

book to want the addition of many noble things of newer choosing.⁶⁵ A marigold might symbolise death, the Virgin Mary, or marriage.⁶⁶ The ‘rose / By any other word would smell as sweet,’ comments the lovelorn Juliet.⁶⁷ Perhaps, yet what is the nature of this sweetness? What associations does its smell evoke?

Refocusing Flowers

This volume seeks to refresh our understanding of flowers’ importance in connection with the Tudor and Stuart courts. Flowers are ephemeral, complicating efforts to study them; however, they were physically discernible to Tudor and Stuart senses, seen and touched, and there is therefore ample record—written, visual, textile—of engagements made with them. They were colourful, as the volume’s illustrations strive to recreate. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the garden of flowers was the garden of ‘delight’; yet Parkinson acknowledges that ‘The study, knowledge, and [travail]’ of flowers and herbs has ‘been entertained of great Kings, Princes and Potentates, without disparagement to their Greatnesse.’⁶⁸ If flowers have never been forgotten by historians, they have been appreciated primarily within a greater view. In the courtly garden, filled with paths, bays and fruit trees, grottos and fountains, statues and automata, this volume asks the wanderer to pause by the gillyflowers and heliotrope, tiger lilies and irises, honeysuckle and fritillaries, to contemplate them for their own sake and their impact on the wider landscape.

The early modern European obsession with flowers spans disciplines, from the garden to the decorative arts, and this volume takes part in lively and timely discussions on courtly interactions with nature in an increasingly global world. Goody’s seminal work on flowers, though its perspective appears limited to modern readers, deals with their culture across an expansive geographical and temporal scope, while the Dutch Republic has received attention for its seventeenth-century ‘Tulipmania’ and resplendent floral still lifes.⁶⁹ Elizabeth Hyde’s study of the social and political roles of flowers

65 Rea, Flora, ‘To the Reader,’ np; Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 231–32.

66 See Fisher, *Flowers of the Renaissance*, 124; D’Ancona, *Garden of the Renaissance*, 226; Goody, *Culture*, 181.

67 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 210, Act 2, Sc. 1, ll. 86–87.

68 Parkinson, *Paradisi*, ‘To the Covrtevs Reader,’ n.p.

69 See especially Goldgar, *Tulipmania* (2007); Pedersen and Poulsen, eds., *Flowers and World Views* (2013); Segal, *Flowers and Nature* (1990). Moore and Garibaldi’s (eds.) *Flower Power* (2003)

in Louis XIV's France remains the only in-depth and interdisciplinary court-focused study of its kind. In *Cultivated Power*, Hyde maps flowers that 'communicate historical memory, military might, and the rebirth of civilisation,' drawing attention to the 'new "culture of flowers"' that portended 'changes in the cultivation, uses, and symbolism of flowering plants.' Hyde notes that flowers crossed social boundaries, fascinating 'gardeners to kings' and were celebrated for their physical qualities such as 'beauty, form, colour and fragrance' as well as their changing meanings, rarity, and tastefulness.⁷⁰

This volume similarly forwards the study of flowers as material and cultural objects in distinctive Tudor and Stuart contexts. Dugan has persuasively claimed the Tudor rose was an 'essential component' of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I's 'performances of royal power' through scent; Maria Hayward has pointed to the floral symbolism of Elizabeth's portraits; Erin Griffey and Gordon Higgott consider flowers as emblems of health and fertility in the portraits and interior decoration of Henrietta Maria; and various other studies address blooms in diverse forms.⁷¹ The symbolism and cultural meanings of nature in portraits and masques have appealed as testament to aristocratic status and the monarch's power to tame nature, and studies of English visual, literary, and material culture acknowledge nature's use to express royal power and beneficence.⁷² Literary studies map a culture of nature in interaction with the court in gardening manuals, herbals, and poetry, all featuring flowers amidst their verdure.⁷³ In the last two decades, literary scholars have carried out much innovative work on the early modern green world in England. Flowers' presence is most notable in the digital collaboration directed by Wendy Wall and Leah Knight on the royalist Lady Hester Pulter's poems, while Laroche has considered the

and Fisher's *Flowers of the Renaissance* (2011) evince further attention paid to flowers in a European scope.

