55, Bishopsgate Within, or Kingsland	1774; R from 1772, later Smithfield, trading into 1810s	
<b>Edward Holmes</b>	R wholesale paper & rag warehouse	59, Holburn Hill	1793; R 1792-94	
<b>Jones's (William &amp; Thomas)</b>	Manufactory; India paper	71, Holburn Hill (later Shoe Lane)	R trading here from 1771-83	Tc BM, HC 91.37 (engraved Daryl)
<b>John Kingsbury</b>	Stationer & Printseller	Tooley St, Southwark		Bod JJC Booktrade tc 5
<b>Thomas Lovewell</b>	Paper maker & Stationer	80, Aldersgate Street	R 1779-c.1789	Tc BM, HC 91.40
<b>William Lovell</b>	Paper stainer	138, Fleet Street	1793; R 1797-1810	Bill BM, HC 91.39 (Miss Harrison, 1802)
<b>James Mackenzie</b>	Bookseller & Stationer	80, Newgate St, Cheapside	1770	Bod
<b>Masefield's (Richard)</b>	Manufactory for Mock India Paper Hanging & Papier Machée	427, The Strand	1763; R c. 1758 & 1780-1809?	Handbill BM, BC 91.20 (1760s)
<b>Joseph Knight</b> ?apprentice to	Paper manufactory	427, The Strand	R 1788-1819	bill BM, HC 91.38 (Mr Michie, 1788)

## Appendix 3

<b>Th. Dobyns</b>				
<b>Pope &amp; Mackellan's</b>	Upholstery & Paper Hanging Warehouse	The Pope's Head, Harvey Court, nr Half Moon St (Bedford St), The Strand	c.1734; <i>DEFM</i> c.1760	Tc BM, HC 91.44
<b>H. Martin &amp; Co</b>	Paper hangings manufacturers (& other household services)	'Regent Cottage', 134, Regent St	R 1800s	Tc BM, BC 91.19
<b>John Middleton</b>	Colour manufactory & paper hanging warehouse (later paper stationer)	80/81, St Martin's Lane	R c.1792-1806 & c.1806-10	
<b>John Owen</b>	Paper stainer	173, Shoreditch	1793; R c.1792-1818	
<b>Ebenezer Palmer</b>	Paper hanging & Stationery Warehouse	85, Cheapside	R e19C (the Poultry & Fish Hill St)	Bod, JJC Booktrade Trade cards 5
<b>William Paul</b>	Manchester Paper Hanging Manufacturer	21, Snow Hill	1784	
<b>Mary Philpot</b>	Paper stainer	16, Market St. St.James's	1793	
<b>Robert Pickering</b>	Paper Hanging Manufacturer	61, Cheapside	1793; R c.1792-94	
<b>Henry Pinkcomb</b>	Stationery & Paper Hanging Manufacturer	42, Fish street Hill	1784	
<b>Jo Pugh later William</b>	Paper Hanger (later Stationer & paper hanger)	18, Blackman St	1793; R 1802-12	
<b>Ralph</b>	Paper Hanging Manufacturer	108, St Martin's Lane, Charing Cross	c.1791- c.1801	Tcs BM, BC 91.2, 25, 26 (inscr 1791, 1801)
<b>William Ridgway</b>	Stationer, sells 'newest fashion figured paper for hanging rooms'	The White Bear, Warwick Court, Holburn	c.1755	Bod JJC Booktrade tc 4
<b>Roberts's (Robers? 1763)</b>	Paper hangings warehouse (1763 manufacturer)	Pall Mall	1763	Bod JJC Booktrade tc 23 (95)
<b>William Joseph Rogers</b>	Stationery & Paper Hanging Maker	139, Minories	1784; R 1794-98, c.1801-20	
<b>Salte (Salt) &amp; Baker</b>	Paper Hanging Manufacturers	103, Cheapside	1763; 1774; R c.1753-76	
<b>John</b>	Decorator in	Great	1786-1802;	

