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MARKETING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION? REVOLUTIONARY AUCTION ADVERTISEMENTS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE (PARIS, 1778-1793)

Abstract - This article presents an exploratory study into the Parisian auction market, its transformation during the French Revolution and the relationship between economic policies and political ideologies, building further on existing research on consumerism in eighteenth-century France and the revolutionary art market. Surveying the advertisements for auction sales featured in the Parisian newspaper *Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers*, this research first reconstructed the more general developments in the auction market. Secondly, it examines material culture and its social distribution during the Terror, comparing the figures with a pre-revolutionary year. Thirdly, the research investigated the consumer values that gave cultural and social meaning to the products and guided the buyers in their consumption. This article's findings reveal that the unprecedented diffusion of aristocratic luxuries on the auction market was supported by a stable advertising discourse of elite consumer values centred around aesthetics and high quality.

In the wake of revisionist scholarship, historians have tended to equate the French Revolution with the Terror, judging that the bloodshed of the guillotine lay at the heart of the revolutionary experience.¹ A less poignant act of violence, yet still an example of a very drastic economic policy during the Terror, is the auctions of confiscated goods of enemies of the republic who had been sentenced to death, *émigrés* (exiles) and church property for the benefit of the financially distressed First Republic. Studying the administrative practices behind the Versailles clearance sales Rémi Gaillard described them as follows: "The sale of the royal furniture, in the midst of the Terror, remains a national trauma, the symbol of the patrimonial error. The feeling that this transaction was an aberration in itself is heightened even further when its direct consequence is considered: the national blunder has benefited other nations."² He was certainly not the first to become interested in these curious auction sales. The Goncourt brothers vividly described in their *Histoire de la Société française pendant le Directoire* the hectic activity taking place at the Parisian auction halls during the Revolution.³ Also, historians of the late twentieth century have devoted themselves to the question of the revolutionary auction sales. In 1981 Michel Beurdeley published *La France à l'encan*, an impressive though rather anecdotal study on the sale, exodus and even destruction of French *objets d'art* during the revolutionary period.⁴ The contributions of Charlotte Guichard, Timothy Richard Brown, Benjamin Perronet and Darius Spieth have substantially increased our knowledge of the Parisian auction marketplace, though their focus has always been on specific upper market circuits, namely those of art collections and exceptional luxury objects.⁵

What is lacking in the current historiography is a broader understanding of the revolutionary auction market, in both scope and time frame. Therefore, I propose two new approaches in my contribution to this subject. First, by including more common or 'low-profile' auctions after death, bankruptcy or judicial forfeiture as well as these exceptional auctions of confiscated goods, I aim to build up a more complete and precise image of this 'marketplace of the revolution'. Secondly, by comparing the revolutionary sales with auction practices during the late eighteenth century I will try empirically to resolve the question to what extent the National Convention's radical decision to disperse noble, ecclesiastical and royal estates substantially affected the auction market's continuity.⁶ These two comparisons throughout time and in different

auction circuits will enable me to capture some of the features of revolutionary auctions that have been less studied by scholars in the past. These include examining the advertising discourse used to market revolutionary auctions, continuity with pre-revolutionary auctions and the disruptive effects on the auction market of the sales of confiscated goods.

By addressing these lacunae, this article's main goal is to explore whether the revolutionary policies brought about significant changes on a market circuit that exactly embodied the commercializing dynamics but also the social ills of the Old Regime.⁷ So, how did the sale of confiscated goods impact on the auction market in terms of its resources, its suppliers and its marketing discourse? And do these findings match with attested changes in material culture, social transformations and the evolution of advertising language? Moreover, did the economic distress and the revolutionaries' policies for controlling prices, wages and commerce during the Terror cause a drain on more frivolous luxury consumption?⁸ Or, on the other hand, did these auctions give a boost to the luxury market, strengthening traditional consumption practices, as has been suggested by Natacha Coquery?⁹ Finally, how do we need to interpret this seemingly paradoxical relationship between these economic measures enabling and possibly even reinforcing luxury consumption and the republican ideal of 'overt consumer renunciation', as Rebecca Spang and Colin Jones have described it?¹⁰

One methodological strategy for evaluating the concrete effects of the revolutionary auction policies would be to scavenge the historical archives of the Parisian *commissaires-priseurs* (auctioneers) which contain numerous auction catalogues and sales inventories recording what was sold and for how much.¹¹ However, this very time-consuming endeavour would not allow me to fulfill my research goal of creating a wider view of the revolutionary auction market. The sales inventories and especially the catalogues that have been preserved would again construct a bias towards the art, book and luxury markets.¹² Thus, in order to achieve my goal of gaining an insight into revolutionary auctions this research has looked at another source type, namely auction advertisements published in the long-standing Parisian periodical, *Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers* (*Affiches*).

Historical advertising as an object of study has increasingly gained in popularity among scholars from a varying range of disciplines, such as consumer studies, retail history, but also gender history and urban studies.¹³ In the French context, Natacha Coquery did pioneering research on Parisian retailers during the revolution and the adaptation of advertisement practices in this context of political upheaval.¹⁴ Also, Colin Jones gave advertisements a privileged position in his important article, 'The Bourgeois Revolution Revivified'. Using the advertisements from the *Affiches* as his main source material and pointing out their remarkable increase and transformation, Jones makes an argument for the rapid progress of commercialization in late eighteenth-century French society. The development of capitalism instilled market-conscious, public-spirited sentiments and forms of civic sociability among the intellectual elites, triggering the mercantile and professional bourgeoisie together with the liberal fraction of the noble class to question the existing order even in the decades before 1789.¹⁵ Today, Jones' study is seen as a turning point within historiography as it is often interpreted as a neo-marxist 'counter-attack' against the revisionist canon that was forming itself within French Revolution studies at the time of the bicentenary of the Revolution.¹⁶

The above-mentioned scholars studying the revolutionary auctions, however, have shown little interest in the accompanying sales announcements. This is not surprising, as from the perspective of an art historian they do not contain much valuable information. In contrast to the official sales records deposited in the auctioneers' archives, these sources do not allow one to

deduce the selling price or to trace the buyer.¹⁷ The descriptions of the artworks are often rather concise, compared to the increasingly lengthy and specialized vocabulary of sales catalogues at the time.¹⁸ These limitations, however, are outweighed by their stable format, longevity and integral preservation into our own era. Therefore, the comparative analysis of auction sales advertisements during the French Revolution can offer a unique window onto this specific market, contributing to already existing research on late eighteenth-century and revolutionary Paris.¹⁹

In order to track the vicissitudes of the revolutionary auction market, this article will concentrate on four aspects of revolutionary auctions, deploying quantitative methods of ‘distant reading’. First, I will look at the periodical in which the advertisements were published, the *Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers*. Then, I will explain how and why I selected the sample years I did. Next, I will study their general features and the evolution of the total number of sales advertisements. In the second section I will investigate what these sources can reveal about material culture, scrutinizing what types of furniture, decoration, accessories and materials were in vogue and whether the revolutionary events changed them. Thirdly, I will address the social distribution of these auction advertisements, looking into possible links between the advertised goods and their social realms. Here, I will elaborate on the methodological difficulty of analysing social markers in this period. In the fourth part I will examine the consumer values that are embedded in these auction advertisements. By analysing the value descriptors that advertisers used to market their goods and which for consumers gave social and cultural meaning to their acquisitions, it is possible to gain a deeper insight into the mental frameworks and cultural repertoires that guided consumers to prefer this or that object. Delineating a provisory hierarchy of consumer values I aim to go beyond the attested shift of eighteenth-century consumer motivations from intrinsic value to fashionable design, from conspicuousness to novelty.²⁰ Finally, I will make up the balance of the French Revolution’s influence on the auction market, evaluating the revolutionary auction policies within a framework of ‘politics of consumption’.²¹ Here I intend to reflect further on my findings, using them as a stepping stone for re-thinking the complex interrelations between politics, social transformation and consumer cultures during the revolutionary period and beyond.

I.

In late eighteenth-century Paris auction advertisements were published in the *Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers*. Founded in 1751, this periodical was one of the first and most long-standing in the Parisian press landscape.²² The *Affiches* was commercial in nature, offering free advertising space for people to publish ‘all notices that will appear suitable & interesting [...] written in a very legible manner’.²³ The barriers to promoting a sale were thus relatively low, widening the array of social groups that could publish advertisements in the periodical. Moreover, a legal obligation stipulated that all auction sales taking place on juridical grounds, such as those resulting from clearances after death, debt settlements and judicial forfeiture, necessarily had to be announced by means of a poster and the publication of a notice placed free of charge in the *Affiches*.²⁴ From its various sections, this article’s analysis used the advertisements from the column headed ‘*Ventes de Meubles & Effets*’, where all notices announcing auction sales were placed. In this section a variety of advertised products could be found, ranging from sweet delicacies to timber to talking birds, but a large part was reserved for auctions of what were strictly speaking second-hand goods.²⁵ However, this does not mean that those goods were old, of poor quality or even cheap; rather it indicated

that these objects already had a life-cycle behind them with their former owner, the testator or debtor, a factor which could even enhance their symbolic value.²⁶

Along with a fairly fixed structure, such auction advertisements started by indicating the reason for public sale (*'après décès'*, *'au vertu de la loi'* or, during the revolution, *'au nom de la République Française'*) and the exact time thereof. In over the half of the post mortem sales the identity of the deceased was stated, including his or her gender, occupation or noble title. If the sale concerned confiscated goods of *émigrés*, the former owners were always called by their former titles and names. The general sales announcement could be connected to possible meaningful descriptors regarding the nature, extent or status of the auction (*'effets précieux'* or *'vente considérable'*). This was followed by a sometimes full-page list of the auctioned belongings, ranging from basic furniture to orange trees with individual greenhouses. Sometimes specifications of the permitted means of payment or the availability of catalogues were given. At the end, the address of the auction venue concluded the sales announcement.²⁷

Behind these seemingly strictly formulated and 'blunt' institutional texts there is a wealth of information to uncover, which can, surprisingly enough, instruct us on the cultural dynamics of consumption. An advantage of auction advertisements is the fact that they offer a diverse set of goods in comparison to, for instance, advertisements for new, unusual goods, like medicines or technological devices.²⁸ Auction advertisements give us the ability to explore a much wider range of consumer products than has usually been addressed by consumer historians.²⁹ Most importantly, auction advertisements contained qualitative descriptions of particular objects or collections of auctioned goods. Therefore, information on the 'signifying' level like materials, design features, quality markers and value descriptors can be linked to individual products. Moreover, these 'signifiers' allow for the reconstruction of cultural repertoires, as the adjectives used in the advertisements to qualify certain products are revealing of the imagined value of the goods in the eyes of sellers and buyers.³⁰

The availability of the *Affiches* poses historians interested in the revolutionary period but working outside the French capital a methodological challenge: only small fragments of a few years are digitised. With just two months of the periodical missing, 1793 is the most complete year available, from which I read through 550 auction advertisements, 226 of them being for post mortem sales. As this article explicitly questions the 'disruptive' nature of the French Revolution, discontinuity can be measured only by comparing the advertisements of 1793 with their counterparts from a pre-revolutionary year. Therefore, I analysed the *Affiches* of 1778, the last full year available before the start of the Revolution, which yielded 467 adverts. These results will not be discussed in depth here, but the quantitative findings based on these pre-revolutionary advertisements will be taken as a 'parameter for change'.³¹ By analysing 1793, the first year of the Terror, I hope to capture 'by proxy' the effect of the French Revolution. Given the exceptional nature of the continuous, total crisis of that year, my results cannot be seen as representative of consumption during 'the Revolution', a problematic term in itself. Instead, they should be interpreted as an illustration of how the most radical episode of the Revolution created a particular marketplace, one of auctioning confiscated goods, without pretending that this portrait fits parallel developments on retail or commodity markets, or in consumption in later periods of the French Revolution.

