

Response Page

The following responses were posted on the H-France discussion list in response to Marsha L. Frey's review of Laurence Pope, ed., *Letters of François de Callières to the Marquise d'Huxelles*.

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It is rarely wise for authors to take issue with a review of the kind that Professor Marsha L. Frey accorded to my recently published (with Professor William S. Brooks) "Letters (1694-1700) of François de Callières to the Marquise d'Huxelles". [1] If I do so, it is because Professor Frey appears to have believed that she was reviewing a work of diplomatic history rather than an edition of previously unpublished [2] letters, and as a consequence her review will tend to mislead the community of scholars in H-France about the nature of the book.

Readers of Professor Frey's review would not know that the letters in question are not the stuff of dry-as-dust diplomatic history, but the record of a passionate friendship and a political alliance between two remarkable people. Callières (1645-1717) is, as Professor Frey indicates, a familiar figure, though there is new biographical information about him and his conduct as a negotiator in the introduction. But Professor Frey has nothing to say about their recipient, Marie de Bailleul, marquise d'Huxelles (1626-1712), and that is a pity. As I discuss at some length in the introduction, on the evidence of these letters she was a woman of influence if not power. A word or two about her may be of interest to H-France.

In her youth, Huxelles had been compromised by her role in the network of Nicolas Fouquet.[3] Mother of the Marshal who negotiated at Utrecht for France and from whom she was estranged, Huxelles was a close friend of the Marquise de Sévigné and her daughter, Mme de Grignan. The letters show that at her Paris house she gathered the what might be called the peace party: Arnauld de Pomponne, Minister of State; Rose, principal secretary to the King whom Callières would replace on his death a few years later; the brothers d'Estrées, many others. The first letter in this series was written while Callières was traveling in Flanders on a secret mission for Louis XIV, using a false name to avoid detection. (He had been reprimanded by the Foreign Minister for talking too much.) Huxelles tracked him down nevertheless, and his bemused response begins "Nothing can be concealed from you".[4] When Callières hears in November of 1696 that

sniping at court is endangering his mission, he writes two letters on the same day, one in a big round hand to the King, and the other to Huxelles, using identical language. When he is appointed Ambassador and the King sends him money for salary and expenses, he thanks Huxelles. Examples could be multiplied. Flattery aside, Callières obviously believed her to be a woman of power, and he was no mean judge. It is particularly unfortunate that Professor Frey's review passes over this remarkable woman in silence. I was at some pains to bring her to life in the introduction, and what I believe to be her portrait (I can't prove it) is on the cover of the book.[5]

Professor Frey suggests that "these letters will not reveal anything new to the well read diplomatic historian". She may be right. But I wonder whether even the best read diplomatic historian would know that Callières was repeatedly reprimanded by Louis XIV for withdrawing a key concession at Ryswick on a technicality and told that his conduct was prejudicial to the King's honor, even as Vauban was writing angrily to Racine that the territorial concessions Callières was making were treasonous, or that Callières was rightly accused of chicanery by the allies with whom he was negotiating. Since Callières is only known today as the author of a famous book on negotiation which advises honest dealing, this may not be without interest. [6] With regard to his career, the introduction contains new evidence showing that Callières was involved in the promotion of the ill-fated voyage of Robert Cavelier de la Salle to the mouth of the Mississippi in 1683, and those interested in the man may be intrigued by the efforts of Huxelles to arrange a marriage for him with a member of her set. Other scholars may wish to inspect the state papers he left on his death to Abbé Eusèbe Renaudot which are interspersed (uncatalogued as by Callières) throughout the Fonds Renaudot in the BnF. (The papers include a draft of procedures for Torcy's "political academy", his school for diplomats. Details on request.)

As for the larger international context, as I make clear in the introduction Callières's letters to Huxelles are not about the negotiations at Ryswick. The substance of the negotiations and his recommendations were reserved for his reports to the King. Professor Frey suggests that "the editors" (there was only one, though I benefited enormously from the expert advice and help of Professor Brooks) failed to consult archival material in the Hague and in London. That might be a failing in a work of diplomatic history, but once again, the tedious history of the Ryswick negotiations was not this book's subject. A discussion of the Spanish succession and the partition treaties, which Professor Frey suggests ought to have been included in order to "make sense of the allies' attitude at Ryswick" (1697), would hardly have helped, since those events occurred after Ryswick. (She presumably means that the state of the health of Carlos II and the unresolved issue of his succession cast a shadow over the Ryswick proceedings. The health of the King of Spain is a frequent subject of the letters, and the issue is fully explained.)

