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OLD MAID ON A JOURNEY,

by James Gillray

An original framed hand-coloured etching and engraving by caricaturist James Gillray. The corpulent figure of the independent polymath, antiquarian and collector Miss Sarah Sophia Banks is depicted being shown into the best bedroom of an Inn followed by a grotesque retinue of gurning servants carrying her assorted baggage. Miss Banks was a prolific collector of printed ephemera including broadsheets, newspaper clippings, visiting cards, caricatures, advertisements and playbills as well as being a leading numismatist of her day. Her great library of volumes on ancient coins as well as her capacious collection of the coins themselves was gifted to the nation upon her death and are now spread over the Royal Mint, The British Library and British Museum. One of the 18th Century's brilliant but unacknowledged women, Sarah Banks was the sister of the famous botanist Joseph Banks who sailed with Captain Cook to New South Wales. According to recent scholarship as well as editing her brother's manuscripts she often conversed with him on their subjects and many of her ideas were incorporated into his writings. Perhaps puzzlingly, given the warm and close friendship which was said to exist between Gillray and his wealthy female patron, Miss Banks is depicted as a obscenely fat and ugly. One can only speculate on the nature of the comedy and manners of the time (not to mention the sense of humour of the subject) when interpreting the comic effect of this print.

DIMENSIONS: 33.5cm (13^{3/4}") High, 45.5cm (18") Wide, Including frame.

PRICE: £450

STOCK CODE: A082



HISTORY

Published 1804