

Astronomical Accounting: Caroline Herschel's Paper Machines and Note-Taking Practices

ID de Contribution: 1

Type: Non spécifié

Astronomical Accounting: Caroline Herschel's Paper Machines and Note-Taking Practices

Unlike many other women in science Caroline Herschel (1750-1848) was and is well known for her scientific work. This however is only true for certain aspects of her contributions in astronomy. Herschel has been praised as an independent comet hunter and an indispensable, but passive assistant to her brother William Herschel. In this paper, I aim to provide a new perspective on Herschel's scientific achievements by focusing on her use of notebooks and other paper technologies for the accumulation and production of astronomical knowledge. I explore the following question: How did Herschel use notebooks and other paper technologies as information management tools? I will unpack two examples of Herschel's paper technologies: I will compare her domestic accounting books with her astronomical notebooks, and explore Caroline Herschel's surviving copy of John Flamsteed's *Atlas Coelestis* which is heavily annotated in her hand. By studying her manuscripts as material objects worthy of inquiry in their own right, I reveal Herschel's agency in her scribal tasks which have so far been understood as passive and subordinate assistant work. Through a focus on Caroline Herschel's paper practices, I will highlight the collaborative nature of knowledge production in the Herschel family.

Orateur: Mme LEHNEN, Odile (Durham University)