

EXTRA-ILLUSTRATING HORACE
WALPOLE'S *DESCRIPTION*
OF STRAWBERRY HILL: THREE CASE STUDIES

by

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STUDIES of the phenomenon of binding independent drawings, engravings, autograph letters, and other documents into printed books in the late eighteenth century have concentrated quite naturally on the elite social groups within which many of these extra-illustrated books were created.¹ Less examined are the artists and booksellers who supplied the market for those books and provided the prints and drawings that adorned them. This paper explores that world by investigating the role of Horace Walpole's printer and amanuensis Thomas Kirgate and the Harding family of booksellers and artists in creating three extra-illustrated copies of Walpole's *A Description of the Villa of Mr. Horace Walpole, youngest son of Sir Robert Walpole Earl of Orford, at Strawberry-Hill near Twickenham, Middlesex. With an Inventory of the Furniture, Pictures, Curiosities, &c.*

The *Description* is the primary document we have on the content and display of Walpole's famous collection of art and antiquities, portraits and miniatures, curiosities, books and prints, coins and medals, sculpture, and furniture. One hundred copies of the book had originally been printed at his Strawberry Hill Press in 1774, but it was superseded in 1784 by an expanded edition of two hundred copies. Each edition was supplemented with a series of appendices printed successively as the collection grew. The 1784 edition, with additions printed as late as 1791, was not issued until Walpole's death in 1797, when his executors

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1. Lucy Peltz, "A Friendly Gathering: The Social Politics of Presentation Books and Their Extra-Illustration in Horace Walpole's Circle," *Journal of the History of Collections* 19.1 (2007), 33–50; "Engraved Portrait Heads and the Rise of Extra-Illustration: The Eton Correspondence of the Revd James Granger and Richard Bull, 1769–1774," *The Walpole Society* (2004), 66, 1–161; and *Facing the Text: Extra-Illustration, Print Culture, and Society in Britain 1769–1840* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, 2017), 45.