70 Hyde, *Cultivated Power*, xii, xiii.

71 Dugan, *Ephemeral History*, 17; Hayward, "Empresse of Flowers", 20–27; Griffey, "Rose and Lily Queen", 811–36; Higgott, "Mutual Fruitfulness", 312–16.

72 See Strong, *Artist* (2000); Orgel, *Illusion of Power*, 49–56; Morrall, 'Regaining Eden,' 94–95; Pittock, *Material Culture*, 61–64, 74–75. Mulry persuasively argues that reforming the natural environment was integral to Charles II's persona as a capable ruler following political upheaval, *Empire Transformed* (2021). These studies complement a shifting trend of engaging with nature in European visual and material culture beyond traditional discussions of landscape and still life, see Goodchild, Oettinger, and Prosperetti's (eds.) *Green Worlds in Early Modern Italy* (2019) and Grasskamp's *Art and Ocean* (2021).

73 These include Bushnell, *Green Desire* (2003); Laroche, *Medical Authority* (2009); Tigner, *Literature* (2012).



floral image of Elizabeth I as conveyed through herbals.⁷⁴ Christine Adams draws attention to the spectacular representation of flowers at court in *The Masque of Flowers*, and the famous Ophelia's flowers present, as Laroche points out, the 'extensive knowledge of plants and their medicinal uses' that gentlewomen were expected to possess.⁷⁵ Studies on textiles and jewels similarly acknowledge a strong floral presence 'characteristic' of 'the English love of gardening and nature.'⁷⁶

While such investigations enhance our perspective of flowers' visibility and functions at court, many relate to specific contexts and disciplines, and can be taken further with a focus on blooms across mediums, an approach this volume prioritises. Strong's analysis of gardens and portraits concludes in the mid-seventeenth century as he argues that formal parterres gave way to arcadian landscapes, as does Henderson's.⁷⁷ Aileen Ribeiro contends that in the early 1600s 'the Elizabethan and Jacobean meticulous depiction of flowers in dress' fell out of fashion.⁷⁸ In fact, flowers bloomed in paint and cloth throughout the Tudor and Stuart epochs and a fuller and more nuanced analysis of their place in court culture is needed. Describing the royalist Sir Thomas Hamner (1612–1678) in Flintshire, Wales, who sent his prized tulip bulbs to fellow flower enthusiast and parliamentary general John Lambert (1619–1683), Anna Pavord argues that 'Flowers transcended even the Civil War, perhaps the most cataclysmic event in British history.'⁷⁹ Yet at the Battle of Edgehill in 1642, Charles I wore a sash embroidered with roses, carnations, and tulips, also integrating flowers into the politics of the war.⁸⁰ Flowers therefore spanned humanity and pageantry, and fascination with flowers was constant even as its perimeters and the colours of flower beds were in constant motion. Likewise, the Tudor and Stuart courts as they are discussed in this volume extended beyond the palaces and houses of royalty and prominent courtiers to the broader physical and conceptual spaces where 'court' actions and ideas about flowers permeated.

74 Wall and Knight, eds., 'Pulter Project.'

75 Laroche, 'Ophelia's Plants,' 216.

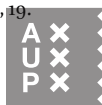
76 Reynolds, *In Fine Style*, 189. See Ribeiro, "Paradise of Flowers"; 110–17; North, 'Instrument of Profit,' 46–51; Houghteling, "From Scorching Spain"; 11–12, 19–22.

77 Strong states that gardens 'vanish from portraiture': *Artist*, 13. See Strong, *Renaissance Garden* (1979); Henderson, *Tudor House* (2005). An exception is Jacques, *Gardens of Court* (2017) spanning 1630–1730.

