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Music, discipline and arms in early modern France. By Kate van Orden. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005. Pp. xiv + 322. ISBN 0-226-84976-7. £25.50.

Cultivated power: flowers, culture and politics in the reign of Louis XIV. By Elizabeth Hyde. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. Pp. xxiii + 330. ISBN 0-812-23826-5. £32.50.

The palette of historians of early modern France has been lightened progressively during the past generation, moving from the sombre shades of institutional and financial history through the primary colours of the martial arts and the gaudy finery of the court to the delicate pastel hues of music and flowers. Yet the issue of power remains at the centre, as both these original and illuminating studies demonstrate. Kate van Orden has no difficulty in showing that, for contemporaries, music delivered much more than recreation. As she neatly puts it: 'it is not just that music operated politically, but that music was taken to be so powerful in an age dominated by the most brutal forms of political struggle' (p. 5). A sound polity required sound music, for 'where music is disordered, there morals are also depraved, and where it is well ordered, there men are well disciplined morally' (p. 5). That precept formed part of the statutes of the Academy of Poetry and Music, founded in 1570, and could be supported by reference to classical authorities going back to Plato's *Republic*. Especially popular was the story of Alexander the Great reaching for his weapons whenever his musician, Timotheos, played in the Phrygian mode, anticipating Woody Allen's remark in *Manhattan murder mystery* that, whenever he hears the music of Richard Wagner, he has the urge to invade Poland. A sixteenth-century demonstration of the same inflammatory effect of music was recorded in 1581 at the wedding of the duc de Joyeuse, when the singing of a song by Claude Le Jeune prompted one guest to draw his sword and offer to fight any man in the hall. It was only when the musicians switched to a song in the Hypophrygian mode that he calmed down. (Neither the source, nor Kate van Orden, seems to be aware that this kind of behaviour is not uncommon at wedding receptions and has more to do with alcohol than music.)

Throughout the troubled times covered by this book, music was prominent in theory and practice. In his *Six livres de la république*, Jean Bodin developed Plato's view that faulty harmonies could destroy a state. He pointed to Polybius's description of Arcadia, where musical study was compulsory for all citizens up to the age of thirty and where the neglect of music led to 'such sedition and civil warres, as wherein no kind of crueltie was forgotten' (p. 70). Unlike Plato and Aristotle, however, Bodin commended the French attachment to the fifth and seventh modes, for in the bracing climate of the north, they led not to effeminate weakness, as in Greece, but to civilized manners. An exemplar of the civilizing process was the sophisticated Louis XIII, an accomplished luthenist who whiled away the slack periods during the siege of La Rochelle by composing motets and rehearsing his choir. On the other side of the ramparts, the Huguenots prepared themselves for battle

with the singing of hymns and psalms, a special favourite being Psalm 144: 'Blessed be the Lord my strength which teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight.' Most of them, alas, did not survive to hear the Catholic equivalent – a *Te deum*. In a particularly interesting chapter, van Orden examines Henry III's development of the *Te deum* ritual, presenting it as 'a Catholic version of the Roman triumph' (p. 147).

Ranging from the 1560s to the 1660s she makes good her claim that music formed an important part of the behavioural and cultural disciplining that took the French elites from self-destructive civil war to mutually supportive co-operation with the crown in the Versailles project. Whether it was the liturgical music of the Church ('foundational to royal ceremonial') or the 'pyrrhic ballets' of the Jesuit colleges or the equestrian ballets of the court *Carrousels*, social control went hand-in-hand with the civilizing process. Attractively presented and priced, lavishly illustrated and equipped with many well-chosen musical examples, this highly original study should appeal to anyone interested in the history of early modern France. One puzzling oddity is the very abrupt ending, so abrupt indeed that one must wonder whether something went wrong in the production process.

