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James H. Dahlinger, *Etienne Pasquier on Ethics and History*. New York, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Bern, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007. x + 147 pp. Frontispiece, notes, bibliography, and index. \$60.95 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978-0-8204-9547-7.

Review by Katherine MacDonald, University College London.

In 1583, the barrister, historian and poet Etienne Pasquier (1529-1615) was appointed by King Henri III to preside over the *Grands Jours* at Troyes. An institution with medieval origins, the *Grands Jours* continued to flourish in the sixteenth century in response to the grievous lack of regional uniformity within the French legal system. The king's agents were supposed to oversee the scrupulous dispensation of royal justice in the provinces, where local customary law was all too often subject to the unfair manipulation of local potentates. Pasquier was no stranger to such work, having previously exercised the same duties at the *Grands Jours* in Poitiers in 1567 and 1579. In *Etienne Pasquier on Ethics and History*, James Dahlinger notes how Pasquier's correspondence reveals that as a barrister he thrived on the challenge of clearing huge numbers of back-logged cases, as well as relishing the opportunity to learn about local customs and curiosities as a historian (p. 28).

While zealously performing his legal functions at Troyes, Pasquier also somehow found the time to have his portrait painted by Jean de Hoey. An engraving based on this work serves as the author-portrait in the 1633 edition of Pasquier's most important work, *Les Recherches de la France*, a multi-volume treatment of French institutional, social and cultural history which he spent most of his life writing and refining. De Hoey's portrait (Dahlinger uses the engraving as the frontispiece to his book) shows a venerably bearded Pasquier wearing the soft cap and imposing black silk robes of his profession and an alert, yet beneficent expression on his rather careworn visage. Significantly, it depicts Pasquier in $\frac{3}{4}$ length, yet without his hands — a departure from convention in contemporary portraiture. The handless likeness inspired Pasquier to compose a witty Latin distich: "Nulla hic Paschasio manus est, lex Cincia quippe Caussidicos nullas sanxit habere manus." Pasquier n'a point icy de mains; car la Loi Cincie veut que les Advocats sans mains passent leur vie." As Dahlinger explains (p. 30), this is a reference to the current controversy over whether lawyers' fees ought to be allowed to remain secret or must be made public. In Roman law (the *lex Cincia*), lawyers were forbidden from accepting bribes or other fees outside of a previously agreed-upon payment. Pasquier's Latin distich was not the only poetic composition prompted by de Hoey's portrait. On the contrary, Pasquier penned a whole series of poems, "La Main de Pasquier," and had other literary friends from across France contribute to the collection, in Latin, French and Italian.

Thus de Hoey's handless portrait with its elegant accompanying distich, when we become aware of its context, illustrates how Pasquier skilfully contrived to furnish an ethically idealized representation of himself as a lawyer above reproach, who

remained free from the taint of venality. That it was painted in the midst of the flurry of activity of the *Grands Jours* heightens our perception of Pasquier as indefatigable servant of justice and the public good. The constellation of poems it generated shows how well-connected Pasquier was in literary circles.

Dahlinger's discussion of Pasquier's portrait, its background and the manifold creative activities which it sparked, provide a good indication of his overall approach to Pasquier's life and works. A compact study (at just over 120 pages of text) of a figure both protean and prolific, Dahlinger's work attempts to reorient previous scholarship on Pasquier, while still taking into account the many facets of his activity. As he points out in his introduction (p. 3), other scholars such as Huppert, Kelley and Thickett have classed Pasquier more narrowly as one of the founders of a new secular, positivist and scientific historiography in sixteenth-century France.[1] Yet more specifically, Pasquier has been treated as a pioneer of French literary history.[2] Dahlinger has chosen to concentrate instead on the moral motivations behind Pasquier's historiography in the *Recherches de la France*. For Dahlinger, the same ethical impetus underlies all of Pasquier's published writings, both leisure prose, letters, poetry, and more serious tracts and pamphlets.