If we want to grasp the impact of the French Revolution, an important issue is the evaluation of the scale of the redistribution of those confiscated luxury goods that apparently 'flooded' the auction market. Although they are a rather imperfect indicator, given their focus on

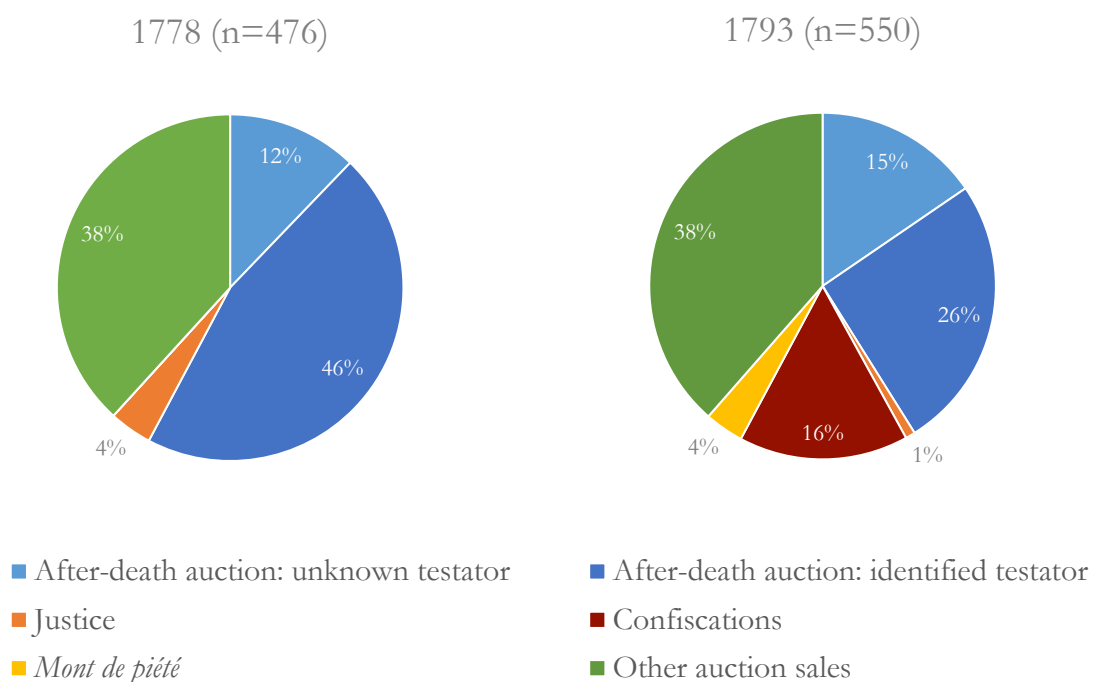
the upper market circuit, the estimates of auctioned works that art historians made for the revolutionary period give us some insight into the increase in the number of auctions in 1793. Burton Fredericksen and Darius Spieth came up with very similar estimates of auctioned paintings in the late eighteenth century.³² Both authors noted a remarkable surge in the number of paintings auctioned in 1793, which stood out from the ‘steady and devastating recession in the art market that defined the Revolutionary era as a whole’.³³ The peak in art auctions in 1793 is all the more striking if we take into account that a considerable amount of this recently acquired state property never appeared in auction catalogues. Most artworks that were taken from churches and religious institutions were directly donated to public museums, while other art collections were publicly auctioned without printed catalogues for their sale ever being produced.³⁴ So, it seems safe to conclude that art auctions benefited greatly from the stream of artworks confiscated from individuals who fled France or those who were condemned to death as enemies of the republic.³⁵

A quick survey of the *Affiches* in the two sample years shows a fairly stable number of sales advertisements, with a slight increase from 467 to 550 that can hardly be called an explosion in the auction market. However, sorting the sales by type reveals more accurately the transformations brought about by the Revolution. The number of auctions of post mortem property fell from 275 in 1778 to 226 in 1793, or from 59% of the total of sales advertisements to 41% (Figure 1). Auctions organized to satisfy court judgments fell from nineteen to five, with descriptions as ‘*en vertu d’Arrêts de Parlement/de la Cour*’ changing into ‘*en vertu de la loi*’. As regards post mortem auctions, advertisements mentioning the testator’s name fell from 79% of the total to 62%. Within this reduced number of auctions with known testator that took place during the Revolution (141 compared to 217 in 1778), an even more striking shift comes to light. The relative percentage of advertisements where the occupation or status of the deceased is not mentioned or where his name is even anonymized through the use of asterisks rose steeply from 40% to 80% (*cf. infra*: Table 1). What might account for the latter development is the tense political climate in 1793. Advertisers probably did not want to discourage clients who were afraid of coming under suspicion through attending sales of property belonging to those who were discredited by the Jacobins. On the other hand, such findings fit remarkably well with the work of, for example, Sarah Maza, who argues that the revolutionary period was more than ever characterized by the inability to view the social realm as divided into classes. This cultural evolution could explain the reducing importance of declaring the occupation or social status of the testator.³⁶

According to the sales advertisements of 1793 the auctions also took on new forms and they moved to new spaces. The years running up to the Revolution saw the advent of specialized auction houses, public sales halls and the institution of an official pawnshop in 1777, auctioning unredeemed items on a regular basis. In a minority of cases these auction halls were used as venues for post mortem sales.³⁷ Most of the sales taking place in auction houses offered abundant collections of furniture, decorative pieces and accessories with no provenance. The *Maison Bullion* and the *Encan National* were the most prominent auction houses in 1793, the first founded by the art dealer Paillet and located in the Rue J.J.-Rousseau, the latter established by the entrepreneurs Famin and Fauvelet for the organization of voluntary sales on the site of the former hôtel Longueville in the rue S. Thomas du Louvre.³⁸ In those *encans nationaux* (national auction houses) ‘persons who were intending to leave France received an advance of money, on depositing any effects which they wished to dispose of, and which were immediately sold for them’.³⁹ Other warehouses were specialized in reselling stocks of wholesale goods such as textiles at fixed prices which were allegedly far below the usual retail prices.⁴⁰

Finally, the change brought about by the auctions following from the confiscation of emigrated nobles' goods or the nationalization of ecclesiastical property is evidenced by their number: 71 auctions of confiscated goods are ascribed to mostly aristocratic *émigrés*, 16 deal with the estates of nationalised monasteries and churches. Comparing these 87 extraordinary sales to the 226 normal post mortem sales shows how substantial the effect of the revolutionary policies was on the auction circuit. As a point of fact, the increase in the total number of auctions in 1793 is actually accounted for entirely by the state-organized sales. These forced auctions are easily identified in the advertisements through the use of specific markers. The announcement '*Domaines Nationaux. Au nom & au profit de la République Française*' was commonly used to designate the origins of the goods, followed by the name of the *émigré* whose estate was being sold. Sometimes, references were made in the advertisements to the law of 10 June 1793 which authorized the sale to private individuals of state property or property on the former civil list. This legal document had in 1790 designated certain domains and residences as property of the royal family.⁴¹ After the dissolution of the monarchy these assets could be sold to the profit of the new republic. As a result of the abolition of the civil list the furniture, artworks, utensils and even the stables of the royal palaces of Versailles and Saint-Cloud would pass under the auctioneer's hammer during the Terror.⁴²

Figure 1. Overview of advertised auctions by type and compared by year



II.

In the advertisements entire estates are summarized, attesting not only to the auction market's supply, but also to contemporary consumer patterns. Compared to the figures offered by research on probate inventories the biases of the image of material culture exhibited by auction advertisements are obvious: the *commissaire-priseur* (auctioneer) leading the sale was not that interested in describing the goods as they truly were in the same way that the *huissier* (bailiff) drawing up the inventory was. The auctioneers depicted the goods in their most saleable form.⁴³ These descriptions needed to respond to the audience's aesthetic ideals and moral conventions on consumption in order to attract possible buyers.⁴⁴ Moreover, during the eighteenth century the buyers at auctions consisted for the most part of professional resellers. Within the guild system, the *fripeliers* (dealers in second-hand clothing), *brocanteurs* (sellers of antiques) and *revendeurs* (second-hand vendors) had the right to obtain their stocks at public sales.⁴⁵ Even during the Revolution Beurdeley emphasizes the dominance of second-hand dealers, merchants and connoisseurs operating for their own account or that of a foreign clientele among the buyers at the Versailles clearance sales.⁴⁶ The advertisers used a sort of encoded sales language that was used to inform and, to a lesser extent, to draw in a readership that was already well acquainted with the objects that could be bought at auctions. Therefore, these advertisements stem from a specific commercial logic rather than being 'stolen glimpses' inside Parisian residences. Nonetheless, while auction advertisements might be rather short and selective, given that publishing a sales notice was obligatory, the advertisements of the *Affiches* contain almost all of the post mortem auction sales organized in eighteenth-century Paris. Thus, the distortions of the source type are balanced by their large numbers, their complete availability and their social inclusivity, so that we can presume that auction advertisements offer an insight into the shifting supply of the revolutionary auction market and indirectly into corresponding changes in material culture.

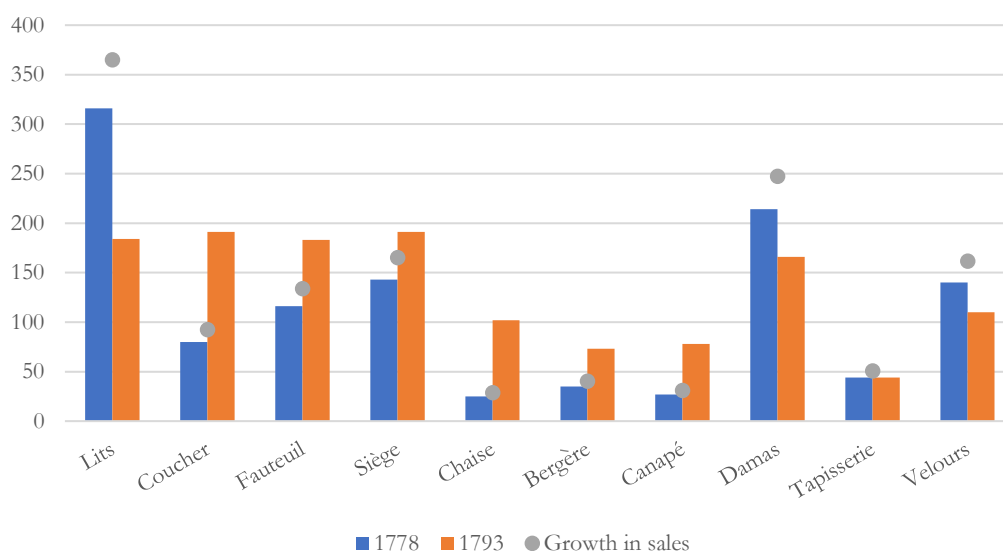
While I will delve more deeply into the political significance of the revolutionary auctions in section V, it is important to note for the moment that auctions offered consumer goods that had surrounded the testators day in day out in their domestic sphere. Those everyday items like furniture, decorative items and accessories affirmed but also created the *Sitz im Leben* of their owners; they symbolized ideology and forged social identities among class and gender.⁴⁷ So, the interior of a Parisian dwelling during the French Revolution could potentially communicate a citizen's allegiance to the revolutionary cause.⁴⁸ Behind the privacy of the façades, some citizens effectively altered their consumer behaviour in response to the revolutionary ideologies: the Parisian interiors were slowly changing in reaction to the Revolution, as the regime's 'emphasis on restructuring all aspects of everyday life' translated itself into the sponsorship of new aesthetics and artistic productions.⁴⁹ However, material objects in the private sphere could never assist in crafting new types of sociability and public rituals in the same way as, for example, clothing did during the French Revolution.⁵⁰ Still, recognizing the transformative power of material culture, this second section looks at the evolution of four particular categories of goods in the auction advertisements, i.e. furniture, textile decoration, decorative items and accessories. Those are deemed important objects in 'the making of the political and social order' but also in its transformation through new types of sociability that originated in the use of those objects.⁵¹

In general, the total number of auction advertisements grew by 15% (1778: 476; 1793: 550), but the sale of many individual pieces of furniture mentioned in those advertisements could not match this growth rate. The generality of this stagnation might indicate that the language used to

advertise estates became slightly more selective or summarizing, refraining from giving over-lengthy descriptions of the goods being auctioned. This explanation seems more likely than that there was a gradual decline in all these different objects in Parisian interiors. Moreover, certain objects still outperformed the general growth rate, while others almost disappeared from the lists of auctioned goods. Thus, some of the peculiarities of material culture during the revolutionary era and the extent to which this was socially determined can be grasped through these auction advertisements.

Sales of upholstered furniture stayed relatively stable and those of most pieces were even able to increase slightly in 1793 (Figure 2.1). A clear shift occurred from *lits* (cribs: -42%) to *couchers* (beds: x2.4) when one compares the figures between 1778 and 1793. This development denotes a subtle, though important difference in comfort. The cribs described as *lits* were necessarily complemented with bedding to provide comfort. The advertisements often describe how they were adorned with luxurious bedding like feather mattresses. On the other hand, *couchers* made up a more uniform category without material distinctions regarding bedding.⁵² The increase in the number of *chaises* (chairs: x4) at the cost of the *siège* (seats: -29%) probably had a socio-cultural, rather than a material basis, as according to the *Dictionnaire critique* ‘the ordinary people say a chair; persons of good taste say a seat’.⁵³ Other comfortable seating like *fauteuils* and *bergères* grew further, but the individualizing trend in seating of 1778 was slightly counteracted by the growing numbers of *canapés* (couch).⁵⁴ At the same time, the *lits à la duchesse* (four-poster beds), which were still very much in vogue during the reign of Louis XV and primarily associated with female leisure usage, completely vanished from the auction advertisements.⁵⁵

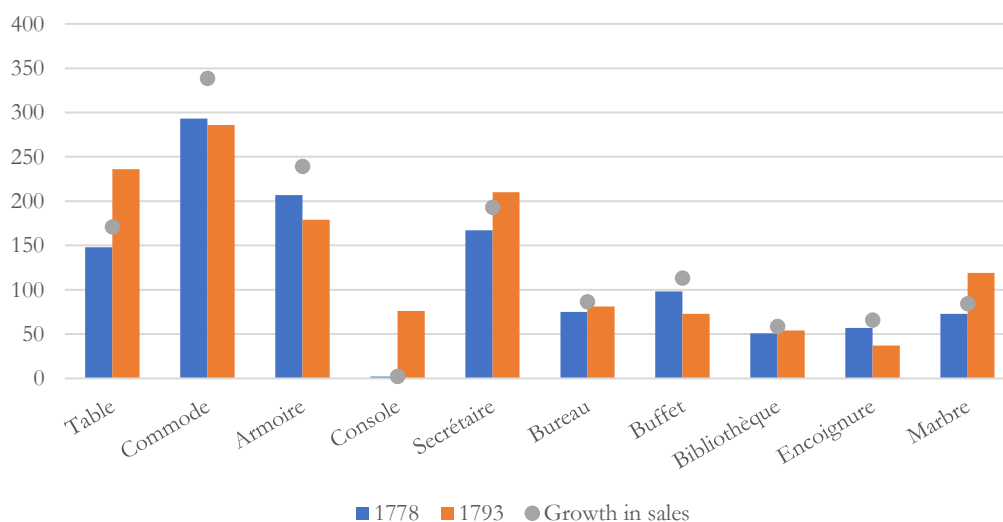
Figure 2.1 Numbers of types of upholstered furniture mentioned in the auction advertisements by year



