

Dynastic Marriages, 1612/1615: A Celebration of the Habsburg and Bourbon Unions. Margaret M. McGowan, ed.

European Festival Studies: 1450–1700. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013. xv + 308 pp. \$124.95.

This comprehensive collection of studies spans the entire multifaceted world of festival studies in one conspicuous example — the dynastic marriages of two of the most powerful families at the time, the Habsburgs and Bourbons. Although published as part of a renowned Ashgate series entitled *European Festival Studies 1450–1700*, this book clearly stands out both for its clarity and the depth of its investigation. The chosen subject is of utmost interest since it serves as a point of intersection of power, politics, and spectacle in early Baroque Europe. This is the first time that the topic of Habsburg and Bourbon dynastic unions has been thoroughly examined and connected with celebrations that were staged throughout Europe between 1612 and 1615. Through the well-presented historical setting of J. H. Elliott, the reader is introduced to an intricate political background of this dynastic union, which involved complex interests of the major political powers in the European political arena.

It is to the credit of its prudent editor, Margaret McGowan, who gathered a team of fourteen highly interdisciplinary scholars, that this specific issue of dynastic marriages is elaborately presented from many wide-ranging viewpoints. One of the centerpieces of the book is the study, approached from different angles, of the famous carousel in Paris, staged in 1612. Several scholars give accounts of its stage and costume designs, music, political backgrounds, protagonists, and audience. Marie Baudiere and Monique Chatenet give a detailed analysis of the festival books produced upon the occasion, and also costume and scene design recorded of this magnificent spectacle of state. The chivalric tradition visible in the Paris events of 1612 are also discussed separately and most competently by Paulette Chone. She discusses the intricate allegorical language employed in Paris and contrasts it with similar events in other cities such as Paris and London. Of particular interest is the contribution by Patrice Franchet d'Espray, rarely found in scholarly volumes of this kind. It is a detailed and learned account of the horse *ballet du court* that played a key role in this carousel, and it is written by an equestrian expert who possesses a rather unique expertise needed for an examination of such an endeavor.

At the close of this study, J. R. Mullryne offers two notable comparative examples of dynastic marriages: Ferdinando de Medici in Florence and Henry Stuart in London. As both precede the events of 1612 and 1615, they give a good comparative background for the examination of the importance of celebrating dynastic alliances in late Renaissance Europe.

From carousels to festivals books, *ballets du court* and political pamphlets to music, the world of political self-presentation has been successfully reconstructed and one can say almost enlivened for contemporary readers. Furthermore, the rich bibliography of primary sources, both in print and already digitized, present an additional value of this book, which would serve as an excellent departure point for future scholarship.

JELENA TODOROVIĆ, *University of Arts in Belgrade*