## Appendix 3

<b>Sherringham</b>	ornamental paper hangings	Marlborough St, Chelsea	R 1797-1801	
<b>William Smith</b>	Paper Hanging Manufacturer	Blackman Street, Southwark	1774	
<b>John Sigrist</b>	Paper Hangings manufacturer	The Kings Arm's, 214, Piccadilly (1778)	R c.1778-89	Tc BM, HC 91.48 (1770s); Patent BM, BC 91.9 (Leicester Fields, Green St, ?1770s)
<b>Robson &amp; Hale</b>	Paper Hanging Manufacturers	214, Piccadilly 218, Piccadilly (1793)	1793; R c1790-1820	Tc BM, HC 91.46; Bill GL (Verney, 1809)
<b>G. Rogers</b>	Bookseller & binder (sells paper hangings)	Bible Institute, Within Bishopsgate		Bod, JJC tc 5
<b>Joseph Smith</b>	Paper Hangings maker & Stationer	Rose & Crown, Angel St, St Martin le Grand	R 1753-68?	Tc BM, HC 91.49; Bill BM, HC 91.50 (Mrs Massingbred, 1753)
<b>William Squire</b>	Paper hangings maker (paper hanger, 1774)	Three Tents, The Poultry	1763; 1774; R c.1763-86	Bill BM, HC 91.52 (1760s), tc BM, BC 91.27
<b>Robert Stark</b>	Paper hangings manufactory (1774 paper hanging merchant)	41, Ludgate Hill	1774; R 1765-76	Bill head BM, HC 91.53; Bill Guildhall Lib (Mr Vezean, 1782)
<b>Johnston &amp; Young</b>	Paper Hanging Makers	41, Ludgate Hill	1793 R 1783-c.1811	Bill BM, HC 91.36 (Mr Michie, 1783)
<b>Moses Staples</b>	Stationer & sells paper hangings	Paper Mill, Lombard St	R c.1773	Tc GL
<b>George Street</b>	Stationer; Machae & Paper Hanging Maker; Sells India Paper	60, Gracechurch Street		Bod, JJC, Booktrade 5
<b>Stubbs's</b>	Paper Hangers	29, St John St	c.1800	Tc BM, HC 91.54. Also transparencies
<b>Joseph Styles</b>	Stationer; sells hangings for rooms	The White Hart, King St, by Guildhall	R c.1742	Tc GL
<b>Taylor</b>	Paper stainer	Charles St, Hatton Garden	1785	
<b>Joseph Taylor</b>	Paper stainer	85, Smithfield	1785; R 1792-1804	
<b>(A) &amp; W. Thompson</b>	Stationer & paper hanger	1, Hand Court, Dowgate Hill	1793; R 1792-1804	
<b>Robert Thurley</b>	Stationer and Paper Hanger	24, Minorities	1785; R 1774	
<b>Bartholemew Tombs</b>	Paper Hanging Manufacturer & Stationer; Paper	7, Glasshouse St, Golden Square, Soho	1793	Tc BM, BC 91.28, c.1793



## Appendix 3

	hanger (1793)			
<b>Lewis Tomlinson</b>	Stationer: sells paper hangings	The Bible & Lamb, 124, Whitechapel		Bod, JJC Booktrade tcs 4
<b>William Trickett</b>	Stationer and vellum binder, sells paper hangings & Maché ornaments, also hanging	Oppos Cock Lane, Snow Hill	R late 18C	Tc GL
<b>J. &amp; G. Trollope</b>	Paper hangings manufacturers, Decorators etc	15, Parliament St., Westminster	ff.1778-	
<b>John Trymmer</b>	Paper Hanging Warehouse	The Rainbow, Newgate St	AH c.1740-50	Tc BM, HC 91.57; Bod JJC Booktrade tcs 5
<b>Richard &amp; Thomas Turner</b>	Paper Hanging Manufacturers; Stationers & Paper Hangers	13, Cornhill	1793; R 1792-97, c.1799-1807	
<b>Simon Vertue</b>	Stationer	Royal Exchange	1738	See correspondence betw.AH & Entwisle, 1943 (BM, HC, end)
<b>Richard Walkden</b>	Stationer (sells Paper Hangings for Rooms)	Ye Bell, London Bridge	Insc c.1750	Tc GL
<b>James Wheeley (acquired Wagg &amp; Garnett, 1754)</b>	Paper Staining and/or paper hang. Warehouse (1774); paper hangings manufacturer (1793)	Little Britain & 25, Aldersgate	1774; 1793 1754-1818	Handbill BM, BC 91.30, BM, HC 91.(c.1754)
<b>Kirby</b>	paper hanger	24, Little Britain	1785	
<b>Richard Wilkinson</b>	Stationer; makes & sells paper hangings	North Side of St Paul's Church Yard		Bod, JJC Booktrade tcs4
<b>Woollers</b>	Paper Hanging manufacturers	Nr Whitechapel Church	1763	

## Appendix 4

### **Map showing distribution of paper hangings' tradesmen in London, c.1740-c.1800.**

A red dot indicates the approximate location of the tradesmen listed in Appendix 3 whose streets appear on the map, which is taken from:

Richard Horwood, *Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster the Borough of Southwark and Parts adjoining Shewing every House*, engraving, 1792  
(British Library Maps. Crace.V. Item no.173)  
<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery>[accessed 10 July 2009].