In comparison with seating, the sales of storage furniture slightly reduced in numbers in the advertisements (Figure 2.2). The more refined pieces like chests of drawers, bookshelves, desks and corner cupboards stayed more or less on the same level, while the number of simpler and more ‘rustic’ cupboards and sideboards decreased. These figures seem to indicate that luxury storage

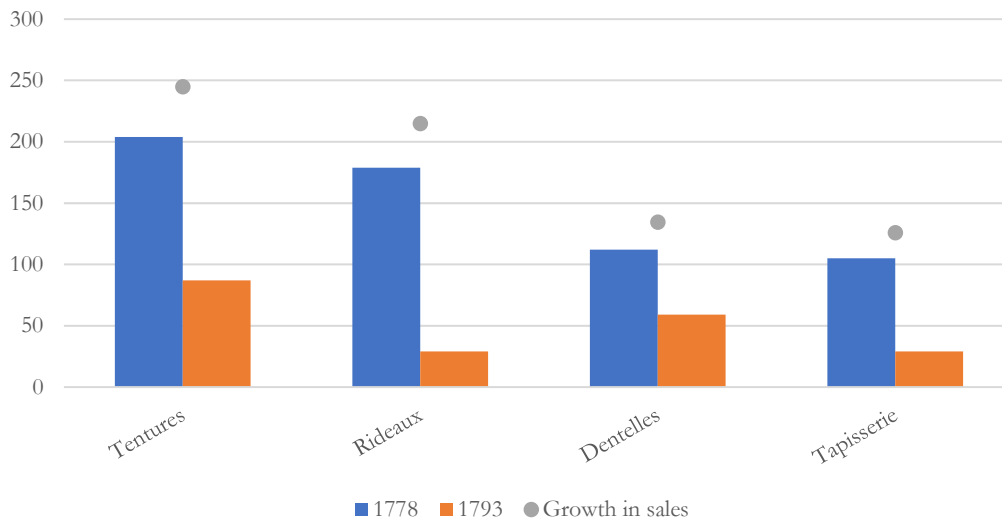
furniture constituted an important sector of the revolutionary auction market. Read by historians as a symbol of an educated, leisurely lifestyle, writing desks were mentioned 210 times, and the console (from 2 to 78 mentions) was another piece of display furniture that was introduced in the estates. Even exclusive cabinets were mentioned twice as often as in 1778 in the revolutionary sales advertisements and the expensive, exotic mahogany gained in overall popularity (from 11 to 178 mentions). Even though the revolutionary government had dismantled the corporate labour system that had underpinned this production, the superior craftsmanship and design of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century cabinet makers were still very much admired at the time. Considered as ‘useful for public education’ the revolutionary administrators withheld from the *émigrés*’ estates certain art pieces, such as unique Boulle marquetry for exhibition at the newly-founded *Musée National du Louvre*. However, numerous original pieces from the grand cabinet makers were sold off at the public sales.⁵⁶ The works of the former royal cabinet maker Charles-André Boulle passed under the hammer twelve times in 1793, compared to eight times in 1778.

Figure 2.2 Number of items of storage furniture mentioned in the auction advertisements by year



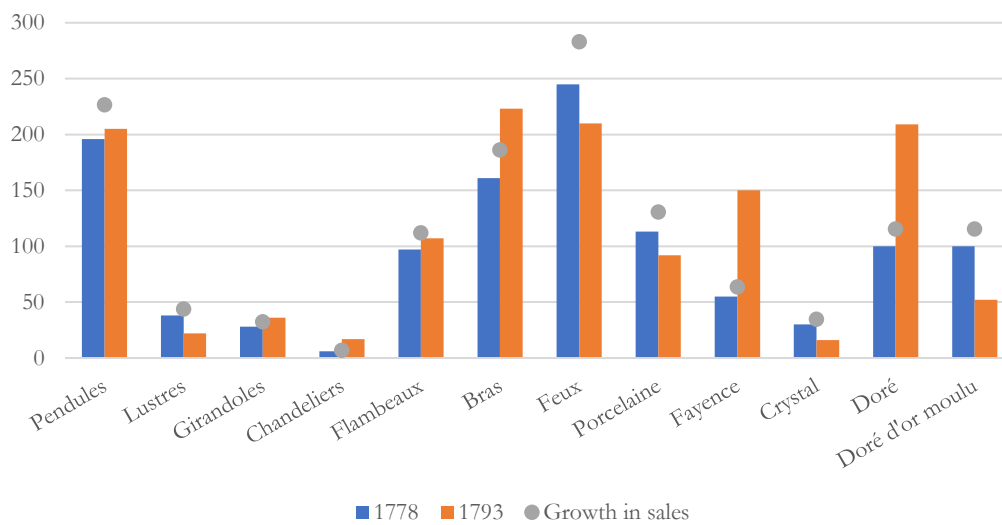
The luxury cloth market faced some difficulties because of the restrictions and taxes the revolutionary governments imposed on (international) exchange, but proved remarkably resilient in research into new distribution methods through the ‘*magasins de confiance*’.⁵⁷ These second-hand warehouses collecting and selling cloth were a lucrative specialization, satisfying their suppliers’ need for cash.⁵⁸ They probably contributed to the tremendous reduction in textile decorations in the estate auctions (Figure 2.3). Wallcoverings reduced by 57%, curtains by 83% and tapestries registered a loss of 72%. The Revolution’s vandalism rather than the warehouses may have had something to do with the collapse of tapestries: in 1793 many such tapestries bearing the royal insignia were ritually burned, which also allowed the gold thread in them to be recovered.⁵⁹ At the same time, the variety of cloth types and the popularity of cloth did not significantly change during the Revolution: damasks remained the first choice for wall covering as did taffetas for curtains.

Figure 2.3 Number of textile decorations mentioned in the auction advertisements by year



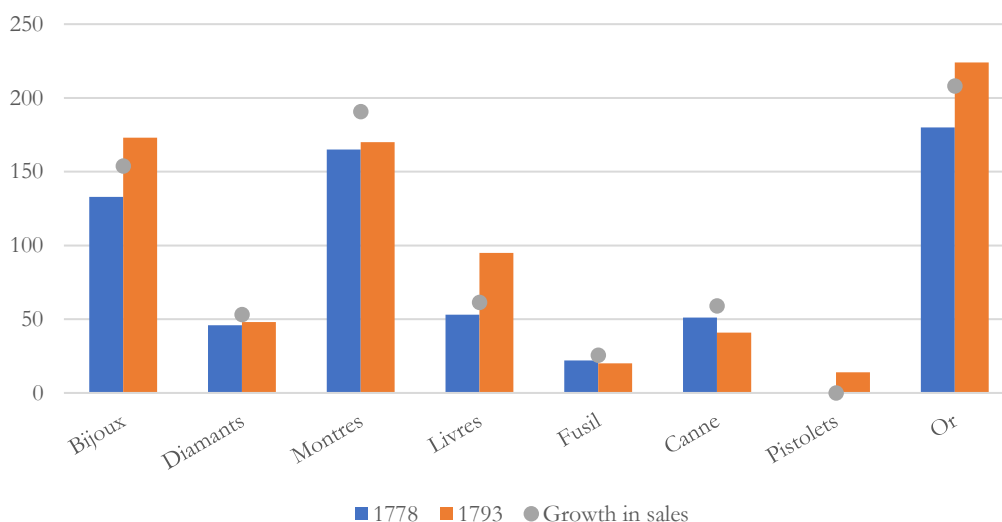
Even though other decorative pieces which contained precious metals also risked being melted down amidst the turmoil of the revolutionary wars, decorative items did not experience such dramatic reductions as their textile counterparts (Figure 2.4).⁶⁰ The number of pendulum clocks remained the same. However, the number of gilded bronze clocks declined.⁶¹ Lighting devices declined more steeply as their functionality gave way to their decorative and luxury-promulgating capacities: the most luxurious item, the chandelier, often decorated with crystals, accounted for the heaviest losses. Torches, wall-lights, candlesticks and even the more frivolous girandoles, though now fabricated in less opulent materials, rose in numbers more slowly. As was the case with lighting and heating devices such as andirons, the materials used moved more and more towards gold- or silver-plate, which did not involve the complicated process of ormolu.⁶² Moreover, bronze as the base material for gilding was increasingly replaced by copper, according to the auction advertisements. Also, in decorated ceramics, a shift towards cheaper though no less ‘pleasurable’ alternatives, the so-called semi-luxury goods, is noticeable. The advertisements show us that the porcelain items which had been produced in the royal Sèvres factory since 1759 were superseded by faience in the closing decade of the eighteenth century.⁶³

Figure 2.4 Number of decorative items mentioned in the auction advertisements by year



All in all, portable goods seemed to have survived the economic crisis best and perhaps even to have profited from institutional changes like the official pawnshop and broadening second-hand markets (Figure 2.5).⁶⁴ Mentions of pocket watches sold at the auctions grew by 3% and jewellery rose by 30%. Watches were important accessories in revolutionary fashion; it was quite common to wear two visible watches with an outfit.⁶⁵ Even the more ostentatious luxury of jewellery did not suffer under the Revolution: ‘The ideal of simplicity of many revolutionaries did not lead to the condemnation of the wearing of jewellery or the even temporary disappearance of its manufacture’.⁶⁶ While some women devoted to the national cause voluntarily deposited their jewellery in the Assembly’s treasury, the sales show that French citizens more often preferred profit.⁶⁷ In general, the use of gold in these personal adornments did not decline after 1778. Only canes appeared in slightly reduced numbers in the auctions, from 51 to 41: while the need for defence in the unsafe streets of Paris remained, people chose simpler canes in order ‘not to display a noble appearance’.⁶⁸

Figure 2.5 Number of accessories mentioned in the auction advertisements by year



III.

Just as the auction market cannot be dissociated from the wares it redistributed, it is impossible to divorce these auctions from their social origins. What was being sold had once constituted the material universe of the former owner, who had carefully assembled these objects to ‘construct himself differently and re-adjust his relation to the collective’, as one of the pioneers of material culture history, Daniel Roche, would say.⁶⁹ In this third section I will look into the social provenance of auctions during the Terror. However, the auctions’ social distribution as represented by their respective sales advertisements must be interpreted carefully, especially when one is using these results to trace the shifting social realms of eighteenth-century France. It is presumable that informal regulations rather than the auction mechanism with public announcements were used to settle the inheritance of the poorest. Whereas these advertisements offer a broad range of profiles from the lower middle classes to the highest nobility that gave Paris its distinctive appearance, profiles like those of servants, wage-earners and journeymen are difficult to trace in these sources because the columns explicitly mentioned the social status of the testator only in the cases of nobles, officers, merchants, master artisans and practitioners of the liberal professions.

How socially skewed these auction advertisements were because of this selective identification of testators is shown in Table 1, where the testators are divided by sample year into four socio-economic groups according to their explicitly mentioned social status. The nobility here includes everyone described by a noble title, with no distinction being made between sources of ennoblement, whether derived from military service, land ownership or the holding of a venal office.⁷⁰ As the number of nobles in Paris on the eve of the Revolution was estimated at 20,000 or 3% of the city’s total population, this group was significantly over-represented in the samples: in 1778 nobles’ estates constituted 31% of the total identified post mortem sales and rose to 33% during the Revolution, when the nobles’ estates which were auctioned after confiscation were included.⁷¹ The second category I have characterized as ‘bourgeoisie’, yet without any nineteenth-century class-struggle-related connotations. In this group are those ‘judicial magistrates, lawyers, attorneys, physicians, notaries, financiers, merchants and traders’ that late eighteenth-century sources defined as ‘*l’état bourgeois*’.⁷² The table shows their marked and stable presence in the capital’s auction sales (1778: 25%). This declined steeply to 5% in 1793 when presumably the chaos of the Terror made the bourgeoisie ‘disappear’ into the growing category of unidentified sales. The modern ‘petty bourgeoisie’ of shopkeepers and independent artisans was not included in this category, but is featured in the ‘guilds’ category. This group includes all testators who are indicated to have had a fixed, (formerly) guild-structured occupation, sometimes as a master. Throughout the years their presence declined (1778: 9%; 1793: 5%), reflecting the demise and eventual banishment through the Le Chapelier Law in 1791 of the guilds, which were ‘economically moribund by the eighteenth century’.⁷³ Finally, there were sales adverts that announced the name (and gender) of the testator but did not indicate their societal position. This large ‘unmentioned’ group expanded during the Revolution, partly obscuring the evolution in the auctions’ social composition. As regards those testators who would have been identified as members of the fading ‘guilds’ and ‘bourgeoisie’ categories in 1778, presumably they were absorbed by the residual group which grew to supply 50% of the post mortem sales.