The same virtues are evident in Elizabeth Hyde's study of floral culture during the reign of Louis XIV. If anything, this handsome volume enjoys an even higher level of illustration, including forty monochrome figures embedded in the text and ten colour plates. They support an argument that takes up, chronologically, where Kate van Orden leaves off. A pictorial link between the two is provided by the reproduction of an engraving by Jean Ganière depicting *Emblem on the elimination of heresy, and of rebellion through the care of Cardinal Richelieu*, in which Richelieu is shown removing caterpillars and other pests from the lily of France, while the eagle of the Holy Roman Empire and the lion of Spain are held in check by heavy chains. It was Louis XIV, however, who made flower power an integral part of his representational culture. Indeed, this book could be described as a floricultural expansion of Peter Burke's observation that ritual, art and architecture may all be seen as the instruments of self-assertion, as the continuation of war and diplomacy by other means'.[1] Not just the stylized fleur-de-lys but the natural lily and a host of other flowers too were enlisted in Louis's project. The florists and flatterers were only too happy to oblige. The book begins and ends with consideration of a magnificent manuscript presented to the king in 1688 by Jean Donneau de Visé, entitled *History of Louis the Great contained in the rapport that is found between his actions and the qualities and virtues of flowers and of plants*. From the hundred-odd pages of this 'masterpiece of late seventeenth century flower painting, calligraphy and marquetry' (p. ix), a succession of trees, plants, and flowers sing the praises of their king. The lily, for example, drew an analogy: 'I multiply a great deal; no sovereign has ever enlarged his state as much as you: your conquests gave more towns to France than all of your predecessors together have taken during their reign' (p. 191).

Employing an association that pervades the iconography of Versailles, the personal superiority of Louis XIV was tied to the national pre-eminence of the French. Also in 1688, Nicolas Valnay proclaimed that it was only during the current reign that France had equalled and then surpassed all other nations in the floricultural arts. At the opening of Donneau de Visé's panegyric, all the flowers sing in unison that, although they come from many different countries, they are all 'French by inclination' (p. 195) and recognize the hegemony of the greatest of all monarchs. Nor was this mere rhetoric, for Louis did indeed create 'the most spectacular displays of flowers that early modern Europe had yet seen'

[1] Peter Burke, *The fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, 1992), p. 65.

(p. 169). Especially at Marly and the Trianon, enormous sums were spent on creating dazzling exhibitions. In 1686 alone, purchases included 18,850 ranunculi, 10,000 *tulipes bosuelles*, 915 double peonies, 1,200 jonquils, 850 double narcissi, 8,200 hyacinths, 2,000 orange lilies, 1,765 pots of tuberoses, 4,000 cyclamen, and 20,050 double jonquils. To that total must be added almost 100,000 flowering bulbs brought up from the royal nursery established at Toulon to take advantage of the Mediterranean climate. An English visitor was told by the director of the royal nursery in Paris that in just four years he had sent 18,000,000 tulips 'and other bulbous plants' to Marly. With money no object, autumn could be turned into spring and winter into summer. As with the rest of the Versailles project, the Sun King's conquest of nature was advertised. The flowers also helped to establish the necessary distance between sovereign and even the greatest of his subjects. The royal flowers, just like the royal palaces, jewels, packs of hounds, or whatever, had to be *hors concours*. On the other hand, the fawning courtiers flattered in the sincerest way they knew, by constructing their own versions of the Trianon, albeit on a suitably reduced scale.

As with everything else touched by the rays of the Sun King, the brilliance began to fade towards the end of the reign. After his death in 1715, both Versailles and the nursery at Toulon were abandoned. Although the former was taken out of mothballs in 1722 when the court returned, the latter was rented to a peasant for the cultivation of cabbages. By this time, the royal flower gardens were being overshadowed by commercialization. Enterprising Dutch bulb-growers had developed a thriving mail-order business, issuing multi-lingual price-lists and establishing an international network of agents. From the catalogue sent out by the Haarlem business of Dirk and Pieter Voorhelm in 1746, for example, one could take one's pick of no fewer than 360 different varieties of auricula. In Paris by the end of the old regime, anyone with sufficient funds could have cut flowers and pot plants delivered to their homes. The floricultural distance between king and subject had diminished if not vanished. If Kate van Orden confirms what has long been known, that the history of music is too important to be left to the musicologists, Elizabeth Hyde now shows that the history of flowers is too important to be left to the botanists.

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