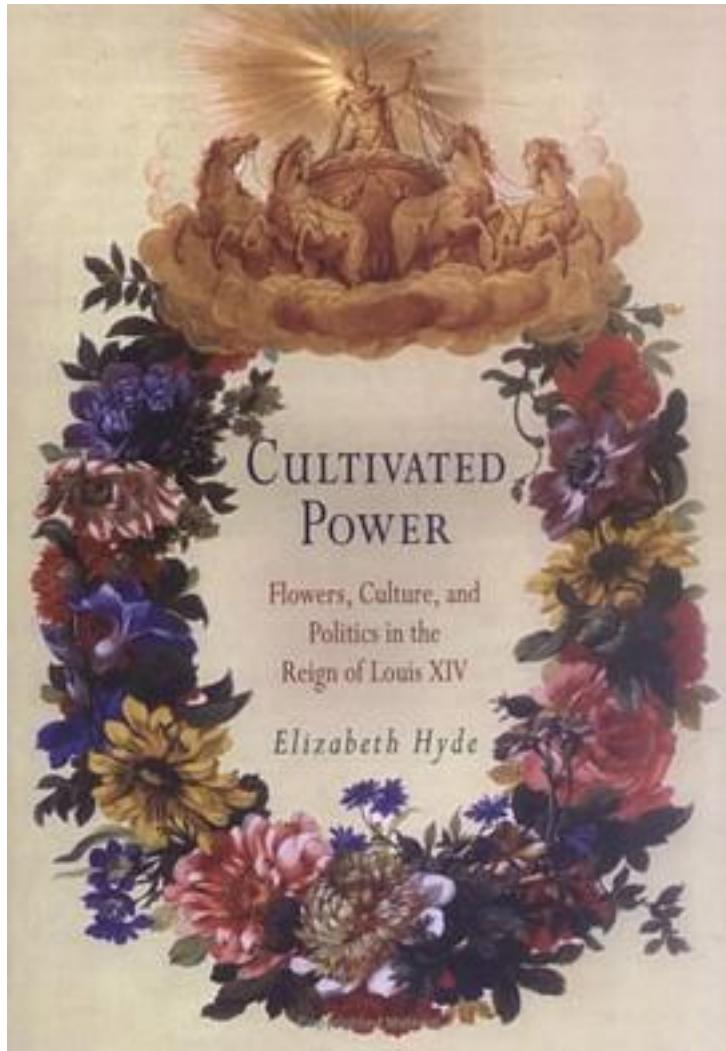


Cultivated Power



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Cultivated Power explores the collection, cultivation, and display of flowers in early modern France at the historical moment when flowering plants, many of which were becoming known in Europe for the first time, piqued the curiosity of European gardeners and botanists, merchants and ministers, dukes and kings. Elizabeth Hyde reveals how flowers became uniquely capable of revealing the curiosity, reason, and taste of those elite men who engaged in their cultivation. The cultural and increasingly political value of such qualities was not lost on royal panegyrists, who seized upon the new meanings of flowers in celebrating the glory of Louis XIV. Using previously unexplored archival sources, Hyde recovers the extent of floral plantations in the gardens of Versailles and the sophisticated system of nurseries created to fulfill the demands of the king's gardeners. She further examines how the successful cultivation of those flowers made it possible for Louis XIV to demonstrate that his reign was a golden era surpassing even that of antiquity. Cultivated Power expands our knowledge of flowers in European history beyond the Dutch tulip mania, and restores our understanding of the importance of flowers in the French classical garden. The book also develops a fuller perspective on the roles of gender, rank, and material goods in the age of the baroque. Using flowers to analyze the movement of culture in early modern society, Cultivated Power ultimately highlights the influence of curious florists on the taste of the king, and the extension of the cultural into the realm of the political.

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