To illustrate the inadequacy of the footnotes, Professor Frey suggests that they ought to have explained the significance of the Bill of Attainder adopted in the case of Lord Strafford. The issue in several of the letters is rather the Bill of Attainder adopted against Sir John Fenwick, convicted of plotting against William III, and the notes make quite clear that its effect was a death sentence. (Callières quotes his final declaration.) [7] Professor Frey suggests that the notes should have explained that Dunkirk was a pirate haven, which would have been news to Jean Bart, who sailed under letters of marque as a privateer, not a pirate. Professor Frey suggests that I should have discussed Marlborough's defection from James II, but he is mentioned only twice

in passing, and is peripheral to the context She is quite right that I erred in dating the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1658; the correct date is 1659, and I can only plead guilty as charged. Among the 797 footnotes, which Professor Frey suggests should have been "more extensive", there are no doubt other errors. The eight pages of bibliography are not intended to be exhaustive, but a selective record of the works and archives consulted. [8]

The bottom line, to use a colloquialism Professor Frey deplures, is that she reviewed the wrong book. H-France readers with an interest in the intellectual and cultural climate of early modern France will find much of interest in the letters Callières wrote to Huxelles -- if they can get access to the book despite its exorbitant price. Perhaps Professor Frey's review copy will turn up on Ebay.

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[1] Laurence Pope, ed., *Letters (1694-1700) of François de Callières to the Marquise d'Huxelles*. Introduction by Laurence Pope. In collaboration with William S. Brooks. Lewiston, N.Y., Queenston, Ont., and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2004.

[2] Professor Frey asserts (a little maliciously perhaps, the reader will judge) that "an excerpted edition" of these letters was published in the 19th century. There was no excerpted edition. An unreliable transcription of perhaps 10-15% of the total volume appeared in an article without footnotes or any editorial apparatus by Edouard Barthélemy in an 1878 number of the "Revue Britannique". I explain this fully in the introduction. (Professor Frey was good enough to provide the full citation in her review.)

[3] Letters from Huxelles in secret writing warning Fouquet that the King was preparing to turn on him were found in his papers after his arrest. Details of her involvement with Fouquet are in Jean-Christian Petitfils, "Fouquet" (Paris: Perrin, 1998.)

[4] "Rien n'échappe à votre penetration."

[5] Although Huxelles's letters to Callières have not survived, there is a massive collection of her letters to the Marquis de la Garde in Provence, written over many years, in two separate locations: at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, and at the Musée Calvet in Avignon. I made a preliminary examination of the Rylands collection, and found in it a page from a letter of Callières she had forwarded to La Garde. (It is included in the book.) They are little known, and would repay further scholarly attention. One of them, for example, contains her contemporaneous version of the dramatic scene at Versailles in which Louis XIV, having accepted the Spanish Succession, declares that "the Pyrenees are no more".²

[6] Readers of Professor Frey's review may be under the impression that Callières wrote a book called "The Art of Diplomacy", his more famous work, written much later in 1716². That is the title (unfortunate in my view, since "diplomacy" was not in Callières's vocabulary, and would not take on its current meaning for a century or more) of the standard edition in English of "De la manière de négocier avec les souverains", edited by H.M.A Keens-Soper and Karl W. Schweizer

(University Press of America, Lanham New York London, 1983). It was not written in 1716, since it cleared the censor in 1715. The date of its composition remains uncertain, and is probably many years earlier.

[7] Callières calls it a "bil d'atteindre", and shows remarkable familiarity with English parliamentary procedures.

[8] Professor Frey cites as a bibliographical failing the absence of a mention among the modern editions of "De la manière" of a book she identifies as A.F. Whyte, "On the Manner of Negotiating with Princes" (Notre Dame, IND, University of Indiana Press. 1963.) She is presumably referring to the Notre Dame reprint, retitled, of "The Practice of Diplomacy", a translation of "De la manière" that had appeared in 1919 (London: Constable). Whyte was an English diplomat; the Notre Dame edition of his book was superseded by the Keens-Soper Schweizer edition published in 1983. There have been dozens of English language versions of "De la manière" over the years. (It is a great favorite with diplomatists.) This edition is not one of the better ones, and it would have been pointless to list it.

