

Wolfe, Kathryn Willis and Phillip J. (eds.). Gabriel Naudé. *Considerations politiques sur la Fronde la correspondance entre Gabriel Naudé et le Cardinal Mazarin*. (Paris, Seattle and Tuebingen: Biblio 17, 1988). 215 pp.

What could be more welcome than this edition of Gabriel Naudé's letters to Mazarin? Arriving at the opportune moment, that is when scholars are at a turning point (some say *épistémè*) in discussing the history of the relations between the press and revolution, writing and political activism, and sociability within the *Republic of Letters*, this edition of Naudé is a remarkable presence, an intelligible and loud voice, which confirms, refines, and progresses the work of scholars on all these questions. In addition, these letters are purely and simply a joy to read.

While scholars have tied themselves up in knotty notes trying to define the meaning of the word public in the 18th century (pace Habermas), and about the relationship between the creation of a public and revolution, scholars at work on the 17th century have turned out a powerfully coherent, analytically subtle, and erudite paradigm of understanding on essentially the same phenomena.

In a lucid and erudite Introduction that is neither pedantic nor too long, the Editors place the letters squarely in the contexts in which they may best be understood. The recently published context for these letters is awesome. Hubert Carrier's thesis on the Mazarinades, *La Presse de la Fronde (1648-1653): Les Mazarinades; la Conquête de l'Opinion I* (Geneva, Droz, 1989), Christian Jouhaud's *Mazarinades: la Fronde des Mots* (Paris, Aubier, 1985) and Alain Viala's *La Naissance de l'Ecrivain* (Paris, Minuit, 1985), lay out the questions and supply the general answers for the reader of Naudé's letters. Desperately trying to convince his patron, Mazarin, to create a stable of writers that would answer the polemics against his policies and person, Naudé dissects the relations between opinion, public, and power in the capital during the princely Fronde. Naudé believed deeply in the power of opinion, and believed that if only the Parisians could be informed

to the point of understanding what Mazarin was seeking to do, and the self-interest (as opposed to public interest) of the princes, they could be brought to abandon the Fronde.

A second context for these letters is, of course, the *Republic of Letters*. Naudé's correspondence reached across Europe in the discussion of learned topics, the procurement of books, disputes with monks, and most of all, simply friendly exchange of gossip. Hans Bot's edition of the correspondence between Jacques Dupuy and Nicolas Heinsius (the Hague, Nijhoff, 1971), André Rivet's with Claude Sarrau (Amsterdam, APA Holland University Press, 1978), Paul Dibon's and Françoise Waquet's edition of Gronovius's letters (Geneva, Droz, 1984) and K. W. and P. J. Wolfe's own edition of Naudé's correspondence with Jacques Dupuy (Edmonton, Alta, 1982) allow us to penetrate directly into the *cabinets*, libraries, and monastic cells of the learned and powerful of the mid-seventeenth century. Through these letters we can become *familiers* among those who constructed the state with their learning and eloquence, and those who attacked it with the same tools of religious controversy, scientific inquiry, and, as noted before, participate in a sociability that had both terrestrial and heavenly (and occasionally diabolical) dimensions.

In these, we learn that Naudé dared to exhort Mazarin to action in ways respectful, but not always deferential. The frustration caused by Mazarin's unwillingness to follow Naudé's advice is evident and intense. As the Frondeurs looked for still more ways to hurt the Cardinal (the Parlement had voted him the title "enemy of the public peace" it was inevitable that the judges would attack the Cardinal's library and the household collections. Naudé had spent years building up a superb collection of learned books and rare manuscripts along the lines that he had traced himself in a treatise on what a learned library should contain.

Readers of these letters will not fail to identify with Naudé as he recognized that he cannot, himself, write the type of pamphlet that Mazarin needs to have written for

him. He is too learned, and the tendency to contextualize the whole Mazarinade phenomenon as he did in the *Mascurat* is just not the type of writing that will change the course of events in Paris. He inveighs against those who advise Mazarin to ignore the attacks (Lionne) and not to bother to have them answered.

As we put down this exciting correspondence we realize that as Naudé packs for Stockholm there is a truly remarkable order of discourse and intimacy between librarian and cardinal. Sphinx-like, and as frustrating to his protégés as to later historians, Mazarin scarcely revealed what he was thinking to anybody. Naudé frequently reminded Mazarin of his predecessor's combativeness in the public opinion wars of the 1630s, but to no avail. Did Mazarin believe that silence was a better long-range builder of the Absolutist state, than Reason of state discourse? Kathryn Willis Wolfe and Phillip J. Wolfe have performed a great service to scholarship in editing these letters. Their reading permits us to live through one of the livelier minds of the mid-17th century.

Orest Ranum