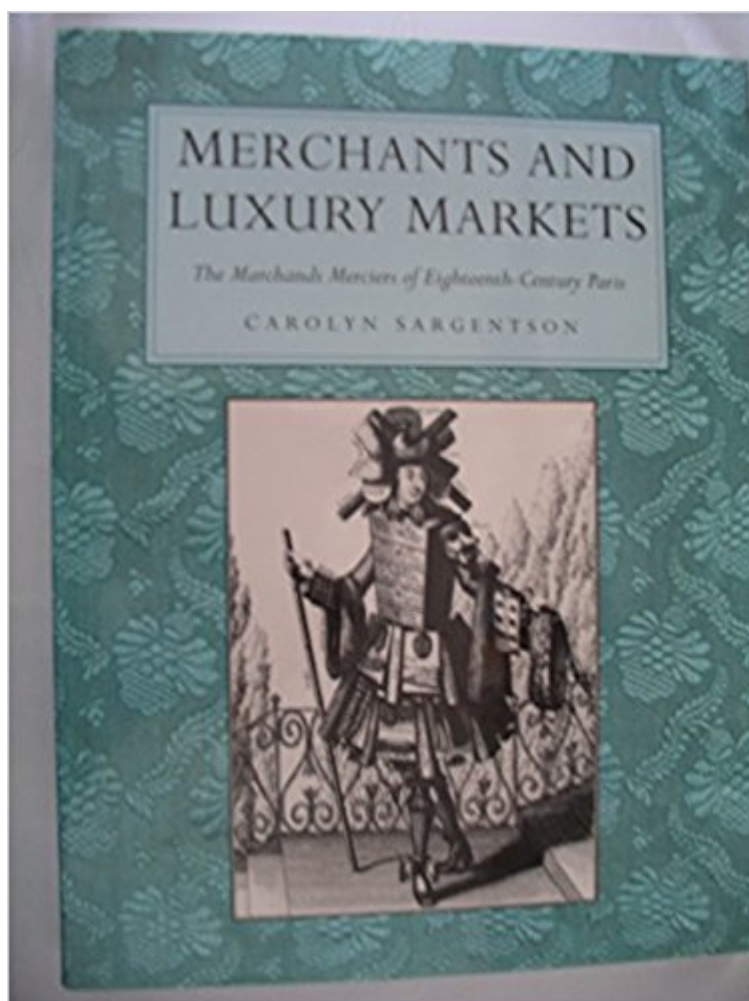


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Merchants And Luxury Markets: The Marchands Merciers Of Eighteenth-Century Paris



Synopsis

"Makers of nothing, sellers of everything" is how official records define the marchands merciers of eighteenth-century Paris. These merchants were centered around the rue St. Honoré, identified then, as now, with the luxury trades for which Paris was already internationally famous. They established trading rights in items like fans, wigs, mirrors, and even ink, all of which were supplied to markets that were fashion-driven and likely to expand rapidly. Through an examination of inventories and other records, Sargentson offers a new perspective on the history of consumption, painting a fascinating picture of the marketplace for luxury goods during the fifty years that preceded the Revolution. Her text raises important questions about the life cycle of objects and the way they were valued; the trading options of merchants who operated within narrow margins of credit and cash flow; and the relations between the different groups jostling for position and advantage.

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Merchants And Luxury Markets: The Marchands-Merciers Of 18th Century Paris is a major contribution to the study of the Parisian marketplace for luxury goods in pre-Revolutionary France. Historians examining the luxury economy in 18th Century Paris have generally focused on makers of goods, instead of sellers. Carolyn Sargentson offers a new and fascinating perspective on the practical workings of the marketplace by focusing upon a group of merchants who played a vital role in establishing Paris as the leading venue for fine goods and luxury items. These were retailers of a

wide range of merchandise that included silks, furniture, porcelain, lacquer, fans, wigs, and even ink! Their shops centered around rue St. Honore, the fashionable district on the right bank of Paris which was internationally famous for its haute couture, luxury accessories, and fine furnishings. Sargentson based *Merchants And Luxury Markets* on the study of inventories from 40 merchant families and other previously unpublished records. Her ground-breaking scholarship raises important questions about the way objects are valued in relation to the supply and demand of the market over a period of time. *Merchants And Luxury Markets* is a "window in time" that no library collection on French history or 18th century European studies program should be without! --

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