Thus, Dahlinger convincingly analyses Pasquier's habitual use of historical parallels in the *Recherches* to encourage his readers to reflect on contemporary realities (pp. 65-66). Like many of his fellow parliamentarians, Pasquier was dismayed over the present conditions of violent unrest in France brought about by confessional differences and foreign intrigue. Miraculously this did not impede his optimism, born of the conviction that his writings gave him the chance to influence the course of public events for the better. Dahlinger makes extensive use of the chapters on the Gauls (book I of the *Recherches*) to illustrate Pasquier's view of the central value of justice and law in building an enduring state. A good king cooperates with Parliament, taking advice from experienced lawyers like Pasquier himself (pp. 82-83).

Dahlinger is interested in how Pasquier presents the reader of his published correspondence with an idealized self-portrait. Pasquier has contrived this self-portrait to exemplify how one may become versed in parliamentary values and thereby qualify as a suitable counsellor for the king (p. 9). Pasquier's well-known letters to his sons Theodore and Pierre serve as mirrors for the virtuous would-be lawyer and soldier respectively (pp. 46-49). As such, they are also letters of advice to the two chief institutional arms of the monarchy: Parliament and the military nobility. As Dahlinger puts it, "Pasquier lived his life and recorded his actions as a model for emulation for his own day and for *postérité*" (p.18).

Along parallel lines, Dahlinger analyzes Pasquier's ethical role as the ideal sage in his colleague Antoine Loisel's *Pasquier, ou dialogue des avocats du parlement de Paris* (1602) (pp. 33-38). Here, Dahlinger's discussion centres on the classical background to Loisel's portrayal of Pasquier in the dialogue, modelled on Cicero's *Brutus*, and inspired by Aristotelian view of the rewards legitimately accruing to the virtuous, who enjoy a good name, influence, friends and material prosperity (p. 35).

This intriguing aspect of Pasquier's career — his management of his public image — remains largely unexplored in the present study since Dahlinger does not make use of any of the recent critical work done on the self-presentation or self-fashioning of the early modern subject. In their treatment of a range of early modern writers, critics such as Stephen Greenblatt, Mario Biagioli or Lisa Jardine have investigated their protagonists' concern with self-advancement and self-promotion and their

efforts to conform to the codes of European court culture.[3] Montaigne, whom Pasquier admired, would of course be a natural point of comparison in this respect. Dahlinger does make one fleeting reference to the difference between Pasquier's idealized self-portrait and what he somewhat naively describes as "Montaigne's candid self-analysis".[4] Another exemplary figure in terms of the project of textual self-construction would be Erasmus, who again, occupies an important place in Dahlinger's study, but only in reference to his use of mirror discourse (p. 81; pp. 120-121).[5]

This reservation aside, Dahlinger's study stands as a valuable contribution to scholarship on Pasquier, a central figure of the period whose views on ethical responsibility in government, tolerance and the personal values of integrity and industry are of abiding interest.

NOTES

[1] George Huppert, *The Idea of Perfect History* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1969); Donald Kelley, *The Foundations of Modern French Historical Scholarship. Language, Law and History in the French Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); Dorothy Thickett, *Estienne Pasquier, 1529-1615: the versatile barrister of 16th-century France* (London and New York: Regency press, 1979)

[2] See Joan Crow, 'Etienne Pasquier, Literary Historian', *French Studies*, 22, 1968, pp. 1-8; L. Clark Keating, *Etienne Pasquier* (New York: Twayne, 1972); Suzanne Trocmé Sweany, *Estienne Pasquier (1529-1615) et nationalisme littéraire* (Paris: Champion; Genève: Slatkine, 1985).

[3] Stephen Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and his Roles* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973); Mario Biagioli, *Galileo Courtier: the Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: the Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[4] See Etienne Pasquier, *Choix de lettres sur la littérature, la langue et la tradition*. ed. Dorothy Thickett (Geneva: Droz, 1956), pp. 43-46. Pasquier comments on Montaigne's *Essais* in a 1602 letter to Monsieur de Pellejay. On Pasquier and Montaigne, see Catherine Magnien-Simonin. "Estienne Pasquier (1529-1615) lecteur de Montaigne," in *Montaigne et Henri IV (1595-1995). Actes du colloque international*, ed. Claude-Gilbert Dubois, (Bordeaux 1996), pp. 67-86.

[5] Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: the Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

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