

Gitta Bertram, Nils Büttner, Claus Zittel, eds. *Gateways to the Book: Frontispieces and Title Pages in Early Modern Europe*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2021. Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture, vol. 76. xxxiii + 601 + 201 illus. \$199.00.

Tim Somers. *Ephemeral Print Culture in Early Modern England: Sociability, Politics and Collecting*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2021. Published in association with British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. xvi + 306 + 33 illus. \$115.00.

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Tim Somers's definition of ephemera in *Ephemeral Print Culture* suggests that his book has little in common with *Gateways to the Book*. According to Somers "ephemera is defined in relation to what it is *not*: expensive, durable books produced from multiple sheets, bound and safely stored on the shelves of a library, read infrequently, with relatively high survival rates" (3)—that is, the kinds of books that have elaborate title-page or frontispiece illustrations. Ephemera, often printed on single sheets, circulated in large quantities and was affordable on laborers' wages (4). In England approximately 20 million ballad sheets were printed between 1557 and 1708; between 5 to 10 million pamphlets circulated in the two year period 1679–1681; and in the 1660s one in three household owned an almanack (4–5). To Somers such a production scale suggests that "ephemera formed the backdrop of daily life" (5). If ephemera were common, then books containing illustrated title pages and frontispieces were elite; according to *Gateways to the Book*, their opening illustrations offered a royal way ("via regia") into the book culture grounded in the Republic of Letters (Bertram, Büttner, Zittel, 4). The initial illustrations

... provide emblematic models and ideograms; they are the key to the worlds of cognition and imagination; they show patterns of perception, ordering and reasoning; they shape the collective memory, and sometimes they even serve as tools for mediation. (Bertram, Büttner, Zittel, 4)

As different as these two varieties of print might appear, both *Gateways to the Book* and *Ephemeral Print Culture* establish the predominance of the printed word in early modern culture as well as the visual image's continuing significance.

Focusing as it does on title-page and frontispiece illustrations, *Gateways to the Book*'s central interest is iconographic interpretation, but as we shall see below, so is *Ephemeral Print Culture*'s. *Gateways to the Book*'s extensive first chapter defines visual reading practices and the book's academic scope; the fifteen essays that follow are divided into three parts. Part 1 (chapters 2–4) provides a foundation for understanding the subsequent chapters first, by defining the differences between title pages and frontispieces and tracing their historical development (Gitta Bertram); next, by explaining the uses of initial illustrations for the authority and prestige of printer-publishers, especially their representation of the Roman goddess Minerva as a patron for printers (Lea Hagedorn); and finally, by exploring the ways initial portraits served as publicity for authors and the political elite (Hole Rößler).

Part 2 (chapters 5 through 9) contains five essays that explain the relationship between initial illustrations and a book's contents within different disciplines. Chapter 5, which focuses on seventeenth-century German poetry, rejects the idea presented in Rößler's essay that frontispieces promoted authors, and finds, instead a variety of relationships between initial images and literary contents—from the formulaic, to the metaphorical and allegorical, to the ironic (Claus Zittel). The next chapter likewise finds a range of relationships between images and text—here in music textbooks—some of the earliest books theorize music by invoking the iconography of music's origins; later books' initial illustrations underscore a book's educational purpose; and among the latest books the initial images envision a readership interested in practicing music (Fabian Kolb). Chapter 7—on art books—sees frontispieces and title pages in books on architecture—with their depiction of architectural features like columns, platforms, and arches—as formative of an iconographic tradition appropriated by books in other disciplines. Surprisingly, though, books on painting and sculpture “only exceptionally” had frontispieces” (303, Constanze Keilholz). Chapter 8 turns to books on science, although rather unusually by focusing on frontispieces in fortification treatises that

display “increasingly close relationship between war and mathematics throughout the early modern period,” mostly through personifications of war and architecture in initial images (322, Delphine Schreuder). The final essay in the second part, presumably about travel guided by natural science, discusses some unusual title-pages and frontispieces that precede books about Africa and the Levant. Other than giving a nod to “science” by representing human differences, the frontispiece’s and title pages’ visualization of “‘Orient, Levant, Barbary, Ottoman Empire, Africa and Asia’ remained still quite undistinguished semantically and iconographically” (390, Cornel Zwierlein).