78 Ribeiro contends that later seventeenth-century flowers were less naturalistic and 'restricted to woven textiles, with heavy, Baroque designs': "Paradise of Flowers"; 116.

79 Pavord, 'Passion for Flowers,' 12.

80 Beck, *Embroiderer's Flowers*, 19.



This volume revives scattered interest in flowers to underscore them as an integral, stable, and developing aspect of court culture. Spanning two dynasties allows it to form a fuller, more focused picture of flowers at court, including the later Stuart reigns. The breadth of its interdisciplinary approach is appropriate given how widely flowers permeated ceremony and daily life. Chapters encapsulate gardens, visual and material culture, and literature, intertwining environmental history, sensory history, the history of medicine and science, food history, trade, and empire into court history. Insistently local and bound by the geographies in which they grew, the flowers of the Tudor and Stuart courts were also transnational and cross-cultural. If cultural historian Raymond Williams defines nature as ‘the material world itself,’ Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello’s contention in the field of material culture that items have social, cultural, and historical lives, takes on added importance in relation to botanical matter.⁸¹ By the time flowers arrived in Britain from Asia, Europe, and America, they carried histories of transit and handling, but also natural and biological histories of soils from which they had come.

Flowers’ history is broad as it is wide, and this volume leaves much to be charted. It focuses on England as the location from which both the Tudor and Stuart courts primarily functioned; more work is welcome, and indeed imperative, on floral culture in conjunction with courts in Scotland, Ireland, with American colonies, and in the London-based Cromwellian court. The colonial connections of flowers in the court’s gardens demand further exploration. Although amongst the Tudor courts, only Elizabeth I’s reign is dealt with as the subject of single chapters and further work can productively focus on other Tudor courts, the essays by Paula Henderson, Eleri Lynn, Susan North, Elizabeth Hyde, and Beverly Lemire engage directly with these courts within their fuller scope and the volume endeavours to present Tudor floral culture as an essential foundation for that of the Stuart era. While the early Stuart court of James VI/I and Anna of Denmark is a vibrant location for further focused study on flowers, recent study has been undertaken on Anna’s garden patronage and the inclusion of the later Stuart courts of Charles II, Mary II, and William III has been prioritised, as these have seen comparatively little work.⁸²

While areas of court culture also remain under-investigated in this volume, such as masques, its budding explorations fertilise the ground for

81 Williams, *Keywords*, 158; Gerritsen and Riello, eds., *Global Lives*, 3–4.

82 See Field, *Anna of Denmark*, 58–69. This patronage is referred to in Henderson’s chapter in this volume.



further studies. Flowers illuminate cultural, social, and physical aspects of court lives, to a greater extent than has been considered. As the Tudor and Stuart courts are one part of a vaster floral, human, natural, and global history, there is no more apt time to consider flowers' imprint on the court than when human imprints on flowers have become shockingly visible. In early 2022, the University of Cambridge reported that plants in the United Kingdom now flower one month earlier owing to climate change.⁸³ In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, flowers were moved, grown in new soils, and inspired new desire for knowledge, learning, and even dominion of nature that preceded modern ecological changes. As the flowers of the Cambridge study remind us how connected our lives and actions are to the world outside our doorsteps today, the Tudor and Stuart courts were not isolated nor insular as a fixed collection of people and palaces, but adaptable, responsive, integrated, operating outdoors as well as inside, growing and moving.

Floral Culture and the Tudor and Stuart Courts

The essays of this volume comprise four sections. 'Flowering Spaces,' 'Flowers and the Body,' 'Performing Flowers,' and 'Global Flowers' traverse the range of cultural functions of flowers in court life. They utilise diverse media: books, prints, portraits, paintings, fabrics, and accounts, and span two centuries, from the dawn of the Tudor dynasty to the twilight of the Stuarts. Given their differing disciplinary (and interdisciplinary) perspectives, the essays take varying approaches to remaking engagement with flowers as ephemeral subjects. A number turn to documentary evidence, including maps, lists, and archival scribbles, while others combine written and visual culture; some map the real presence of flowers, whilst others interpret meanings in floral depictions. Sitting side by side, they inform an understanding of the experience and operation of flowers in court spaces and culture. Essays focus on the court in London and expand beyond it, presenting a fuller representation of its floral topography and offshoots.

