La bibliothèque parisienne de Gabriel Naudé en 1630: Les lectures d'un libertin érudit.

By Estelle Boeuf. Geneva: Librairie Droz SA, 2007. 439 pp. €125,00. ISBN 978-2600-01067-2.

Estelle Boeuf and the editors of Librairie Droz have combined forces to produce a book that is interesting, searchable, and a pleasure to handle. This is no mean feat, considering that well over half of its four hundred pages renders the contents of a private seventeenth-century library, and the volume could just as easily have been monotonous, opaque, and very hard on the eyes. Although Gabriel Naudé (1600–1653) served variously as librarian to the president of the Parlement de Paris, to Cardinal Mazarin of France, and later to Queen Christine of Sweden, the interest of the book exceeds the strict domain of library science. Among his writings can be found not only the celebrated pioneering handbook *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque* (Advice on Establishing a Library, 1627) but also a work in defense of those falsely accused of magic and political works with extrapolations of the ideas of Machiavelli. After studying literature and philosophy in Paris, Naudé received a degree in medicine from the University of Padua and formed a circle of open philosophical discussion with his friends Pierre Gassendi, La Mothe le Vayer, and the lesser-known Elie Diodati, a friend of Galileo who facilitated the translation of the latter's *Dialogues*. Boeuf's exposition clearly shows why Naudé has been viewed by scholars as an intermediary between figures of the Italian Renaissance such as De Valla and Machiavelli, French Renaissance humanists such as Montaigne and Henry II Estiennes, and prototypes of the French Enlightenment such as Fontenelle and Bayle. Thus, this book will not only serve the interests of librarians and historians of print but also provide a resource for intellectual historians and historians of science and biomedicine.

Expanding on her previous work and on that of others, Boeuf here undertakes a full study of a handwritten (though not autograph) inventory entitled "Catalog des livres qui sont en l'étude de G. Naudé à Paris" (Catalog of Books in the Study of G. Naudé in Paris) (Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Fr. 5681). This relatively early inventory (thirty-two pages in quarto) was compiled prior to Naudé's departure for Italy in 1631, lists 2,250 volumes comprising approximately 3,700 editions, and can be compared to expanded inventories of his library made at later dates (8).

In her ample introduction Boeuf gives an overview of this early Paris collection from considerations of size, language, edition dates, and the geographical distribution of printers. She then describes how Naudé came to be a librarian for figures of much greater social and economic status than himself, how he avidly collected on his own, and how he merited, for his bibliographic knowledge, the moniker of *bibliothèque vivante* (living library) (7). As Naudé did not arrange his private Paris collection according to his own suggestions for organizing a library (102), Boeuf analyzes the inventory by subject, citing many titles to illustrate how the books reflected Naudé's interests and the intellectual milieu. She begins with medicine and the other sciences, noting how natural sciences and astrology were essentially auxiliary to his interests in medicine (42, 46). She then moves

methodically through philosophy, politics, history, geography, literature, theology, and law and concludes her introduction with an account of the various means by which Naudé acquired this collection.

The catalog itself is admirably presented. The top portion of each page contains numbered transcriptions of entries from the catalog, while the lower portion, reflecting identical numeration, gives a more standardized name authority and the standardized version of titles and adds information about specific possible editions that is not given in the original inventory. This is a boon to any researcher, as the various names of authors and the variant titles of many ancient, medieval, and Renaissance works are indeed legion.

Nor does Boeuf stop here. She offers five additional indexes: an alphabetized author index; an alphabetized title index of anonymous works; an index of printers rendered alphabetically by geographical location; a breakdown of the inventory by provenance (where possible); and a concordance of call-numbers where many of the inventoried items can currently be found, either in the Bibliothèque Mazarine, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, or the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève. The visually pleasing layout and the intellectual organization of the catalog and these appendixes make the book searchable in the highest degree, and the concordance of call-numbers makes it easy for interested researchers to locate the inventoried items if they should desire to consult them. The author has performed a great deal of hard and productive work.

If I have one quibble with this book, however, it is this: the author fails to define the term *libertin érudit*, which so tantalizingly appears in her subtitle. One can chase the phrase through a sprinkling of footnotes, but even there the term is never defined. In fact, the introduction does not even offer a basic definition of "libertine." Admittedly, it is not a simple term, as its modes have been variously construed as skeptical, atheist, sexual, moral, aesthetic, political, and, evidently, erudite. Since Boeuf does not directly broach this issue, she is unable to suggest where on this spectrum Naudé might be ranged, except by fleeting references to the suggestive but cryptic label found in her subtitle. In a similar shortcoming, Boeuf never situates Naudé's place in the history of library science or discusses what importance has been attributed to him. It appears that in both cases she has generously assumed that researchers who come to this book will already know all this, but the addition of a few explanatory paragraphs in order to situate Naudé more clearly for the less initiated would only have added to the work.

Yet it would be unjust to dwell on these minor shortcomings, for what she has accomplished here is much more arduous and, in the long run, of far more use to the many and varied researchers who will come to this finely produced book as a resource.

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