Next, the listing of an auctioned estate was seldom exhaustive in auction advertisements; the list of auctioned goods was compiled selectively with the buyers’ interests in mind. Again, the higher the prestige of the testator, the more likely it was that his household was described in all its

richness and abundance. For this reason, these results cannot be seen as a definitive and accurate picture of the variety of Parisian estates according to social status. Rather, this study has chosen to interpret the frequency and manner in which goods are ascribed to certain testators as an indicator of which products were more or less often associated with certain social groups within marketing discourse. In these advertisements can be found a cultural construction and confirmation of what consumer items were deemed appropriate belongings for an individual with a given social position.

Table 1. Social composition according to sample year and gender (in absolute values and %)

		1778 (N =217)	1793 (N =124 / 229 ¹)
Nobility	male	21 (3***)	3 (+71)
	female	22 (3***)	0
	total (in %)	20	33¹
Bourgeoisie	male	45 (1***)	10
	female	10	0
	total (in %)	25	4
Guilds	male	18	10
	female	1	2
	total (in %)	9	5
Clergy	male	14 (1***)	3 (+16)
	female	-	-
	total (in %)	6	8¹
Not mentioned	male	30 (9***)	66 (17***)
	female	56 (25***)	45 (17***)
	both	-	3 (1 ***)
	total (in %)	40	50

¹ These percentages include the auctions after emigration or confiscation (referred to as revolutionary auction sales) as well as the regular sales *après décès*: to the category of the nobility 71 revolutionary sales were added to the regular post-mortem sales, to the clergy 16 revolutionary sales in the 1793 sample.

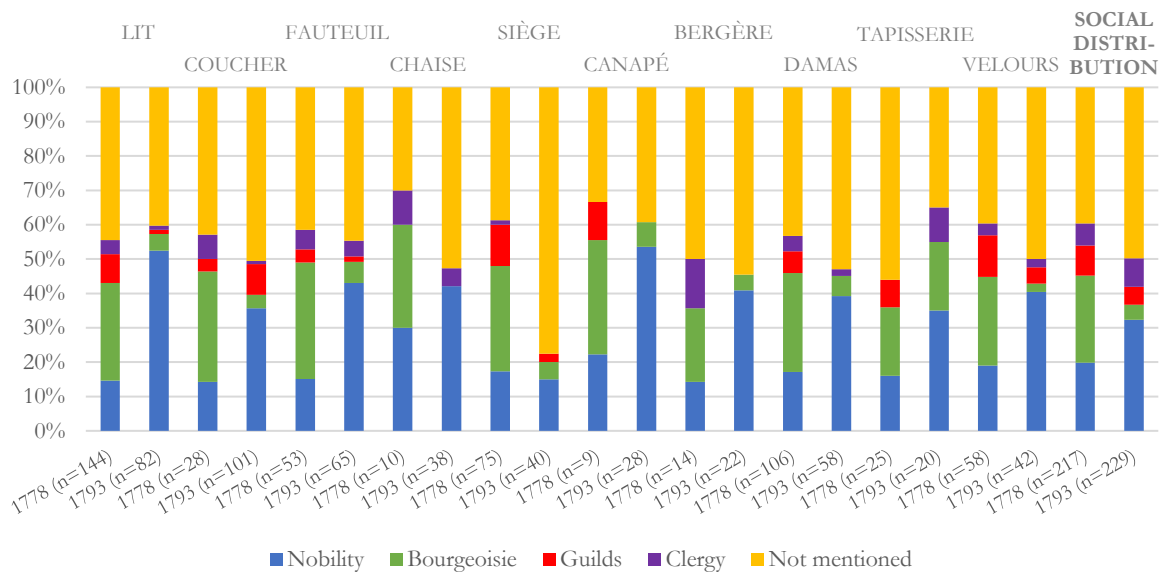
One way in which to clarify this hazy vision of the auctions' social composition is by analysing them comparatively. By tracing how the popularity and materiality of different types of objects evolved among the social groups throughout the pre-revolutionary years, it becomes possible partially to resolve the question to what extent this proliferation of the nobility's goods was a new development sparked by the Revolution or a continuation of previous processes of

emulation-driven dispersal of these objects to the lower classes? In order to evaluate whether the ownership of particular products was more or less specific to certain groups I have in the main offset the relative share of the goods attributed to one category within the total number of 'identified' goods against the percentage of total post mortem sales whose owner is stated to be of that group. This method allows me to detect groups that, for their position in society can be described as 'under-possessing' or 'over-possessing'. Moreover, in order for one to grasp the characteristics of aristocratic estates and the impact of their sudden dispersal, the findings on the nobility need to be compared with those on other social groups, the bourgeoisie for 1778 (55 testators) and the residual category in 1793 (114 testators) being the most important.

Changes in furniture are never dictated by mere utility alone, nor by an independent ideology of the aesthetic, but, as Leora Auslander and Dena Goodman have said, furniture and its changing styles contributed to 'the making of the political and social order, as well as of people's self-understandings'.⁷⁴ This makes the findings from the advertisements before and during the revolution even more striking. As far as different kinds of 'supporting' and 'containing' pieces of furniture are concerned, simple basics as well as expensive specialised items, the bourgeoisie in both years owned a relatively larger amount of furniture than a generally 'underperforming' nobility. This under-representation does not mean that the aristocrats owned fewer of those types of luxury furniture, but in the public imagination crafted by advertising discourses the bourgeoisie's 'display furniture' did not differ substantially from the aristocracy's furnishings. Together with the female-dominated residual category of 1778 the bourgeoisie was the driving force behind apparent tendencies towards comfort and individualization (*cf. supra*: Figure 2.1).

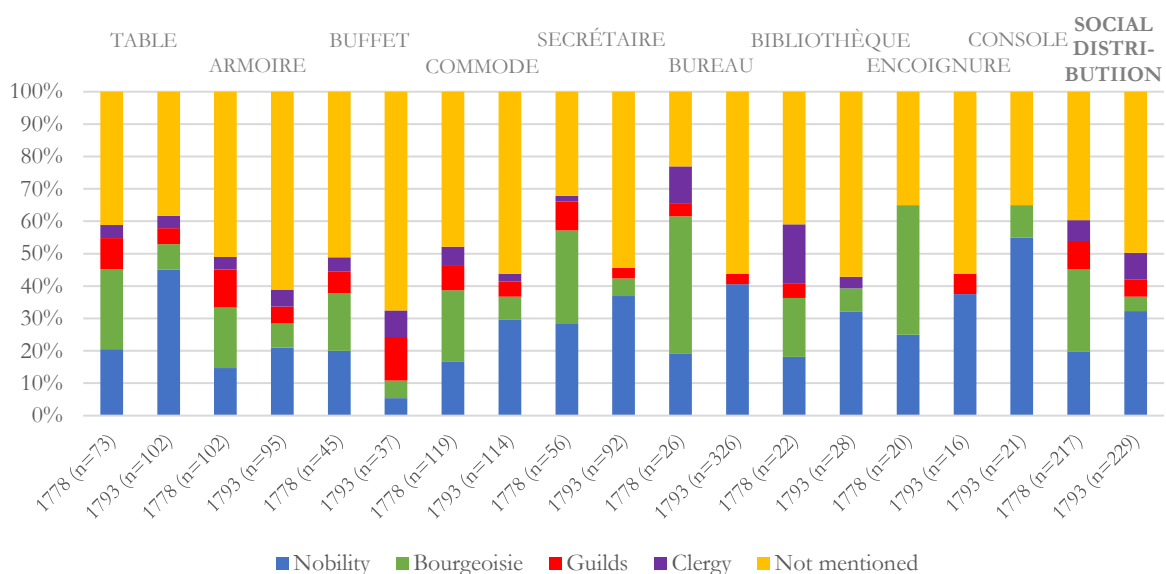
If we look at the distribution of upholstered furniture in 1793, it immediately becomes obvious that the clearance sales considerably skewed the auction market's supply (Figure 3.1). The bourgeoisie's share almost completely disappeared, probably into the unidentified category, and gave way to that of an ever more 'achieving' nobility that steadily owned more than its share of the social distribution. The strong growth of certain pieces of upholstered furniture in Figure 2.1 originated in their influx from noble residences and as such reflected aristocratic tastes. The shift from *lit* to *coucher*, for example, betrays a social dynamic as cribs appeared more often among the nobility while beds were common among non-noble testators. The growth of *chaises* in the advertisements was also predominantly driven by the aristocratic estates. This preference for simpler terms rather than their eulogistic counterparts to describe the nobility's seating might appear bizarre, though it might reveal a gradual shift away from 'hypercorrecting' word choices that were too much associated with the refined vocabulary of the elites.⁷⁵

Figure 3.1. Distribution of upholstered furniture according to social status by year (in %)



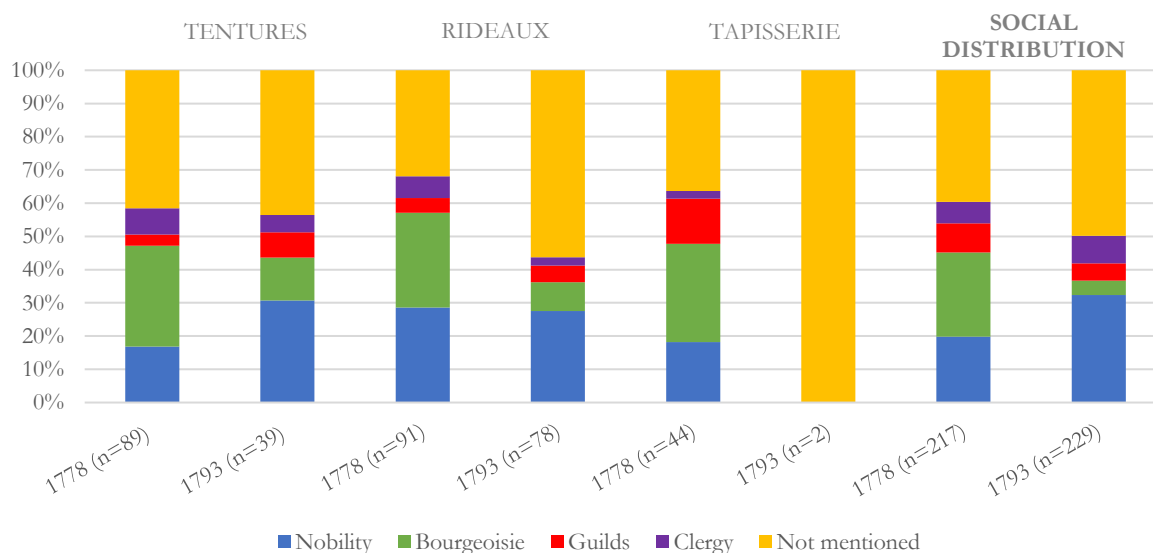
In the matter of storage furniture, the social differentiation between estates was rather subtle (Figure 3.2). Aristocrats took all types of tables and cupboards to the auction sales but these were already widely distributed among the residual group of unidentified testators.⁷⁶ Indeed, bourgeois testators in 1778 owned considerable numbers of corner cupboards, desks and writing tables. These were important pieces in the bourgeois household, expressing a commercial logic of utility and innovation and demonstrating the bourgeois' self-proclaimed work ethic to visitors.⁷⁷ During the Terror the residual group took over this position, adding almost as many chests of drawers, writing desks, bookcases and desks to the advertisements as the nobility. Still the simpler and more 'rustic' wardrobes and cupboards are remarkably sparse among the nobility's estates. Finally, with the *console* (sidetable), the nobility introduced a furniture type to the auction market that was less likely to be found among the common people of Paris because it had no storage capacity and only 'display utility'.

Figure 3.2. Distribution of storage furniture according to social status by year (in %)



Despite their huge decline in terms of numbers in the revolutionary auction advertisements (Figure 2.3), textile decorations were distributed fairly evenly among testators both before and during the revolution. Having their origins in the seventeenth-century aristocratic hotels, textile decorations were by the late eighteenth century, however, no longer exclusive to the nobility. Wallcoverings and curtains were more generally needed for concealing and thermally isolating a building's outer walls.⁷⁸ This democratization of decorative textiles becomes clear in the auction advertisements of 1778 when the bourgeoisie achieved percentages within the social distribution of furniture that doubled those of the nobility. Even in the category of decorative tapestries with its established royal associations the bourgeoisie clearly outperformed the nobility.⁷⁹ The introduction of the confiscated noble estates in 1793 moreover did not really alter the distribution of textile decorations (Figure 3.3).

