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Luxury and Literature in the 18th and 19th Century

This project examines the origin and circulation of various concepts and manifestations of luxury between the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century. Always a remarkable and far-reaching phenomenon that has influenced human history from the ancient world to the present day, luxury has in recent years become the focus of a robust debate that has also had significant reverberations in the philosophical, legal and economic discourse in Europe. This project builds on the various and as yet isolated strands of research of recent years, in order to reveal a complex panorama of luxury phenomena and to place these in a unified context. At the core of the investigation is the multifaceted cultural space encompassed by the French, German and Italian borders – a space which is permeated by fertile economic and political relations, and which allows us to comprehend the circulation of luxury goods in all of its aspects. The basis of this analysis will consist of media such as periodicals, as well as literary texts in which the introduction and instrumentalisation of luxury objects are addressed. This project stresses the cultural-historical aspects of the subjects involved, placing particular emphasis on the literary traces of luxury-phenomena in the European context.