



Archives de soie. Fabrique et insurrections à Lyon au début des années 1830. Journées d'étude des musées Gadagne

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Book Reviews

LUDOVIC FROBERT, ed., *Archives de soie. Fabrique et insurrections à Lyon au début des années 1830. Journées d'étude des musées Gadagne*. Silvana Editoriale, Milan, 2014. 156 pp., 47 illus. €20. ISBN: 9788836625994

LUDOVIC FROBERT and GEORGE SHERIDAN, *Le Solitaire du ravin. Pierre Charnier (1795–1857), canut lyonnais et prud'homme tisseur*. ENS Éditions, Lyon, 2014. 380 pp., 13 illus. €24. ISBN: 9782847885552

In 2011, under the aegis of the Labelsoie festival, the history museum in Lyon (musées Gadagne) coordinated the first of its annual study days. Their aim was to reveal the impact of the silk industry (*La Fabrique*) on all aspects of the city's material and intellectual life and heritage, and, in so doing, challenge some of the myths the Lyonnais — among others — live by. The theme for the inaugural event took its cue from the 180th anniversary of the first revolt of the silk weavers (*canuts*) in November 1831, a rising with its roots in the imposition of a tariff for weaving rates; it was followed by a second, more serious uprising in April 1834. According to some historians, these events marked the beginnings of a militant working-class consciousness — a view qualified here in six essays by established and up-and-coming historians. Each provides an intriguing case study of social, political and economic thought and action in the first half of the nineteenth century — in most cases through the eyes of a particular individual. Regulated by Napoleon in 1806 through the *conseil des prud-hommes*, Lyon's silk industry occupied about 50 per cent of the city's workforce in the 1830s, relying on innovation for its success and resistant to full-scale mass-production. The essays are accessible

to academic and lay audiences, written in straightforward French and enlivened by illustrations that intimate the strength of the holdings of printed and manuscript sources at the musées Gadagne and the Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon (BML).

The first three essays focus on industrial organisation in Lyon in the first half of the nineteenth century. George Sheridan revisits concepts and experiences of apprenticeship through the eyes of Pierre Charnier (1795–1857), who had followed an apprenticeship in silk weaving before becoming a workshop head (*chef d'atelier*) and then a vocal member of the body that regulated disputes in the trade (the *conseil des prudhommes*). Charnier's testimony as observer of working conditions and mediator in disputes between workshop heads and apprentices fed his reforming zeal, which he articulated orally and in writing in the 1830s and 1840s when he proposed a new form of contract between masters and apprentices — one imbued with moral and religious obligations that echoed the contracts of the silk-weaving guild in previous centuries and differentiated his stance from that of other contemporary reformers. Simon Hupfel then introduces the Englishman Dr John Bowring, who visited Lyon in 1832 to promote the cause of free trade and also to observe how the silk industry worked. Enthused by the role of the *conseil des prud'hommes* in regulating disputes and protecting design, and, more broadly, by the encouragement given to the arts in France, he subsequently shared his views at two Select Committees in London — on the Silk Trade in 1832 and on the Arts and Manufactures in 1835. Some of his ideas were adopted, others rejected. The *conseil des prud'hommes* hovers as a benign spectre, and its functions and the balance of its membership are only fully described in the

next essay, in which Pierre Vernus provides an overview of preceding forms of organisation and legislation, before examining contractual relationships between manufacturer businessmen (*négociants fabricants*) and workshop heads, and the variables involved in setting a fair price for weaving.

The second group of essays deals with contested representations of Lyon. Bruno Benoît examines the black legend that resulted from the revolt and that depicted Lyon as a dangerous city continually plotting against Crown and property. He does so by providing a lively account in the first person from the reports of police superintendent (*commissaire*) Pierre Pratt for both Ministry and Prefecture, addressing the depressed economic state of the city, the fears of the population, and the real or perceived threats facing the authorities. As such, it is an excellent introduction to the social environment of Lyon for those unfamiliar with the city and the place of silk weaving within it. Ludovic Frobert turns his attention to the views expressed in the Press by conservative bourgeois journalist Saint-Marc Girardin and the response from the champion of the silk weavers, Charnier, who explained directly to the government in Paris the reasons behind the insurrection on behalf of the *canuts* in 1831 and 1832. Finally, through a case study of the birth, growing pains, peregrinations and adaptations of the sculpture commissioned to commemorate Joseph-Marie Jacquard (1752–1834), eponymous inventor of the loom, François Jarrige sweeps through just over a century of local anxieties around Jacquard's contentious invention, how and where in Lyon its maker should be remembered. By the centenary of Jacquard's death, during a severe depression that recalled that of the 1830s, the municipality — ironically — chose him as a symbol of Lyon's magnificent past and celebrated with pomp.

