

Artemis Yagou (ed), *Technology, Novelty, and Luxury*, Deutsches Museum Studies 12 / Munich, Deutsches Museum Verlag 2022, 118 pp.

This elegant and useful book takes as its subject, luxury studies, and as its objects, a range of material culture goods that are not so commonly associated with luxury *per se*. An introduction and 4 chapters are provided by a design historian, an organologist, an historian of science and culture, and an historian of decorative arts. Their researches spring from a symposium conducted by the editor, Artemis Yagou, at a meeting of the Annual Meeting of the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT), Milan, 2019. Yagou is an Athens-born historian who in her capacity as Research Associate of the Deutsches Museum gathered these chapters and directed their focus to artefacts housed in the Museum. Richly illustrated in tonal and revealing colour, and printed on high quality paper, the study looks and feels in the hand like a little luxury object in and of itself, representing the best type of museum-collection academic-inflected writing.

Yagou provides a brief but also concise and useful introduction which sets out the main contours of the field. Luxury Studies in her view is less about the marketing, branding or image making aspect of an industry and more closely connected to histories in the study of consumption, the 'hierarchy of values' [citing Douglas and Isherwood, *The World of Goods*], the politeness and sociability associated with Eighteenth-Century Studies of the Enlightenment, novelty, but also technology. Yagou argues for the necessary interdisciplinarity of successful luxury studies and the imbrication of design with technological innovations. The sources she quotes include the well-known figures Maxine Berg and Giorgio Riello, who have written on innovation, import substitution, and subcontracting in the long eighteenth century.

Panagiotis Pouloupoulos is correct to note, in 'Aspects of Technology in Populuxe Musical Instruments of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries' that 'musical instruments have rarely been examined within the context of luxury in scholarly studies'. Using the figure of the entrepreneur maker Sébastien Erard, famed maker of pedal harps, Pouloupoulos argues that the combination of new technologies (design of metal mechanisms), new materials (moulded 'composition') and new aesthetic forms (neo-classical and other motifs redolent of the *ancien-régime*) combined to create new instruments. Watch-key tuning mechanisms derived from horology transformed the efficacy and ease of playing of new lyre guitars made by *luthiers*. The miniaturisation of pianos and the development of other new forms such as walking-stick clarinets encouraged the portability of musical instruments. This new range of 'populuxe' or more affordable formats opened up music to new middle-class groups around the world. The focus is on French and German-made musical instrument artefacts in the museum collection.

Joseph Wachelder considers a category of objects that was nowhere included in McNeil and Riello's 'Luxury: A Rich History' (Oxford University Press, 2016), that of childhood toys. Wachelder charts the rise of the new 'educational toys' such as cup and ball, yoyo and *diabolo*, and the kaleidoscope. The focus is German anglophilia and its relationship with the English consumer revolution as represented in the pages of Bertuch's *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (1786-1827). English medical ideas such as Thomas Beddoes' focus on touch merged with polite concepts of sensational psychology, amusement and instruction to

create a market of new fashionable goods, toys. Once again, interdependencies between 'consumption, educational innovations and science as popular culture' are fruitfully explored, indicating the overall coherence of this collected volume. The focus here is on very interesting German toys and the better known German periodicals in the museum collection.

Artmeis Yagou writes on the important populuxe category of timepieces. A rare luxury for the elites in the seventeenth century, by the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the masculine pocket watch was a quintessential populuxe item to which men of many stations might aspire. Yagou makes a very useful micro-study of one particular watch in the Deutsches Museum collection, an English made early-nineteenth century watch made for the Ottoman market. Yagou makes a careful study of every part of the case and the workings, discovering spurious English marks to suggest the material was sterling silver and the maker also an imitation of the well-known London manufacturer, William Prior. The case connects this Ottoman import as an example of a 'technological popular luxury'.

Camille Mestdagh on 'The Luxury Furniture Industry in Nineteenth-Century Paris: Between Resistance and Compromise' explores the heady production of luxury furniture in historicising styles in the last third of the nineteenth century. French luxury furniture, she argues, made less use of the new and expensive steam-powered technology to craft wood and veneers being pioneered by the English. With the exception of establishments such as Krieger (later Damon), workshops tended to remain small. Yet the production was significant, furniture being the fourth largest economic sector in Paris, after food, clothing and building. Wealthy global luxury consumers enjoyed the artistic references, complex wood-working and techniques including ormolu (mercury gilded bronze), enamel, hardstone and porcelain plaques used for the more expensive forms. But the demand for this often 'pictorial' furniture (carving, veneering, inlays and marquetry, of sometimes allegorical and figures, continuing a Baroque and Rococo impetus) by firms such as Dasson and Beurdeley dropped off around 1890 when individual fortunes lessened and new tastes emerged for more democratic Arts and Crafts forms, and Art Nouveau. The examples are French and often presented in photographic formats from nineteenth century periodicals.

In conclusion this is an exemplary and refereed academic publication, useful for all those interested in object-based research, the history of luxury and the later workings of the consumer revolution of the long eighteenth century.

Peter McNeil is the co-author with Giorgio Riello of *Luxury: A Rich History* (Oxford University Press, 2016). His research explores the interaction of dress fashions with wider material culture and he has recently published on Eurasian fashion and design, 1500-1800, in *The Cambridge Global History of Fashion* (2023).