Part 3 (chapters 10 through 16) contain seven “Case Studies” that share little in common besides their focus on title pages and frontispieces. Chapter 10 offers a close allegorical reading of a group of title pages used in sixteenth-century Basel that visually represented the *Tabula of Cebe*, a dialogue by the ancient Socratic philosopher Cebe of Thebes, in which a group of youths discover the meaning of a painting that represents five stages of life (Miranda L. Elston). The next chapter discusses Peter Paul Rubens’s title pages influence upon his successors, in part, because his title pages established a pattern of architectural features that easily could be appropriated; in part, because authors and publishers sought him out for his reputation as a major painter. His title pages were notable for their “liveliness in the depiction of human figures” (438, Nils Bütner). In 1634 the Dutch painter Jacob van der Gracht published a book of anatomy, *Anatomie der witterliche deelen van het Menschelick Lichaem* (the subject of chapter 12) that intended artists rather than physicians as its readers: “The author adapted to artists’ needs materials extracted from the only works on anatomy then in circulations: books for medical practitioners” (451). While the title page depicts a dissection, its other elements indicate that the book itself, rather than dissection, would better “equip artists with the level of anatomical knowledge” necessary for their art (452, Alice Zamboni). The focus of chapter 13 is an eighteenth-century devotional work, *Cultus Sancti Francisci Saverii Societatis Jesu Japoniae & apostoli* (The Veneration of St. Francis Xavier of the Society of Jesus, apostle of Japan and the Indies). Each section of the book is dedicated to a devotional practice associated with St. Francis Xavier, and each section is preceded by its own frontispiece that allegorizes

the respective devotional practice. The images serve as meditational objects (Alison C. Fleming). Chapter 14 offers the collection's single analysis of a title-page exemplar from a manuscript, *Imagen de Dios I de sus obras (Pintura Sabia)*—Image of God and his Works (Wise Painting). This seventeenth-century Spanish text, whose teaching was aligned with the Jesuit idea that artistic uses of images and words could “enlighten” divine mysteries (“wise painting”), was written for a courtly patroness, and its title page figures the treatise's complex ideas about spirituality and art (Martijn van Beek). Jeremias Wolff (1663–1724), chapter 15's subject, was one of the most important publishers in Augsburg. His publications were in great demand by the Austro-German nobility, especially his “richly engraved architectural print collections” of aristocratic dwellings (527). This chapter describes these collections' most important features and concludes that “Patrons and authors capitalized on the print collection's ability to propagate idealized notions of princely sovereignty and cultural philanthropy through images of palace architecture” (354, Daniel Fulco). Most of this collection's essays focus on continental authors and publishers, but the final chapter is dedicated entirely to early eighteenth-century book illustration in Britain, namely for the publications of the poet, Edmund Waller. The essay finds the same kinds of frontispiece and title page conventions identified by this collection's other essays: monumental elements like architectural iconography and portraits of authors that secure their status and authority.

Taken as a material object, *Gateways to the Book*, is an impressive artifact. Its 199 illustrations of title pages and frontispieces, which are beautifully reproduced on coated stock, provide a rich resource for readers interested in paratextual illustration. (It also has two graphs.) The collection's organization, with its foundational essays in part 1 and with part 2's interdisciplinary focus, provides useful interpretative models for part 3's more idiosyncratic studies. As so often happens in essay collections, the contributions tend to be somewhat uneven. A few do little more than provide a written narrative for the illustrations being considered. A few are overly ambitious in the broad cultural conclusions they draw from limited examples. Most, however, offer valuable insights into the ways in which reading images and reading texts are interconnected—even in a culture where the printed word

predominates. As the extensive (and impressive) bibliographies for these essays suggest, substantial scholarship already exists on early modern title pages and frontispieces. As a consequence, the third part's case studies tend to be somewhat eccentric (Edmund Waller?!). Similarly, surely there must be better examples of initial illustrations for scientific publications than those from books on geometry and fortifications. Even so, *Gateways to the Book* offers valuable insights into explaining early modern print culture through printed images.

