

Occasions of State: Early Modern European Festivals and the Negotiation of Power. J. R. Mulryne, Krista De Jonge, R. L. M. Morris, and Pieter Martens, eds. European Festival Studies: 1450–1700. London: Routledge, 2019. xxii + 292 pp. + 14 color pls. \$149.95.

This recently published collection of essays by Routledge is a valuable result of two endeavors—the European Palladium project and the conference that was, under the same title, held in Venice in 2013. However, this book is far more than just a fruitful elaboration of conference proceedings—it presents the erudite continuation of a notable series, European Festival Studies: 1450–1700. Initially commenced six years ago, this series was launched as a partnership between the the Society for European Festivals Research and the publishing house Ashgate. Since 2013, it has resulted in eleven important volumes devoted to different aspects of festival research, absolutely unique in early modern scholarship. When this project began, under the direction of professor J. R. Mulryne, who also stands as one of the editors of this book, publications on festivals in the early modern world were few and far between. In the meantime, the Society and its distinguished authors profoundly mapped out the realm of festival studies, thus further enriching our knowledge of the early modern world. The fact that Taylor & Francis continued this edition, after taking over Ashgate, in 2017, is laudable, and this collection of essays truly proves to be worthy of the long line of scholarly volumes formerly published.

Coedited by four renowned scholars in the field, *Occasions of State* examines the concept of negotiation of power in early modern festivals from a rich variety of angles. The rather vague title of the book (and the preceding conference) allowed the gathered scholars to take the broadest view possible and to cover the highly diverse set of geographies that constituted early modern culture. Including such iconic loci as the fortress of Bastille, the ducal palace of Venice, and the theaters of Milan as well as the less familiar spaces of Valladolid and Graz, this book displays a panoply of powers and an equally varied set of festivals that demarcated early modern diplomacy. Equally varied are the forms of festivals this book examines: triumphal processions in peace and wartime, state banquets, inaugural ceremonies, spaces for dancing in Renaissance France, and allegorical dramas in the theaters of Milan.

Particularly poignant is the opening essay in this volume, which stands as a theoretical platform for the entire book—the discussion on the importance of festivals for the constitution of the early modern notion of identity. Its author examines the role that festivals had not only in expressing identities in this troubled time but also in creating them. This pivotal concept is presented through the multiple lenses of historical, sociological, and political studies, always bearing in mind that the early modern identity is a fluid entity, a process with no end.

Equally valuable contributions are two texts that deal with a rarely discussed form of festivals—those staged in wartime. Whether held in towns entered by force (like both

cities of Frankfurt in 1631) or staged to signify a compromise between the citizens and the conquering monarch (like Gustaph Adolphus's entry into Riga in 1621), they were carefully balanced and often-peculiar events in which the previously established language of festivals appropriated profoundly novel significations. One peculiar case was presented in the text devoted to the city of Valladolid as a "theater of peace" in 1605, when this venerable center of erudition was chosen for the ratification of Anglo-Spanish peace. These ceremonies in peace glorifying Valladolid were, as was often the case, an enactment of political realities, being often a truer mirror than the reality itself.

Each of the chapters in this book is an important piece of research in its own right, shedding a new light on the power of festivals in early modern Europe. They greatly differ in their approaches and methodologies, but viewed together, they offer a priceless addition to the understanding of festival culture and the mechanisms of displaying and negotiating power.

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A Europe of Courts, a Europe of Factions: Political Groups at Early Modern Centres of Power (1550–1700). Rubén González Cuerva and Alexander Koller, eds. Rulers and Elites 12. Leiden: Brill, 2017. x + 264 pp. \$137.

This book is the result of a conference held at the German Historical Institute, Rome, in 2014. In ten chapters, eleven authors discuss case studies dealing with a variety of courts across Europe (including one in Istanbul). The editors provide an introduction along with suggestions (mostly in English, German, and Spanish) for further reading. Each chapter includes a separate bibliography.

In their introduction, the editors put the study of factions into the context of "the crisis of the contemporary State and the criticism of the teleological paradigms of State-building" (1–2). Choosing to emphasize networks instead of an older paradigm that stressed classes, they state that now people are looking more at informal means of power, such as "the social mechanisms of patronage, brokering and clientelism" (2). Perhaps even more importantly, the editors assert that these mechanisms of informal power can be studied comparatively and internationally. They assemble a diverse and entertaining variety of court examples, from a mix of settings, including imperial (Prague and Istanbul), papal (Rome), royal (London, Paris, Madrid), (arch)ducal (Brussels, Nancy, Turin), and even republican (Venice). The assertion is made that "court culture was a shared pan-European heritage" and that it is necessary to break from much of the practice to date, which examines courts individually, stating that "comparison is fundamental" (9).