'Flowering Spaces' begins in the garden. Paula Henderson plots the changing Tudor and early Stuart flower garden, creatively tracking flowers through plant lists, herbals, and gardening books to fill gaps left in surviving designs. Flowers for aesthetic pleasure increasingly predominated in the Tudor and early Stuart gardens of Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, William Cecil

83 Büntgen et al., 'Plants in the UK,' n.p.



and Robert Cecil, Robert Dudley, John Lumley, and Anna of Denmark, and in winter representations of flowers substituted blossoming plants outside. Eleri Lynn takes up this theme, arguing that the floral tapestries, cloths of estate, and bed hangings adorning Tudor royal palaces reveal an overlooked partiality for flowers and their symbolism at the dynastic heart of the court. Lynn's work is innovative in interpreting flowers in tapestries, revealing symbolic, technical, and social significance by foregrounding what has otherwise been conceived of as decorative space. While verdure or *millefleurs* tapestries emulated European fashions, royal textiles reflected burgeoning botanical interests as well as Asian designs. Maria Hayward's essay branches beyond London to Worcestershire, demonstrating how the aristocratic passion for flowers permeated the lost garden of a Tudor gentleman with court connections. Henry Dingley's 'life with flowers,' painstakingly recovered through annotations on his illustrated herbal, reveals a floral world both wild and cultivated through a refreshingly personal lens. In looking to the margins of their source materials, Hayward, Henderson, and Lynn reveal flowers at the centre of court spaces and uncover a courtly approach to flowers not only in noble gardens and interiors, but along wild riverbanks.

In 'Flowers and the Body,' flowers blossom on garments, as medicinal cures, and even as food. Susan North charts the fashion for flowers in jewels and dress from the Tudor to Stuart courts, and its motivations as decorative, dynastic, and symbolic, laying important groundwork for examining flowers by establishing clear categories that dress historians have often referred to interchangeably. While reasons for the choice of particular flowers are usually unrecorded, North transcends these limitations to establish that men and women, queens and kings, garlanded themselves with flowered fabrics, jewels, and lace to varied ends. As bodies bloomed in the botanical splendour of silks and threads, so flowers and plants nourished individuals as *materia medica*. Erin Griffey takes up plants—their flowers, leaves, and roots—in iconography and physic, to analyse Henrietta Maria's prints, portraits, and even recipes alongside the hitherto unstudied prescriptions of her physician, Theodore de Mayerne. If natural imagery advertised the queen as a mother, plants were essential to maintaining her fertility through conception, birth, and beyond, and Mayerne's notes provide extraordinary insight into a royal stillbirth. While Griffey draws art together with the history of medicine, Susannah Lyon-Whaley argues that flowers in culinary recipes and on display in dining rooms at the court and beyond celebrated the restored Charles II. Flowers' associations with springtime, renewal, and health elevated the

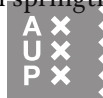
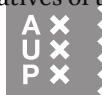


table to a location where royalist ideals of kingship could be embodied. These essays tantalisingly demonstrate the interaction of plants with living bodies, reminding us that flowers were not only seen but worn, consumed, and used.