Gateways to the Book's editors inadvertently link their book to *Ephemeral Print Culture in Early Modern England* when their introduction observes that while systematic study of initial illustrations is "scarcely one hundred years old, their collection is much older" (7). The two most important collectors they note, Samuel Pepys and John Bagford, are central to Somers's *Ephemeral Print Culture*. Indeed, Bertram, *et. al.* say that Bagford's collection "influenced modern research on frontispieces and title pages" (9). Bagford, Somers says, is his "book's recurring case study from which to explore the whole world of collection" (3), which is the subject of *Ephemeral Print Culture*. John Bagford (1650/1–1716), a Londoner who was trained as a shoemaker, made his living as a 'book runner,' supplying clients, including Hans Sloane, Robert Harley and Samuel Pepys, with printed books and manuscripts. Interested in the history of printing, he was himself a collector of title pages, ballads, printed ephemera and manuscript fragments, and his own connoisseurship influenced the tastes his clients' collecting displayed. *Ephemeral Print Culture* focuses on collecting from the 1600s through the 1800s, a time where collecting ephemera "took on a heightened cultural significance" in two contexts: "the scientific, antiquarian and commercial activities of 'virtuoso culture'"; and "polemical uses of the past" (15). In the first case, "Baconian empiricism" fostered collectors' interest in "accumulating 'facts' and 'particulars' that advanced knowledge, and the ability to discuss such "facts" bestowed social cachet on the person. Following the 1660 Restoration of England's monarchy, print became instrumental in expressing the culture's highly volatile political and religious polarization. Bagford "exemplified the moderated, sociable ideals encouraged by the virtuoso community," but "as a historian of print he unavoidably engaged with political and religious controversies ... and provided controversial prints (both

topical and historical) to clients” (19).

Chapter 1 establishes the ways in which collecting expressed and enhanced social status, both for tradesmen (Bagford and his fellows) and their clients. Coffee houses became sites both of auctions where tradesmen acquired ballads, playing cards and samples of calligraphy, and of social exchange where tradesmen developed relationships with their clients and fostered their collections.

Chapter 2 addresses unusual specimens of ephemera produced by engravers and draftsmen in Bagford’s network: medleys and micrography (or miniature writing). In the latter religious texts were “miniaturised into spaces as small as a penny or shaped into ‘word-images’ (calligrams) representing divisive monarchs” (66). Medleys, which looked like collages, “juxtaposed ‘old’ and ‘new’ prints and manuscripts” in engravings that “deceptively” mimicked print typography and calligraphy (67). The objects medley makers produced invited comparisons between the past and the present, often to effect satire: “the objects in medleys evoked remembrance of the Reformation and Civil Wars, memories of which were highly contested in the 1700s” (70). Somers discusses several different medleys with different political and religious ideologies. Micrographic portraits were put to similar uses, as, for example, when the engraver John Sturt, constructed the image of King George I from the Book of Common Prayer’s prescribed prayers for the monarch, with the king becoming “an emblem of the church of England” (110).

Ballads from the Glorious Revolution (extant because of collectors like Bagford and Pepys) are the subject of Chapter 3. Somers considers these from the perspective of the juxtaposition of a ballad’s wording with its assigned melody; being conventional and regularly assigned to different ballads, melodies could complicate the interpretative field. By assigning a funeral tune to a celebration of William and Mary’s arrival, for example, could suggest that James II had actually abandoned his people. This chapter also gives interesting insights into ballad collections by identifying the categories Pepys and Bagford applied to their collections.