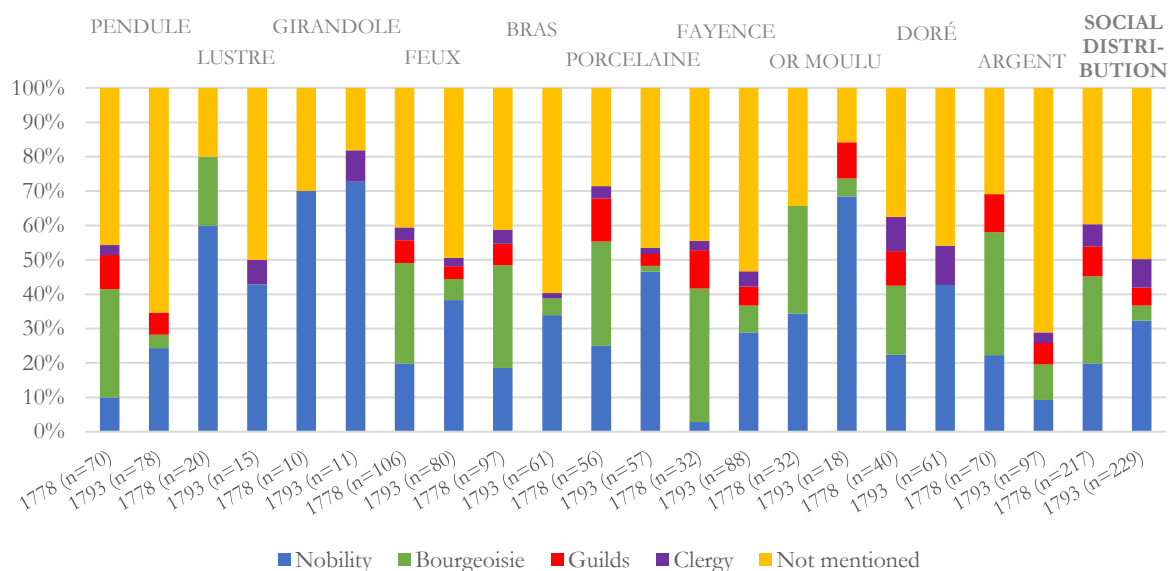
Figure 3.3. Distribution of textile decoration according to social status by year (in %)



Other decorative articles such as clocks, vases, porcelain items and lighting devices were more easily appropriated within a logic of conspicuousness and fashion. Therefore, these items more clearly reveal the social stratification of the Parisian dwellings of the late eighteenth century. While the highly specialized craftsmen producing these costly items were constantly seeking to update their designs in order to satisfy an ever more fashion-frenzied Parisian nobility, they also diversified their materials and techniques in order to attract a broader customer base.⁸⁰ Indeed, the auction advertisements support Fairchild's and Coquery's findings of a burgeoning luxury and semi-luxury market in which the populuxuries offered fashionable objects imitating the novelties produced for the city's nobles at more affordable prices.⁸¹ Moreover, the auction advertisements demonstrated that the revolutionary sales even deepened this rift between the high-end decorations of the nobility and their semi-luxurious spin-offs among 'ordinary' Parisians, especially as there were hardly any formally recognized bourgeois testators left in 1793 (Figure 3.4). Whereas in 1793 a larger proportion of pendulum clocks was associated with noble estates than in 1778, these clocks were still not particularly strongly represented among noble testators. The combined share owned by the bourgeoisie, guild workers and the residual group stayed high, at 75%. As regards lighting

devices, however, the most luxurious types of lighting remained firmly at the upper end of the spectrum in 1778 and 1793, with the nobility owning up to 70%. The materials from which these chandeliers and girandoles were made moreover remained very exclusive in 1793: ormolu remained the predominant method of gilding them and several of these lighting devices in noble estates made use of crystals. Among the simpler devices for heating and lighting, the distribution of andirons and wall-lights was more representative of the sample's social composition. However, the residual group of 1793 would not reach the levels achieved by an extremely 'over-achieving' bourgeoisie in 1778. In addition, the materials used for the lighting devices owned by the residual category shifted more and more towards *doré* (gold-plated) rather than *doré d'or moulu* (gilded). Also, silver-plating made a significant entry in 1793 among the residual category, even though this can be seen as a 'traditional' way of adding value. In the same way as decorative metalware was no longer exclusive to the elites, 'democratic' or 'modern' ways of consuming non-durable, easily-replaceable products such as earthenware were surely not exclusive to the middling groups.⁸² The nobility took the lead in the use of porcelain with 47% of references in the advertisements, and even faience – which the nobility had demonstrated resistance to earlier – shows a noticeable increase in presence in the *émigrés*' auctions. Indeed, the 'hybrid consumer model' attested to by Bruno Blondé for eighteenth-century Antwerp and Brussels might go some way to explaining why the French nobility also invested in those novel and especially fashionable consumer products as a diversification strategy.⁸³

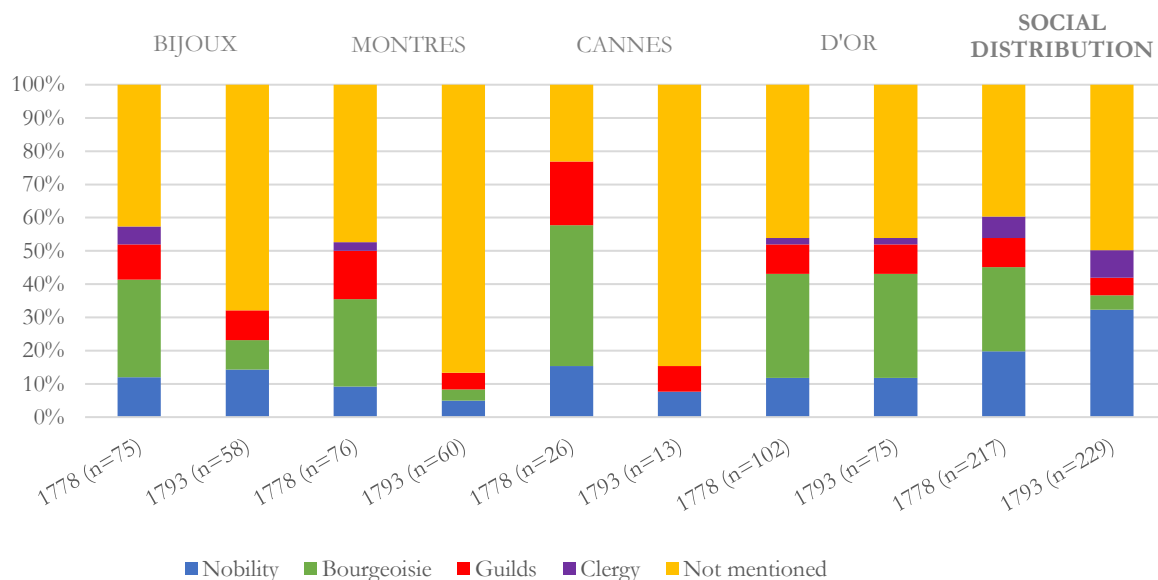
Figure 3.4. Distribution of decorative items according to social status by year (in %)



Indulging in the consumption of personal 'toys' is interpreted by historians as a salient characteristic of the consumer revolution taking place in eighteenth-century western Europe. According to Arianne Fenneteaux and Woodruff Smith, these portable gadgets assisted their owners to 'signal and maintain their respectability'. In providing new strategies of distinction through the elegant gestures their use demanded, the middling classes sought alternatives for the aristocratic rationale of social and cultural superiority through the possession of traditional luxury goods, and they sought to replace this system with one focused on polite performance.⁸⁴ Studying

the use of personal gadgets in pre-revolutionary Paris, William Sewell argued that the Parisian elites started to exercise ‘standard status protocols’ related to notions of civic equality on their walks throughout the city in the late eighteenth century. Exactly those – then still abstract – ideas that accessories endorsed would later stand at the heart of revolutionary political life.⁸⁵ Also in the auction advertisements of 1778 we see that accessories appeared less often in aristocratic auctions; it was the bourgeoisie and the residual group among whom these little luxuries like pocket watches and canes seemed to thrive, products that were essentially appreciated for their ‘utility, taste and comfort’ (Figure 3.5).⁸⁶ Even jewels, which represented an ‘old luxury’ as a method of storing one’s wealth and giving rise to the excessive display of status and power, were surprisingly rarely mentioned in noble estates so that they constituted a share of only 12%.⁸⁷ During the French Revolution these ownership patterns seem to have been amplified and accessories also retained their rich materials. Among non-noble testators the use of gold in these personal gadgets did not decline in comparison with 1778. Moreover, the nobility’s share decreased further in the auction sales, exactly because of the gadgets’ portable character, as it was easier for *émigrés* to take these costly items abroad.

Figure 3.5. Distribution of accessories according to social status in 1778 (in %)



Still, those goods that they did leave spoke enough of the wealth of the nobility and they gave Parisians a glimpse into the immense social polarization of the Ancien Régime. While nobody would ignore the poignant inequality that reigned in eighteenth-century material culture, the revolutionary auctions created an inflated image of contrast, one that in 1778 would never have been perceived as so extreme. Then there was no question of obviously distinct ‘noble’ and ‘bourgeois’ consumer patterns, at least not in the public marketing discourse of the auctions. Rather, a certain ambivalence seems to have guided the bourgeoisie as well as the nobility in their consumption. The former sought distinction and status differentiation through precious ‘old luxuries’ such as tapestries, jewels and lavishly gilded decorations, while porcelain, new sorts of textiles and various curiosities could satisfy the Parisian nobles who were increasingly becoming

‘fashion victims’.⁸⁸ However this merging of the bourgeoisie into the nobility’s ‘conspicuous consumption model’ that in turn became more aware of fashion in 1793 made way for a more socially polarised auction market: on the one hand this came through the disappearance – at least pro forma through the residual category in the advertisements – of the wealthy bourgeois groups of the pre-revolutionary years; on the other hand, the furnishings of the royal palaces appeared in the revolutionary sales.⁸⁹ The ‘splendours of the court’ now filled the auctions rooms in a way the more limited and ‘modest’ noble estates of 1778 were never able to achieve.

IV.

The inflated perception of material inequality that these state-led sales shaped was not necessarily unfavourable to republican ideologies: the new regime could boast about the fact that such sales redistributed the nobility’s wealth. Nevertheless, the dispersal of these goods was certainly not a straight road to consumption ‘dislodged from the social world of status’, as the aristocratic consumption of luxuries was based on complex concepts of value and meaning.⁹⁰ Far from being valuable only for their monetary worth or high-quality craftsmanship, such goods were associated with knowledge, taste and refinement. Thus, apart from the financial limits imposed on them, buyers were also taught to value a product’s aesthetic qualities within ‘polite’ consumer culture. In eighteenth-century France in particular, where connoisseurship gained momentum among art collectors, cultural capital was a precondition for possible buyers to enter those ever more ‘spectacular’ auction houses.⁹¹

In order to explore whether at the same time as the revolutionary auctions dispersed the nobles’ possessions they also dispersed their ‘repertoires of evaluation’, I have examined in this fourth section how the values and meanings ascribed to the goods sold at the auctions evolved during the Revolution.⁹² Qualitative descriptions are sparsely used in the adverts in the main due to concerns about advertising space and the readers’ attention.⁹³ This, however, increases the importance of the descriptions used and reinforces the particular value they gave that product. In 1793, 695 ‘signifying’ adjectives featured in 550 advertisements, compared to 322 adjectives in 467 advertisements in 1778. This increase suggests a slightly more elaborate marketing discourse during the Revolution which can be framed within a broader development of advertising discourses towards a more persuasive vocabulary. During the eighteenth century also a growing sophistication in the terminology used to describe material culture was noticeable.⁹⁴ In this particular context, the augmented refinement of marketing discourse could also suggest increased awareness among buyers of the ‘values’ of the auctioned products that, through the appearance in the auctions of confiscated goods, changed in nature and scope.⁹⁵ To which desired attributes did the advertisements appeal and do they suggest changing consumer mentalities in revolutionary France?

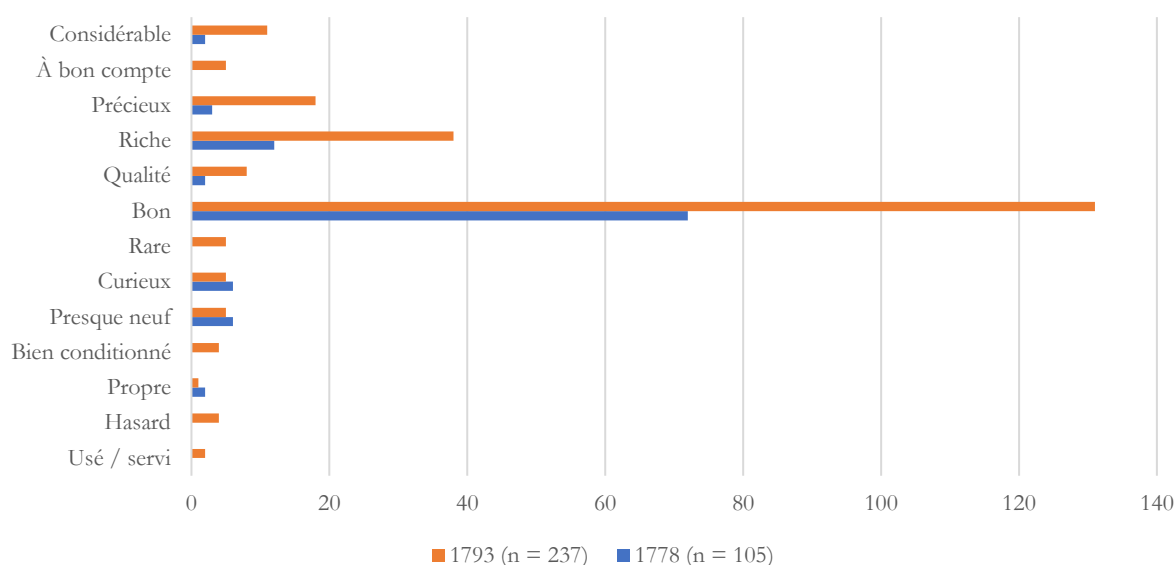
Inspired by what consumer historians have identified as the key product values that guided early modern consumers, I divided the adjectives used in advertisements among four categories representing different ‘sets of values’. However, it was not only supplementary descriptors that gave meaning to goods. For example, the summing up of a long list of items juxtaposed with each other inspired a feeling of variety and abundance, which became increasingly important for ever choosier consumers in the eighteenth century.⁹⁶ Besides, portraying the items in too elaborate and favourable a way might spark doubts concerning the auctioneer’s professionalism and hyperbole.⁹⁷

