

*Humanisme et politique: Lettres romanes de Christophe Dupuy à ses frères (1636-1645)*. Kathryn Willis Wolfe and Philip J. Wolfe, editors. (Paris, Seattle and Tübingen: PFSCCL, 1988. Biblio 17, no. 39). Pp. [vi +] 218.

The eldest of the Dupuy brothers, Christophe, Prior of the Carthusians in Rome was certainly no Sévigné. Few readers are likely to be overwhelmed by the lively attractions of his literary style. For scholars and others who are looking for gossip and information about the papal court and its connections in the 1630s and 40s, however, this is an excellent starting point, and the Wolfes have done a valuable service in getting at least some of C. Dupuy's extensive correspondence with his brothers in Paris into print. (The extant correspondence fills three manuscript volumes at the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the current edition gives us something under a quarter of just one of them.)

The Dupuys were of course central figures in those circles of *robins* and ecclesiastics forming the political and scholarly elite of mid-seventeenth-century France. Their vocations were bookish, their ecclesiastical views Gallican, their philosophy *libertine*, their politics centralizing and "absolutist" (in the rather loose but highly combative sense of that term). They participated with ease in political, legal, ecclesiastical and theological debates of the time, and were an important conduit for information among the divers learned circles of Western Europe. The Dupuys were closely related to the De Thou family. Indeed, the author of the present letters was godson and grand-nephew of Christophe de Thou, father of the great historian. He and his brothers were thus second-cousins of François-Auguste de Thou, executed at Lyons in September 1642 for his part in the Cinq-Mars conspiracy. Three letters in the present collection relate to this event (pp. 73-86), expressing Dupuy's quiet anguish: "une nouvelle qui m'a tellement surpris que je ne m'en puis remettre" (p. 73), he wrote on receiving news of De Thou's arrest. His wary hopes are eventually crushed by "la nouvelle que

j'apprehendois de recevoir plus que chose au monde" (p. 83).

Two other particular events of importance occurred during the time covered by these events. One was personal in its effect on Dupuy: the death of their friend Jean-Jacques Bouchard. Christophe's reading of his will and viewing of his papers afterwards provoked considerable shock (pp. 62-67). He recounts his "horror" and scorn at the sight of texts whose license and profanity were entirely unexpected. The second event was in many ways as personal, but was considerably wider in its political and ecclesiastical repercussions. In July 1644, Urban VIII, Dupuy's friend and uncle of his protector, Cardinal Antonio Barberini, died. A number of letters (pp. 128 and ff.) mention the conclave that followed and the manoeuvrings that finally led to the election of Innocent X. This, too, was a shock for Dupuy, for it came to light that the Barberinis had had a large role (despite initial appearances) in the election of this pro-Spanish, anti-French Pope. In his quiet way, the Prior permits his shock, disappointment and sense of betrayal to show through: "chacun en parle comme de la plus grande supercherie et *vellaccheria* du monde" (p. 141). His surprise is the more comprehensible when we know how just preceding letters have expressed his admiration for what he had learned of the Barberinis' behavior: especially Antonio's.

Except for the drama of the events they recount, these last letters are quite typical. We learn all kinds of details about Papal court affairs, movements, comings and goings, gossip, and the rest. Dupuy tells his brothers of meeting such diplomats as the Swedish Baron Oxenstiern (the Swedish Chancellor's son) and Kenelm Digby, this last also apparently an acquaintance of his brothers (p. 184). He mentions reception of Arnauld's "Jansenist" works in Rome (p. 88 and *passim*), and comments on their heterodox nature. He remains constantly interested in details of the revolt in Catalonia and of the ongoing war between France and Spain: giving and requesting information on skirmishes, battles and any number of sieges. These

military and political events run through the correspondence as a constant refrain.

One takes it that one half of the Wolfes' title (*politique*) refers to these elements. the other half clearly indicates Dupuy's principal vocation: that of book-collector—on his own behalf, and on that of his brothers and other Parisian contacts and friends (most notably their close friend, Gabriel Naudé). He is always mentioning his search for and purchase of volumes: of history (chiefly political and ecclesiastical), of theology, of classical writings of all kinds, especially of architecture. This group of people genuinely was a continuation of the older humanist tradition: and of course, both the Dupuys and Naudé were caretakers of major libraries and founders of what we now think of as librarianship.

Two final elements running constantly through these letters show us an entirely more personal side to Dupuy. One is the affection and concern he is always revealing for his nephew, for whose career and welfare he has taken some responsibility. The other is his love for flowers. Dupuy was thoughtful, generous and affectionate.

All in all this is a valuable addition to the series of letters gradually being made available in print by Wolfe(s). One could have wished the genealogies of the De Thous and the Dupuys were clearer (p. 17 n. 3 and p. 11, n. 5). In the case of the Sanguin family, both its relation to the Dupuys and its generations are either incorrect or very strange. Either this matters and needs to be made clear in a table, or it does not, and could be omitted. Because Christophe refers so frequently to relatives, it clearly does matter: clarity is therefore essential. All in all, though, the editorial work is excellent. The Wolfes have successfully filled in the considerable quantity of material required to make full sense of references that would usually be entirely obscure even to specialists, and this is a most useful edition.

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