Nostalgia for “old” printed ephemera, the subject of Chapter 4, reflected a growing sense of “contemporaniety” that distinguished between a distant ruptured past and current partisanship. Among the

objects this chapter considers are documentary histories like John Rushworth's *Historical collections of private passages of state* (1569), that ostensibly encouraged impartial understanding of the past by reproducing parliamentary speeches and petitions, letters, accounts of trials, newsbooks, and pamphlets, without the collector's commentary. (Even so, the collector's selections reflected bias.) Rushworth's collection was printed, but Somers also considers collectors' manuscript compilations, as well as collections that included pages from Sternhold and Hopkins's "old" metrical Psalms, which had been used in Church of England worship service before a new translation appeared in 1698. As for Rushworth, choices reveal political and religious bias.

The final chapter (Chapter 6) turns to what best might be seen as the most ephemeral of ephemera, printed object that were often collected in scrapbooks. This chapter focuses on Bagford's collections that included in Bagford's words:

London's Trades, Signs, Cryes, arms, Plays & Pastimes, Noblemens arms, Tavern score Boards, Bills & advertisemmts, Turners [,] Englines, Lapidaries Mills, Tobacco paper. Tickets to Feasts, as the Musick, Painters, Anglers, City of Chester, St Andrews, Holborn, Apothecaries, Rowling pres[s] Printers[,] Sons of the Clergy, Stage Coaches, Waggones, &c. (197)

Somers categorizes this as a "natural and artificial curiosity collection," which joins others that were cut and pasted together. Such scrapbooks preserved ephemera "that both fascinated and repulsed their collector" to constitute a form of life writing that expressed a "collector's 'unique' identity" (225).

Ephemeral Print Culture in Early Modern England makes a significant contribution to our understanding of ephemera's importance in early modern England by looking at surviving ephemera through the lens of collecting and collections rather than by lamenting the imprecise understanding available to posterity because of all that has been lost. This book offers fresh insights into a highly polarized religious and political culture that was trying to make sense of its present through printed relics of its past, and which employed juxtaposition, allusion, and irony to do so. When we write and talk about "culture" we look for common reference points, but the nature of collections and collectors is by its very nature uncommon. The categories Samuel

Pepys used in his ballad collection tells us more about Samuel Pepys than about the nature of ballads. Rushworth's repudiation of a framing narrative for the documents he prints does not disguise his political bias, which, despite the repudiation, appears in his choices. Ultimately Somers shows us throughout this book that the "unique" identities that collectors and their collections forge tell us more about identify formation in early modern England than about ephemera itself.

Identity, then, is the common denominator between *Ephemeral Print Culture in Early Modern England* and *Gateways to the Book*, and it provides a valuable way of thinking about visual iconography in early modern print culture. Visual images' allusive quality enabled early modern printers, authors, and collectors to fashion their distinctive identities vis-à-vis their social stature, politics, religion, and position within the Republic of Letters in ways that extended beyond the seeming fixity of the printed word. These books make a significant contribution to the literature on early modern culture from the perspective of print.

Sean H. McDowell. *Metaphysical Shadows: The Persistence of Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and Marvell in Contemporary Poetry*. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2022. x + 203 pp. Review by MARGARET J. OAKES, FURMAN UNIVERSITY.

John Donne, lover/husband/father/poet/apologist/sermonizer/priest, is having a moment right now because of the widely lauded 2022 publication of Katherine Rundell's *Super-Infinite: The Transformations of John Donne*. Rundell deeply embraces the notion that Donne loved to balance, join, and clash paradoxes, both in his life and his writing. In reviewing Rundell's book, Lara Feigel of *The Guardian* notes that "For Rundell, Donne is writing into being a new ideal: a 'completed meshing of body and imagination'" (28 Apr 2022). The most introductory of student readings on Donne include the infamous wild images of "Batter my heart, three-personed God," "And in this flea our two bloods mingled be," and "Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one." Commonplaces about the violent juxtapositioning of images and the sacred and profane in Donne's work are not trite,