After all, an educated buyer – at least in the imagination – should have been able to perceive quality and beauty.⁹⁸

The most obvious driver of value is the item's economic worth and its cost at the sale. Whereas the final sale price could fluctuate through the auction mechanisms and differ from its estimated price, contemporaries were convinced that 'bargains' could be had by buying high-quality second-hand goods 'at prices below the market ones for newly made items'.⁹⁹ The excellent 'value for money' clearly inspired bidders, but advertisers capitalised on this by highlighting qualities like strong construction and durable materials, rather than by emphasizing low prices (Figure 4.1).¹⁰⁰ In the Parisian adverts there were no references to 'low prices' and the description *à bon compte* (cheap), still a somewhat vague descriptor, remained rather exceptional throughout the relevant period. Also, the term *d'hasard* for second-hand goods that appeared in the adverts of 1793 did not mean that they were sold at a low price but rather referred to the 'occasion' of obtaining a bargain.¹⁰¹

Quality, on the other hand, was expressed through the use of many adjectives. Products or even entire estates with a high monetary worth stemming from intrinsic value that could survive the item's first cycle of ownership were described as *riche* or *précieux* (rich or precious). In 1793 these adjectives appeared more often, responding to the more luxurious sales of *émigrés'* estates. This indicates that buyers, despite the turmoil of the Revolution – or because of the rapid devaluation of paper money – were interested in securing wealth in traditional ways.¹⁰² In particular, the growth of *bon* (good), the most basic indicator of quality and referring to the item's state as 'not too badly used or destroyed', in the revolutionary sample year reveals how the adverts tried to approach a public that was seeking to 'capture value'.¹⁰³ Stana Nenadic, who analysed eighteenth-century auctions in Glasgow, argued that such a consumer mentality was typical for the middle-classes.¹⁰⁴ So did 'bourgeois' values gain importance on the revolutionary auction market? Consulting the *Dictionnaire's* lemma on 'bon', various meanings are exemplified, one of which is excellent.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the value of 'goodness' could be linked not only to middle-class prudence but also to refinement and gentility, i.e. traditional aristocratic notions of status.¹⁰⁶ Other factors like traces of usage and the product's exclusivity played a role in determining the goods' economic value as well. Nevertheless, the relatively minor importance of values such as *bien conditionné* (in good condition), *presque neuf* (almost new), *propre* (proper), *servi* (used), *curieux* (curious) and *rare* (rare) persisted throughout the period.

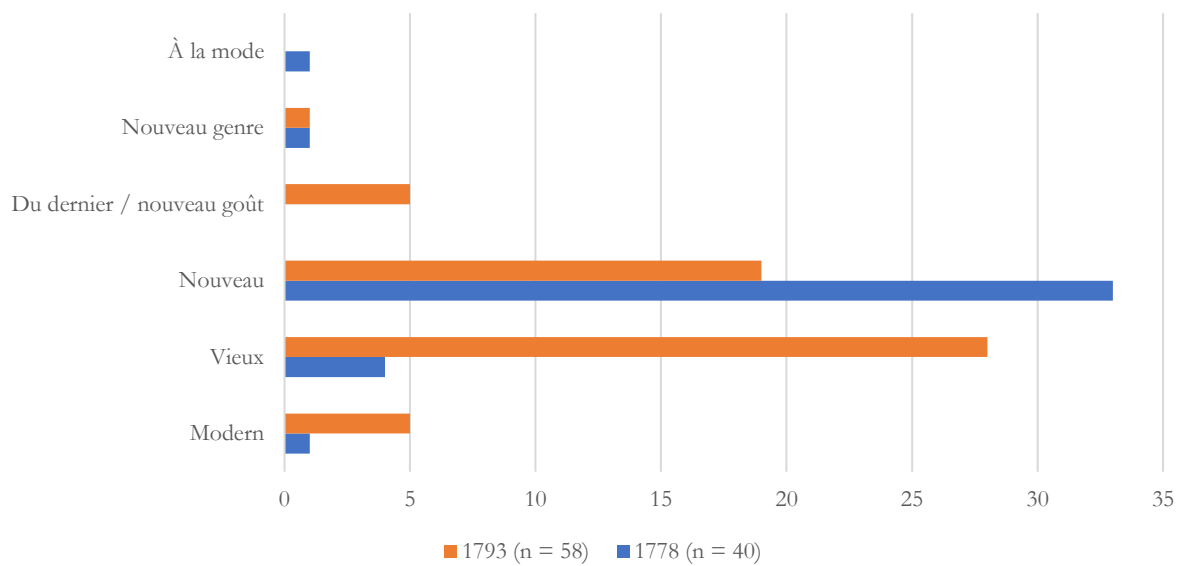
Figure 4.1 References to quality and economic value in the 'Affiches' by year



Of course, economic value could not be divorced from the institutions and social networks in which it came about, as personal relations often guaranteed quality.¹⁰⁷ In the auction adverts this translated mainly into the importance of describing the previous owner, whose social status contributed to the trustworthiness of the auction and the quality of the products. Readers might even have hoped to share in the testator's prestige by assuming that something of his reputation could be transmitted through his former belongings.¹⁰⁸ The Parisian advertisements certainly played upon the former owner's position, yet its decreasing importance during the Revolution especially among non-noble testators was pointed out in the previous sections.¹⁰⁹

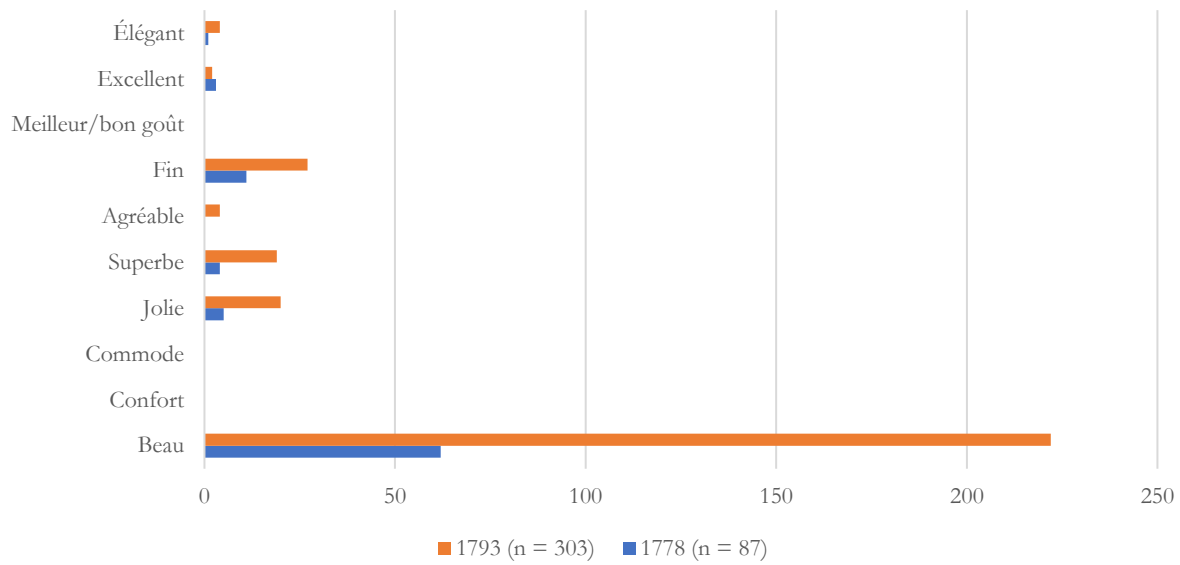
How 'the nascent tandem of neophiliac and fashion-driven behaviour' altered eighteenth-century consumer preferences is widely known.¹¹⁰ However the Parisian adverts suggest that aspirations to own new, clean and fashionable goods did not permeate the second-hand markets (Figure 4.2). The word 'new' remained rather infrequently used and it even declined in 1793. It is important that *nouveau* was used to indicate the goods' superior looks (as in *presque neuf* or *bons comme neufs*) or to distinguish different provenances of the goods being auctioned ('*Meubles neufs & de hasard*') rather than as a distinct 'product virtue'. Nor does *vieux* (old) seem to have been connected with a negative value judgement, because in 1793 it was mostly used to describe wine and liquors, products that gained in value with age. Again, on those market circuits where, by definition, only 'second-hand' goods were sold, boundaries between the 'new' and the 'old' were far from clear. Moreover, those adjectives that valued products solely for their novelty or their fashionable design, like *à la mode*, *du dernier goût*, *moderne* and *d'un nouveau genre* (trendy, of the latest taste, modern and new-style) remained particularly rare in the advertisements.

Figure 4.2 References to fashion and novelty in the 'Affiches' by year



Despite all arguments about the 'tyranny of fashion', what most interested the readers of the *Affiches* in eighteenth-century Paris was the beauty of the goods. Whereas *bon* and *beau* still stood on an equal footing in 1778, *beau* became the leading descriptor in 1793 (Figure 4.3). However frivolous this adjective may sound, the *Dictionnaire*'s technical definitions mentioning proportions, colours and balance show how the term was encapsulated within broader intellectual thinking on aesthetics.¹¹¹ *Beau* could also express '*ce qui est excellent et agréable*' (what is excellent and pleasant), so those items could probably attest to their owners' membership of the 'polite and genteel society' of the elite.¹¹² Aesthetic considerations were to a lesser extent expressed by words like *fin* and *joli* (fine and beautiful) that conveyed beauty in a more modest way, or *superbe* and *excellent* (superb and excellent) to address the product's high degree of perfection. Mirroring the evolution of *beau*, these adjectives gained importance in 1793 but remained at an overall low level. Issues of *confort* and *commodité* (comfort and convenience) did not belong to the persuasive vocabulary of the adverts. The sensual experience of the goods definitely mattered when one was attending estate auctions but the real-life viewing probably made obsolete the explicit mentioning of these qualities in advertising. Rather, what attracted buyers about these goods - according to the advertiser - were their aesthetic qualities, turning them into markers of status and taste. Even during the Terror clients regarded the second-hand market as an economically advantageous forum to continue what was essentially a consumption-based search for distinction and status affirmation. The estates of the realm might have been defunct since 1789, but the vocabulary of the revolutionary auction adverts demonstrated that the meanings and value systems behind consumption tended to follow the logic of a social inequality reproducing material culture.

Figure 4.3 References to aesthetics in the 'Affiches' by year



V.

Given the unprecedented scale and depth of the political transformations taking place during the Terror, one would expect that the Jacobins would through their auctioning policies have curtailed certain forms of 'conspicuous consumption' associated with the nobility.¹¹³ Nothing was further from the truth, because the forced sales of nobles' belongings created a high ambivalence in the consumer supply through the seemingly unbridled influx of luxury goods.¹¹⁴ Besides, what this research has shown is that this ambivalence continued also in the vocabulary: typical high-end luxury objects associated with the lavish lifestyle of the nobility were far from demonized in the marketing discourse and the aesthetic canon of taste and distinction underpinning this type of noble consumption was eagerly harnessed to promote the sale of these goods. While it is almost impossible to assess the extent to which citizens modified their consumer behaviour in the wake of the revolutionary events, the *Affiches*' stable commercial discourse that simultaneously both shaped and reflected changing systems of meaning did not suggest that drastic alterations in the underlying consumer values had immediately been caused by the Revolution. Moreover, in the words used to endow products with values in 1793 the big 'traditional' categories of 1778 featured more prominently; luxury consumption and material culture showed a remarkable continuity in the marketing discourse during the Terror.

Beyond the fascinating question whether the French Revolution was able to craft new types of consumer behaviour in line with new political cultures and regimes of knowledge, an even more difficult question lurks.¹¹⁵ Did material cultures contribute to the transformation of the Revolution itself?¹¹⁶ The consumer discourses revealed in the *Affiches* of 1793 are an indicator that in the mindsets of consumers product values were not changed by the Revolution. Consumer habits and models of social distinction still relied heavily on the nobility, as the Revolution prolonged the hegemony of aesthetics for marketing reasons. While the revolutionaries physically tried to

eradicate the nobility and the hierarchy that its existence set up, a strong imaginary persisted of the social hierarchy in which the nobility was a source of taste and social emulation. Nonetheless, the large-scale public sales trumpeted in the printed media made the aristocracy, its style, taste and way of living accessible to a significantly broader public. Merchants and foreign collectors enriched themselves in large numbers in the revolutionary auctions, although to a lesser extent the upper middle classes would also profit indirectly from this unique opportunity.¹¹⁷ On a hitherto unprecedented scale the Revolution actually brought this aristocratic lifestyle within reach of the bourgeoisie, diffusing its model of consumption and making it accessible for reappropriation and modification within the bourgeois ethic which, since its origins in the eighteenth century, had been influenced by the noble habitus.¹¹⁸ The clearance sales gave the bourgeoisie the opportunity to obtain their own materially tangible piece of taste, fashion and even ‘history’. In a sense, the French Revolution as a historically unparalleled moment when the bourgeoisie could ‘acquire history’—in the shape of the belongings of aristocratic families—formed a prelude to the antiquarianism of the nineteenth-century Parisian bourgeoisie.¹¹⁹ By furnishing their interiors with antiques, as Manuel Charpy argues, ‘the bourgeoisie had a chance to acquire some nobleness and hide their recent social ascent’.¹²⁰ More generally speaking, the improvised sales of goods formerly belonging to the nobility acted as a quick solution to mitigate the financial distress of the young French Republic, yet it also heralded important processes of aristocratic consumer models ‘trickling down’ and constituting the necessary malleable elements for the cultural *and* material construction of the nascent bourgeois order in the following century.¹²¹

Yet apart from the economic logic behind the revolutionary auctions of confiscated goods, the members of the Assembly authorizing the clearance sales sought to dismantle an ‘eternal monument to the insolent pomp of the kings’, as is shown in the parliamentary debates.¹²² Responding to what they perceived as structural societal problems, the legislators, in fact, developed something that in current historical research is interpreted as the politics of consumption.¹²³ As is well attested to by other historians, the French revolutionaries indeed did not close their eyes to the material world around them, as they realized how curbing unwanted consumer behaviour could help them to achieve their political goals.¹²⁴ Yet while scholars have drawn attention to the fact that these state policies originated in a complex entanglement of consumer interests, moral concerns and macroeconomic issues, I argue that historians must more comprehensively grapple with the fact that these political decisions and actions did not land on a blank consumer space either. While the sources show how politicians may have tried to interfere with consumption from the top down, the confrontation of these policies with existing consumer practices and sentiments could sometimes create unexpected ambiguities, as was shown when confronting political with commercial discourse. Whereas Timothy Breen has argued, for example, that the earlier transformations of the Anglo-American consumer marketplace gave the American Revolution a distinctive shape, this same marketplace could in other contexts also harbour seemingly counter-revolutionary forces.¹²⁵ Further research into the construction and reproduction of consumer cultures in the nineteenth century is nonetheless needed to chart the consequences this ambiguous consumer world triggered by the French Revolution had on later consumption (r)evolutions, social transformations and political debates.