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In the following commentary, I would like to reflect upon and amplify numerous points raised in Dr. Marsha Frey's recent review[1] of Laurence Pope's critical edition, *Letters of François de Callières to the Marquise d'Huxelles* (2004) and the editor's subsequent response.[2] It is hoped that, collectively, these exchanges will serve to place the book in a clearer historiographical perspective and thereby profile more precisely its dimensions of usefulness for scholars and students interested in Ancien Régime diplomacy culture and society.

First, on a technical level, Mr. Pope must be commended for producing an important work, long overdue, and one that exemplifies the highest editorial standards. The letters are accurately transcribed, scrupulously annotated throughout,[3] and prefaced by a comprehensive introduction: charming illustrations have also been included. Having co edited Callières' classic diplomatic treatise [4] and written a brief biography of the man,[5] I can further confirm that for me, as diplomatic historian, the work provided interesting, new revelations, Dr. Frey's contrary judgment notwithstanding,[6] and despite Mr. Pope's own assertion that the letters "are not the stuff of dry as dust diplomatic history." [7] Indeed, these letters, far from being tangential to Callières' work as diplomat establish close connections between his negotiating activities and the diplomatic classic for which he is best known. Essentially they illuminate the personal predilections he brought to his perception and conduct of contemporary affairs, particularly his emphasis on the association between verbal, written and social discourse, all fundamental to effective diplomacy.[8]

Moreover, although Callières discreetly omitted all references to the course of the negotiations leading to Ryswick, the history of these is enriched by what the letters do convey: his personal observations on William of Orange, the logistical arrangements prior to the congress, his philosophical musings which reveal a contemplative, speculative side. But there are also sidelights on diplomatic affairs-issues preoccupying Callières that were new to me: his continuing interest in the Polish situation years after his brief mission to that country,[9] his admiration of the mercantile Dutch, despite their Protestant creed, and surprisingly that, on occasion, Callières was guilty of artful dealings, if not outright chicanery, at Ryswick-practices he had condemned in his diplomatic treatise.

I was also not aware that Callières had a falling out with Vauban over the surrender of Luxembourg which the latter wanted to keep or if impossible, then at least dismantled. Ultimately Mr. Pope is correct when he takes Dr. Frey to task for wrongly assuming his book to be a conventional diplomatic monograph and reviewing it as such. Accordingly, his defense against her criticism that he failed to consult British and Dutch manuscript sources is justified, since these would not in any substantive way, have improved the usefulness of his edition (there is also new biographical information in the excellent introduction, and the editor has drawn attention to fresh material on Torcy's Political Academy in the Fonds Renaudot which vitally supplements the *Mélanges Clairambault* known to scholars from Appendix I in *The Art of Diplomacy*).[10]

In sum, then, the letters serve a uniquely complementary function: vividly portraying salient currents within the intellectual/cultural climate of early modern France while concurrently illustrating the significance of these for contemporary diplomatic practice. In this sense, they prominently supplement Callières' other works, all of which to varying degrees, distinctively embody the close connections between language, style and diplomacy and at a time when these elements were blending: when the French language was reaching a precision previously unknown and when French power in Europe was supreme.[11] Finally the edition updates the incomplete and now antiquated work of F. de Barthelemy,[12] providing the starting point for a new study of the writer and her circle.

Notes

[1]H. France; Review, vol. 5 (March 2005) nr. 36.

[2]H. France, 1 April 2005.

[3]There are over 700 notes, all highly illuminating. Hence, Professor Frey's call for "more extensive notes" appears, in my view, unjustified.

[4]K. W. Schweizer and M. Keens-Soper eds., *The Art of Diplomacy* (New York, 1983). paperback University Press of America 1994.

[5]K.W. Schweizer, *Francois de Callieres: Diplomat and Man of Letters 1645-1717* (Lewiston, NY 1995).

[6]In her words, "These letters will not reveal anything new to the well-read diplomatic historian." Review, p. 1.

[7]Response to Professor Frey's review, April 1, 2005, p. 1.

[8] *Art of Diplomacy*, p. 7.

[9]ibid., p. 5.

[10]ibid., Appendix I.

[11]M. Keens-Soper, "Callieres" in: G.R. Berridge, M. Keens-Soper and T. G. Otte, *Diplomatic Theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger* (London, 2001) pp. 112-115.

[12]*La Marquise d'Huxelles et ses amis* (Paris, 1881