Based on substantial research in Lyonnais archives and newspapers, this collection follows in the footsteps of Alain Cottereau's publications on flexible specialisation and collective practices in the early nineteenth century, as well as the body of literature on

the revolts of the *canuts*. For those with little knowledge of Lyon and its industry, two key matters are fundamental: the social complexion of the city and the regulatory framework and role of the *conseil des prud'hommes*. The volume ends by making available several key documents: an extract from Bowring's responses at the Select Committee in 1832 (translated into French) and three from the Charnier papers held in the BML (pp. 129–56). Discovered in the 1930s in a local bookshop by the historian Ferdinand Rude, these were bequeathed to the library on the latter's death in 1990, and finally listed in 2009.

Rude had identified a rare survival: an archive deliberately built up by an early nineteenth-century artisan to inform posterity. His pioneering exploration of these papers laid the ground for their exploitation in Frobert and Sheridan's book *Le Solitaire du ravin*, in which the subject's own voice is given space at the end of each chapter. The book follows a broadly chronological drift through the life of Charnier, who considered himself a 'humble maggot in the army of progress' (p. 54) and signed his published articles 'the recluse of the ravine' (p. 55). The latter was a reference to a lifetime spent in the quartier St Paul in the gorge between Lyon's two hills — the one that prayed (Fourvière) and the one that worked or wove (La Croix Rousse). After an introduction to the historiographical, historical and biographical context for Charnier, three chapters explore his ideas and projects around mutualism for weavers from 1827 to 1857, his relationships with the *prud'hommes* in Lyon and his missions on their behalf in the field. The next three delve into his reaction to the risings in Lyon in 1831–1832 and 1849 (his views that the weavers were merely responding to the violence to which they were subject physically and through economic liberalism), his belief in the alliance of republican virtues with Catholic morality and his desire to communicate his industrial and political experience to social observers whose views were often based purely on theoretical premise or prejudice. The conclusion leaves the last word to Charnier, weaver *prud'homme* but also lover of the countryside and botanist,

collector of books and art. A thorough appendix charts the history of Lyonnais silk manufacturing from the sixteenth to nineteenth century, and a glossary unpacks some of the technical terms specific to the silk industry, its objects, occupations and processes. In brief, this microhistory of a redoubtable artisan, who was alive, active and articulate at a significant moment in the history of the Lyon silk industry, opens the doors to understanding of broader political issues of the time.

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ANNA JACKSON, ed., *Kimono: The Art and Evolution of Japanese Fashion*. Thames & Hudson, London, 2015. 320 pp., 400 illus. £50. ISBN: 978500518021

The publication of this lavishly illustrated volume featuring the Khalili Collection of Japanese kimono coincides with the publication of a spate of books in the English language that notably explore the kimono as a *fashionable* rather than timeless ethnic garment, successfully challenging scholarship that positioned fashion as a Western phenomenon exported to the rest of the world. These include Terry Satsuki Milhaupt's *Kimono: A Modern History* (2015), Penelope Francks' 'Was Fashion a European Invention?: The Kimono and Economic Development in Japan', *Fashion Theory* (2015), Manami Okazaki's *Kimono Now* (2015) and *The New Kimono From Vintage Style to Everyday Chic* (2011), from the editors of *Nanao Magazine*. The latter books mirror global interest in vintage and contemporary kimono as evidenced by Kimono Flea Market Ichiroyan (<https://www.ichiroya.com/>), UNIQLO's recent online offer of *yukata* or the kimono jackets that have become a staple of boho chic fashion and festival wear in the 2010s.

The garments featured in *Kimono* date from the Edo (1603–1868), Meiji (1868–1912),

Taishō and early Shōwa (1912–1950) periods and include formal, semi-formal and informal kimono worn by women, men and children, which have been captured in 400 tantalising colour illustrations. The book is divided into three sections by period, each of which is accompanied by pairs of articles that contextualise kimono production and consumption politically, socially and culturally, and further reflect on the fashionability of the garment. In addition to an individual's position in Edo society, Timon Screech convincingly argues that the diversity of the competing Japanese states in terms of culture, religion, crops, livestock and weather, or residence in any of the Five Royal cities (Osaka, Sakai, Nagasaki, Kyō (Kyoto) and Edo (Tokyo)), each of which had a distinctive urban identity, impacted upon what people wore. Anna Jackson builds upon Screech's chapter by detailing the ways in which a growing market for luxury kimono led to a vibrant fashion culture. Christine Guth focuses on the hybrid cultural forms and practices established in the dynamic Meiji period as opposed to the image of timelessness fostered by Japan's export of kimono to the rest of the world. Jackson emphasises the crucial role of dress in identity formation at this time. The ways in which new sites such as the department store and café impacted upon Japanese dress is explored by Kendall Brown, who focuses on the period between 1912 and 1945, which is reinforced by Jackson's analysis of how 'dress ... became a significant focus for the debates that surrounded notions of tradition and modernity, of the native and foreign' (p. 160).

While the short chapters allow the reader to consider the seemingly ubiquitous kimono in a new light, the illustrated collection drives the points raised home. The body and sleeves of the kimono form a distinctive, flat-planed T-shape: an excellent canvas for surface decoration. Whereas in Western dress gender, age, social position and taste are demonstrated through cut and construction, in kimono these are expressed through choice of decorative technique, fabric, colour and pattern. Sophisticated combinations of weaving, dyeing, embroidery and hand painting are