- ¹ J. Livesey, 'The Limits of the Terror: the French Revolution, Rights and Democratic Transition', *Thesis Eleven*, 97 (2009), 64–80, 78.
- ² R. Gaillard, 'Les commissaires-priseurs et les ventes révolutionnaires du mobilier royal', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 170 (2012), 183–207, 184.
- ³ E. and J. de Goncourt, *Histoire de la société française pendant le Directoire* (Paris, 1855), 4–6.
- ⁴ M. Beurdeley, *La France à l'Encan, 1789–1799: Exode des objets d'art sous la Révolution* (Paris: 1981).
- ⁵ C. Guichard, *Les amateurs d'Art à Paris au XVIII^e siècle* (Seyssel: 2008); T.R. Brown, 'The Politicization of the Paris Auction Marketplace, 1789–1848', in *Collections et marché de l'art en France 1789–1848*, ed. P. Sénéchal and M. Prédi-Hamard (Rennes, 2005), 47–56; B. Péronnet, 'La presse et le marché de l'art, de la Révolution et la Restauration', in *Collections et marché de l'art*, 97–110.
- ⁶ M.L. Lataste (ed.), *Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860*, vol. 66 (Paris, 1904), 225.
- ⁷ L. S. Mercier, *Tableau de Paris* [1781], ed. J.-C. Bonnet (Paris, 1994), vol. 1, 448–450.
- ⁸ N. Coquery, 'Luxury Goods beyond Boundaries: the Parisian Market during the Terror', in *A Taste for Luxury in Early Modern Europe: Display, Acquisition and Boundaries*, ed. J. Stobart and J. Ilmakunnas (London and New York: 2017), 283–302, 286.
- ⁹ *ibid.*, 286.
- ¹⁰ C. Jones and R. Spang, 'Sans-culottes, *Sans café*, *Sans Tabac*: Shifting Realms of Necessity and Luxury in Eighteenth-Century France', in *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe, 1650–1850*, eds. M. Berg and H. Clifford (Manchester: 1999), 37–62, 55.
- ¹¹ Archives de Paris, 'Commissaires-priseurs parisiens', [online:] <<http://archives.paris.fr/a/248/commissaires-priseurs-parisiens/>>, consulted on 15 July 2020. For example Rémi Gaillard worked with the department archives of Yvelines in his research.
- ¹² Archives de Paris, 'Catalogue ventes aux enchères (1780–2011)', [online:] <http://archives.paris.fr/_depot_ad75/_depot_arko/ead/NUM1268.pdf>, consulted on 15 July 2020. The selective preservation of sales transcripts even reinforces the elite bias of the sources because the archives of only three Parisian commissaires-priseurs in the eighteenth century have been preserved: Archives de Paris, 'Archives des commissaires-priseurs parisiens conservés aux Archives de Paris: index patronymique', [online:] <http://archives.paris.fr/_depot_ad75/_depot_arko/ead/FIC0002.pdf>, consulted on 15 July 2020.
- ¹³ C. Wischermann and E. Shore (eds.), *Advertising and the European City: Historical Perspectives*, (London and New York, 2000), xvii.
- ¹⁴ N. Coquery, 'Luxe et Révolution: marchands et politiques, entre dirigisme et libéralisme', in *Faire de l'histoire économique aujourd'hui*, ed. J.-C. Daumas (Dijon, 2013), 213–224.
- ¹⁵ C. Jones, 'Bourgeois Revolution Revivified: 1789 and social change', in *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies*, ed. G. Kates (London and New York, 1998), 157–191.
- ¹⁶ S. Maza, 'Luxury, Morality, and Social Change: Why There Was No Middle-Class Consciousness in Prerevolutionary France', *The Journal of Modern History*, 69 (1997), 199–229, 200.
- ¹⁷ T.R. Brown, 'The Politicization of the Paris Auction Marketplace', 19. The abolition of the auctioneers' corporation did not significantly alter the administrative procedures or archival practices: R. Gaillard, 'Les commissaires-priseurs', 194.
- ¹⁸ D. Lyna, 'Words of Value? Art Auctions and Semiotic Socialization in the Austrian Netherlands (1750–1794)', in *Concepts of value in European material culture, 1500–1900*, ed. B. De Munck and D. Lyna (London and New York: 2015), 57–74, 64.
- ¹⁹ G. Feyel, 'Presse et publicité en France (XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles)', *Revue historique*, 628 (2003), 837–868; C. Todd, 'French Advertising in the Eighteenth Century', *Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century*, 266 (1989), 513–547.
- ²⁰ B. Blondé and I. Van Damme, 'Fashioning Old and New or Moulding the Material Culture of Europe (late Seventeenth – Early Nineteenth Centuries)', in *Fashioning Old and New, Changing Consumer Patterns in Europe (1650–1900)*, ed. B. Blonde and I. Van Damme (Turnhout: 2009), 1–13, 4.
- ²¹ M. Daunton and M. Hilton (eds.), *The Politics of Consumption: Material Culture and Citizenship in Europe and America* (Oxford and New York: 2001).
- ²² N. Coquery, 'Luxury Goods Beyond Boundaries', 289.
- ²³ *Affiches*, 3 January 1752, s.p.
- ²⁴ A.J.L. Jourdan, N. Decrusy and F.A. Isambert (eds.), *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises*, vol. 26 (Paris, 1826), 42–43.
- ²⁵ N. Coquery, 'The Social Circulation of Luxury and Second-Hand Goods in Eighteenth-Century Parisian Shops', in *The Afterlife of Used Things: Recycling in the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. A. Fenneteaux, A. Junqua and S. Vasset (New York: 2015), 13–24, 17.
- ²⁶ J. Stobart and I. Van Damme, 'Introduction: Modernity and the Second-Hand Trade: Themes, Topics and Debates', in *Modernity and the Second-Hand Trade European Consumption Cultures and Practices, 1700–1900*, eds. J. Stobart and I. Van Damme (Basingstoke: 2010), 1–18, 7.

- ²⁷ In eighteenth-century France these types of press notices would be described as *annonces* because of their informative nature. The original term downplays the persuasive or commercial intentions of the sources. Moreover, the editors were obliged to include public sales announcements without charge. Therefore, these sources do not meet all the criteria for early modern advertising as they do not stem from the individual initiatives of salesmen. Bearing this in mind, in this article I nonetheless use the English translation of advertisement, because this is the prevailing term used to indicate second-hand auction announcements in historical research.
- ²⁸ B. Walker, 'Advertising in London Newspapers, 1650–1750', *Business History*, 15 (1973), 112–130, 122–25.
- ²⁹ J. Stobart, 'In and Out of Fashion? Advertising Novel and Second-Hand Goods in Georgian England' in *Fashioning Old and New*, 133–144, 134; D. Lyna and I. Van Damme, 'A Strategy of Seduction? The Role of Commercial Advertisements in the Eighteenth-Century Retailing Business of Antwerp', *Business History*, 51 (2009), 100–121, 113.
- ³⁰ B. Blondé and J. Stobart, 'Aesthetics, language and the marketing of goods in England and the Low Countries, c.1730–1800' (unpublished congress paper, EAUH, 2018), 4; Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* (Paris: 1964), 98–101.
- ³¹ In both years I selected only the odd-numbered sales days in order to keep the manual transcription work bearable without risking too many distortions caused by a random selection.
- ³² The difference stems from the fact that Spieth used only the Lugt index to measure the lots of auctioned paintings and sculptures in Paris, while Fredericksen focused on only the numbers of paintings mentioned in the Getty Provenance index and offered for sale in the whole of France.
- ³³ D. Spieth, *Revolutionary Paris*, 376.
- ³⁴ B. B. Fredericksen, 'Survey of the French Art Market', 30.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.
- ³⁶ S. Maza, 'Luxury, Morality, and Social Change', 207–208.
- ³⁷ F. Laroulандie, 'Le Mont-de-Piété sous la Révolution française', in *Etat, finances et économie pendant la Révolution française*, ed. Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France (Vincennes: 1991), 209–227, 210.
- ³⁸ D. Spieth, *Revolutionary Paris*, 376; M.L. Lataste (ed.), *Archives Parlementaires*, vol. 43, 457 and vol. 49, 576.
- ³⁹ L.A. Fauvelet de Bourienne, *Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main, 2019), 34.
- ⁴⁰ N. Coquery, 'Luxury and Revolution: Selling High-Status Garments in Revolutionary Paris' in *Selling Textiles in the Long Eighteenth Century: Comparative Perspectives from Western Europe*, ed. J. Stobart and B. Blondé (London: 2014), 179–192, 184.
- ⁴¹ C. Granger, 'La liste civile de Napoléon III: le pouvoir impérial et les arts', *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, 22 (2001), [online:] <<https://journals.openedition.org/rh19/288>>, consulted on 16 July 2020.
- ⁴² R. Gaillard, 'Les commissaires-priseurs', 185.
- ⁴³ S. Pennell, 'All but the kitchen sink: household sales and the circulation of secondhand goods in early-modern England', in *Modernity and the Second-Hand Trade. European Consumption Cultures and Practices, 1700–1900*, eds. J. Stobart and I. Van Damme (London: 2010), 37–46, 40.
- ⁴⁴ B. De Munck and D. Lyna, 'Locating and Dislocating Value: A Pragmatic Approach to Early Modern and Nineteenth-Century Economic Practices', in *Concepts of Value in European Material Culture, 1500–1900*, ed. B. De Munck and D. Lyna (London and New York, 2015), 1–30, 8–12.
- ⁴⁵ L. Fontaine, 'The Circulation of Luxury Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris: Social Redistribution and an Alternative Currency' in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, eds. M. Berg and E. Eger (New York: 2003), 89–102, 94.
- ⁴⁶ M. Beurdeley, *La France à l'Encau*, 109–110.
- ⁴⁷ M. Hellman, 'Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century France', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32 (1999), 415–445, 417–418.
- ⁴⁸ In the context of the General Maximum Law private houses could indeed be searched when the owner was suspected of hoarding necessities: R. Spang, 'What is Rum? The Politics of Consumption in the French Revolution', in *The Politics of Consumption: Material Culture and Citizenship in Europe and America*, eds. M. Daunton and M. Hilton (Oxford and New York, 2001), 33–50, 38.
- ⁴⁹ The changes in furniture styles were visible through the application of republican iconography and the reproduction of classical motifs, yet detailed descriptions articulating these evolutions are often lacking in the auction advertisements: L. Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: 1996), 147–154; L. Auslander, *Cultural Revolutions: The Politics of Everyday Life in Britain, North America and France* (Oxford: 2008), 113–148.
- ⁵⁰ J.-P. Bertaud, *La vie quotidienne en France au temps de la Révolution (1789–1795)* (Paris: 1983), 15–19; D. Roche, 'Apparences révolutionnaires ou révolution des apparences', in *Modes et Révolutions 1780–1804. Exposition, musée de la mode et du costume, Palais Galliera, 8 février–7 mai 1989* (Paris: 1989), 105–128, 126; C. Fairchild, 'Fashion and freedom in the French Revolution', *Continuity and Change*, 15 (2000), 419–433, 420–25.
- ⁵¹ D. Goodman and K. Norberg, 'Introduction', in *Furnishing the eighteenth century: what furniture can tell us about the European and American past*, eds. D. Goodman and K. Norberg (New York and London: 2007), 1–10, 1–2.
- ⁵² J.-F. Féraud, *Dictionnaire critique de la langue française*, 3 vols (Marseille: 1787), i. 597.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.* vol. 1, 569; A. S. C. Ross, 'Linguistic class-indicators in present-day English', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 55 (1954), 113–149, 120.