'Performing Flowers' considers flowers in stage plays, and as part of the performance of court bonds and artistry through gift-giving and portraiture. Bonnie Lander Johnson examines the Elizabethan court alongside that of the fairies in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Amongst its flowers, steeped in the herbal lore of old wives, Johnson singles out the pansy which, replicated in Elizabeth's garments using dye made from the South American cochineal insect, indicates an intertwining of floral nostalgia and expansion in both the play and the real-life court. Building on Johnson's insightful analysis, we can also glean uncomfortable links in the play between flowers and foreign children as court objects. For modern readers, this suggests the court's desires to show off exotic, almost otherworldly, floral beauty underscored by colonial activity and dislocations. In the next essay, Susan M. Cogan also considers flowers performing political power, investigating the rising visibility of flowers, sweet bags, perfumes, floral jewels, and textiles on display at the Elizabethan New Year's gift exchange. These flowers enhanced attachment between monarch and subject, dramatising subtle variations of loyalty, power, and flowers' associations with youth, especially as the queen aged. Cogan's close attention to patterns of giving productively interprets short descriptions in the gift rolls, indicating the queen's fondness for floral items and conjuring the fleeting sensory and symbolic experiences they invoked for giver, receiver, and onlookers. Interpreting the meanings of flowers requires looking to their creators and audience. Diana Dethloff's essay moves forward to the late seventeenth century to flowers in portraits, going beyond traditional symbolic analysis to consider artists skilled in depicting flowers such as Simon Verelst. Dethloff sheds light on little-examined collaborations between painters of flowers and 'painters of faces' such as Sir Peter Lely and Willem Wissing, illuminating the importance that artists and patrons accorded sitters' efflorescence. In considering the technical skill required to paint flowers, Dethloff refocuses from the sitters' performance to the virtuoso performance of the painter, and as in Lynn and North's essays towards flowers as more than fillers of space but as conscious, artistic components of the composition.

The final section, 'Global Flowers' expands flowers' geographical connections. Seeds and bulbs brought unknown natural histories to the court, investing them with narratives of trade and empire. Elizabeth Hyde charts



flowers' roles in national posturing and identity-making in iconography and the garden. Intertwining representations with real plants allows Hyde to identify a uniquely English floriculture that looked abroad to demonstrate domestic prosperity. Foreign flowers expanded the crown's vocabulary of power, materially reflected in plant collecting missions royal gardeners undertook in courts in Leiden, Antwerp, and France. As Hyde demonstrates, the court's flowers go hand-in-hand with its imperial politics, even to the present day. Amy Lim and Renske Eking span two imperial European courts in their essay on Mary II and William III, who returned from the Dutch Republic in the late 1680s with a passion for flowers in horticulture and decoration. The blending of flowers indoors and outside reflects a conjoining of artistic influences. It also underscores the global trade networks of the British and Dutch states to represent the couple's joint dynastic identities and claims to power at Palais Het Loo and Hampton Court. Finally, Beverly Lemire highlights how far flowers could travel across a wide geopolitical landscape as floral symbols from India to Britain. Considering quilts, carpets, and cotton 'bespangled' with flowers, Lemire examines how floral textiles motivated English trade, piracy, and direct contact with Asia, eliciting desire at all social levels and finally charges of cultural pollution. All of these essays demonstrate that flowers were transported to England with histories attached and also contributed to England's conception of its own identity on the world stage.

By 1700, Timothy Nourse's *Campania Fœlix, or, A Discourse of the Benefits and Improvements of Husbandry* stated that 'to see a Flower-Garden without its decorations, is ... as to sit down to Table furnisht with Cloth, Plats and Napkin, and nothing serv'd in.'⁸⁴ The bright blooms of these essays aim to stimulate further forays down garden paths and into the scented, colourful chambers of the Tudor and Stuart courts, as well as into flowers' entanglement with the court's political and economic ambitions. At the close of the Stuart dynasty, flowers had become more visible, with engrained roots putting forth long tendrils linking them to new soils. Blooms were pervasive, and the goal of this volume is to highlight their significance. The flowers that Parkinson offered to Henrietta Maria in his 'speaking garden' in 1629 no longer grow 'fresh upon the ground' for the modern reader to survey. Yet their imprints reveal a court alive with flowers. The reader approaching this volume is encouraged to stop and smell the roses, as they encounter flowers that shake the dust and decay from their petals to be touched, smelt, eaten, and seen.

84 Nourse, *Campania Fœlix*, 317.



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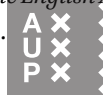
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