- ⁵⁴ Canapés also include the multi-person seating described as *sophas* and *ottomanes*. The latter were distinguished by the rounded forms of their backs and armrests: P. Verlet, *Les meubles français du 18^e siècle* (Paris: 1982), 80.
- ⁵⁵ The *lit à la duchesse* is an elegant chaise longue consisting of two or three separate pieces: *ibid.* 79.
- ⁵⁶ The Boulle revival in the second half of the eighteenth century was driven by high nobles and collectors and not the French court: J.-P. Samoyault, 'Les meubles Boulle dans les palais royaux sous Louis-Philippe', *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles* (2015), [online:] < <http://journals.openedition.org/crcv/13448>>, consulted on 17 July 2020.
- ⁵⁷ N. Coquery, 'Luxury and Revolution', 187.
- ⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 183-84.
- ⁵⁹ F. Souchal, *Le vandalisme de la Révolution* (Paris: 1993), 147-150; M. Beurdeley, *La France à l'Enca*, 38-40.
- ⁶⁰ F. Aftalion, *The French Revolution: an economic interpretation* (Cambridge: 1990), 98.
- ⁶¹ This superior gilding technique is called *or moulu* in French.
- ⁶² Research on Parisian retailers has already found that a boom in gilded objects was noticeable from as early as the 1780s onwards: N. Coquery, 'The Language of Success: Marketing and Distributing Semi-Luxury Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris', *Journal of Design History*, 17 (2004), 71-89, 72; P. Verlet, 'Le commerce des objets d'art et les marchands merciers à Paris au XVIII^e siècle', *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations*, 13 (1958), 10-29, 20-21.
- ⁶³ C.C. Dauterman, *Sèvres Porcelain: Makers and Marks of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: 1986), 15-20.
- ⁶⁴ N. Coquery, 'Luxe et Révolution,' 218.
- ⁶⁵ M. Delpierre et al., 'Catalogue,' in *Modes et Révolutions 1780-1804. Exposition, musée de la mode et du costume, Palais Galliera, 8 février-7 mai 1989* (Paris: 1989), 137- 224, 169.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 170.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 170-171.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 166.
- ⁶⁹ D. Roche, *Histoire des choses banales: Naissance de la consommation (XVII^e-XIX^e siècle)* (Paris: 1997). [Trans. Brian Pearce, *A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France, 1600-1800* (Cambridge: 2000), 2]. Some notable works on the social history of material culture among 'ordinary people' in eighteenth-century Paris are: D. Roche, *Le peuple de Paris: essai sur la culture populaire au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: 1981) and C. Fairchilds, 'The production and marketing of populuxe goods in eighteenth-century Paris', in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. J. Brewer and R. Porter (London and New York: 1993), 228-248. For the nobility: M. Kwass, 'Economies of Consumption: Political Economy and Noble Display in Eighteenth-Century France', in *The French nobility in the eighteenth century: reassessments and new approaches*, ed. J. Smith (University Park: 2006), 19-41 and N. Coquery, *L'hôtel aristocratique*. For the bourgeoisie: R. Flamein, *La Société Fluide: Une histoire des mobilités sociales (XVII^e-XIX^e siècle)* (Paris et Rennes: 2018).
- ⁷⁰ W. Doyle, *Officers, nobles and revolutionaries: essays on eighteenth-century France* (London and Rio Grande: 1995), 57-62.
- ⁷¹ D. Roche, *La culture des apparences. Une histoire du vêtement XVII^e - XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: 1989), 77-78.
- ⁷² L. Coste, *Les bourgeoisies en France: Du XVI^e au milieu du XIX^e siècle* (Paris: 2013), 1.
- ⁷³ L. Vardi, 'The Abolition of the Guilds during the French Revolution', *French Historical Studies*, 15 (1988), 704-717, 705.
- ⁷⁴ L. Auslander, *Taste and Power*, 1; D. Goodman and K. Norberg (eds.), 'Introduction', 1-2.
- ⁷⁵ A.S.C. Ross, 'Linguistic class-indicators in present-day English', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 55 (1954), 121-149, 120.
- ⁷⁶ D. Roche, *People of Paris*, 147-150.
- ⁷⁷ D. Goodman, 'The *Secrétaire* and the Integration of the Eighteenth-Century Self', in *Furnishing the eighteenth century: what furniture can tell us about the European and American past*, eds. D. Goodman and K. Norberg (New York and London: 2007), 183-20, 188; D. Goodman, 'Furnishing Discourses: Readings of a Writing Desk in Eighteenth-Century France', in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century. Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, eds. M. Berg and E. Eger (Basingstoke and New York: 2003), 71-88, 76.
- ⁷⁸ N. Coutin, *L'art d'habiter à Paris au XVIII^e siècle. L'aménagement des hôtels particuliers* (Dijon: 2011), 112.
- ⁷⁹ K. Brosens, 'The organisation of seventeenth-century tapestry production in Brussels and Paris: a comparative view', *De zeventiende eeuw: cultuur in de Nederlanden in interdisciplinair perspectief*, 20 (2004), 264-284, 265.
- ⁸⁰ J. De Vries, 'Luxury in the Dutch Golden Age in Theory and Practice', in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century. Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, eds. M. Berg and E. Eger (Basingstoke and New York: 2003), 41-56, 52; J. Styles, 'Product Innovation in Early Modern London', *Past & Present*, 168 (2000), 124-169, 125-126; N. Coquery, 'The Language of Success', 72 and 85.
- ⁸¹ C. Fairchilds, 'The production and marketing of populuxe goods in eighteenth-century Paris'; N. Coquery, *Tenir boutique à Paris au XVIII^e siècle. Luxe et demi-luxe* (Paris, 2011).
- ⁸² N. McKendrick, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, Bloomington: 1982, 100.
- ⁸³ B. Blondé, 'Conflicting Consumption Models? The Symbolic Meaning of Possessions and Consumption amongst the Antwerp Nobility at the End of the Eighteenth Century', in *Fashioning Old and New. Changing Consumer Patterns in Western Europe (1650-1900)*, eds. B. Blondé and I. Van Damme (Turnhout: 2009), 61-79, 71.
- ⁸⁴ W. D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (New York and London: 2002), 3; A. Fennetaux, 'Toying with Novelty: Toys, Consumption and Novelty in Eighteenth Century Britain', in *Fashioning Old and New, Changing Consumer Patterns in Europe (1650-1900)*, ed. B. Blonde and I. Van Damme (Turnhout: 2009), 17-28, 24-26.

- ⁸⁵ W. H. Sewell, 'Connecting Capitalism to the French Revolution: The Parisian Promenade and the Origins of Civic Equality in Eighteenth-Century France', *Critical Historical Studies*, 1 (2014), 5-46, 21.
- ⁸⁶ M. Berg and E. Eger, 'The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debates', in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, eds. M. Berg and E. Eger (New York: 2003), 7-27, 9.
- ⁸⁷ The term *bijoux* in auction advertisements often did not include all the jewels in a sale, because there might have been separate entries for rings, brooches, pendants... yet it indicates that a collection of jewels was in the possession of the testator. Another possible explanation for this small proportion from the nobility might be the specialised sales of 'curiosities' such as jewels organised by the Parisian aristocracy to participate in commercial activity disguised as collecting *amateur*: L. Fontaine, 'The Circulation of Luxury Goods: Social Redistribution and an Alternative Currency', in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, eds. M. Berg and E. Eger (New York: 2003), 89-102, 94-95.
- ⁸⁸ N. Coquery, 'The Language of Success', 85.
- ⁸⁹ On the bourgeoisie's 'incorporation into a nobility': C. Jones, 'The Great Chain of Buying: Medical Advertisement, the Bourgeois Public Sphere, and the Origins of the French Revolution', *The Am Hist Rev*, 101 (1996), 13-40, 14.
- ⁹⁰ M. Kwass, 'Ordering the World of Goods: Consumer Revolution and the Classification of Objects in Eighteenth-Century France', *Representations*, 82 (2003), 87-116, 108.
- ⁹¹ C. Guichard, *Les amateurs d'art à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Seyssel: 2008), 300-338.
- ⁹² B. De Munck and D. Lyna, 'Locating and Dislocating Value', 11.
- ⁹³ B. Blondé and J. Stobart, 'Aesthetics, language and the marketing of goods in England and the Low Countries, c.1730-1800', 5.
- ⁹⁴ M. Hellman, 'Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure', 422 and 441.
- ⁹⁵ D. Lyna and I. Van Damme, 'A Strategy of Seduction?', 111-113.
- ⁹⁶ N. Coquery, *Tenir boutique à Paris au XVIIIe siècle*, 273-74.
- ⁹⁷ D. Lyna and I. Van Damme, 'A Strategy of Seduction?', 114.
- ⁹⁸ D. Lyna, 'Words of Value?', 64-66.
- ⁹⁹ S. Pennell, 'All but the kitchen sink', 291.
- ¹⁰⁰ J. Stobart, 'In and Out of Fashion?', 138.
- ¹⁰¹ The term *d'hasard* for second-hand goods was already in common use in the 1780s: J.-J. Féraud, *Dictionnaire critique*, vol. 2, 380.
- ¹⁰² F. Aftalion, *The French Revolution: an economic interpretation*, 1.
- ¹⁰³ J. Stobart, 'Clothes, cabinets and carriages: second-hand dealing in eighteenth-century England', in *Buyers and Sellers: Retail circuits and practices in medieval and early modern Europe*, ed. Bruno Blondé et al. (Turnhout: 2006), 225-244, 233.
- ¹⁰⁴ S. Nenadic, 'Middle-Rank Consumers and Domestic Culture in Edinburgh and Glasgow 1720-1840', *Past & Present*, 145 (1994), 122-156, 132-133.
- ¹⁰⁵ J.-J. Féraud, *Dictionnaire critique*, vol. 1, 286.
- ¹⁰⁶ W.D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability*, 224.
- ¹⁰⁷ D. Lyna and I. Van Damme, 'A Strategy of Seduction?', 112.
- ¹⁰⁸ C. Wall, 'The English Auction: Narratives of Dismantlings', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 31 (1997), 1-25, 20-21.
- ¹⁰⁹ B. Blondé and J. Stobart, 'Aesthetics, language and the marketing of goods', 7.
- ¹¹⁰ B. Blondé and I. Van Damme, 'Fashioning Old and New', 4.
- ¹¹¹ E. Russo, *Styles of Enlightenment. Taste, Politics, and Authorship in Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore: 2007), 2-3.
- ¹¹² J.-J. Féraud, *Dictionnaire critique*, vol. 1, 256; M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford and New York: 2005), 6.
- ¹¹³ R. Spang, 'What is Rum?', 40-42.
- ¹¹⁴ On this 'paradox' of the revolutionary sales: N. Coquery, I. Collier, and R. Flamein, 'Ce que les cultures matérielles peuvent apporter à l'historiographie de la Révolution française', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 38 (2016), 125-144, 140.
- ¹¹⁵ William Reddy argued that '[revolutionary] politics transformed the way of exchange and so altered the manner in which particular object acquired their value': J. Livesey, 'Material Culture, Economic Institutions and Peasant Revolutions in Lower Languedoc 1770-1840', *Past & Present*, 182 (2004), 143-173, 143.
- ¹¹⁶ N. Coquery, I. Collier, and R. Flamein, 'Ce que les cultures matérielles peuvent apporter à l'historiographie de la Révolution française', 134.
- ¹¹⁷ Coquery speaks of a revolutionary 'democratization, since auctions had long been the prerogative of the big players': N. Coquery, 'Luxe et Révolution', 217.
- ¹¹⁸ R. Flamein, 'L'univers matériel et la construction de l'identité bourgeoise', 28.
- ¹¹⁹ These practices of ennoblement among the bourgeoisie described at the time as the *savonnette aux vilains* were of course not new, and have been extensively studied in: D. Dessert, *Argent, pouvoir et société au Grand Siècle* (Paris: 1984); F. Bayard, *Le Monde des financiers au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: 1988).
- ¹²⁰ M. Charpy, 'The Auction House and its Surroundings: the Trade of Antiques and Second-Hand Items in Paris during the Nineteenth Century', in *Fashioning Old and New: Changing Consumer Patterns in Western Europe (1650-1900)*, eds. Bruno Blondé and Ilja Van Damme (Turnhout: 2009), 218.

¹²¹ Philippe Perrot offers a convincing account of the transformation of luxury consumption from a noble prerogative during the Ancien Régime into a more 'democratic', comfort-minded definition of luxury within the bourgeois order during the nineteenth century: P. Perrot, *Le Luxe. Une richesse entre faste et confort (XVIIIe-XIXe siècle)* (Paris: 1995).

¹²² M.L. Lataste (ed.), *Archives Parlementaires*, vol. 52, 583.

¹²³ M. Dauntton and M. Hilton, 'Material Politics: An Introduction', in *The Politics of Consumption: Material Culture and Citizenship in Europe and America*, eds. M. Dauntton and M. Hilton (Oxford and New York, 2001), 1-32.

¹²⁴ R. Spang, 'What is Rum?', 42.

¹²⁵ In a nutshell, Breen argues that consumption provided a framework that, on the personal level, allowed people to familiarize themselves with core liberal values; socially it created a sense of recognition and trust among an 'imagined community' of colonists and on the political level it provided a forum for expressing political resistance: T. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: 2004), xv-xvii. On the construction of counter-revolutionary identities through consumption, collections and luxury material culture: L. Auslander, 'After the Revolution: Recycling Ancien Régime Style in the Nineteenth Century', in *Re-creating Authority in Revolutionary France*, eds. B. T. Ragan and E. Williams, (New Brunswick, N.J.: 1992), 144-174; T. Stammers, 'The Bric-à-Brac of the Old Regime: Collecting and Cultural History in post-revolutionary France', *French History*, 22 (2008), 295-315.