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## Gabriel Naude and the Ideal Library

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“**Y**OUNG people should be early taught to distinguish the stops, commas, accents, and other gramatical marks, in which the correctness of writing consists; and it would be proper to begin with explaining to them their nature and use \*.”

\* ROLLIN on the Belles Letters, b. i. c. 1.

A. 54a

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# SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES COURIER

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# Gabriel Naudé and the Ideal Library

BY ANTJE BULTMANN LEMKE

*This paper is an edited version of a talk given by the author for the Syracuse University Library Associates on February 18, 1988. It was originally titled: "Gabriel Naudé, Seventeenth-Century Scholar Librarian of Mazarin". Among Naudé's works discussed here, the George Arents Research Library has copies of the 1903 reprint of the 1661 English translation of *Advis pour dresser une bibliotheque*, the 1744 Cologne edition of *Considerations politiques sur les coups d'estat*, and *Naudaeana et Patiniana*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Vander Platts, 1703).*

The life of Gabriel Naudé falls within one of the liveliest centuries in the history of Europe. Against the background of continent-wide civil unrest, the Star Chamber Decree in England, the breakup of the Spanish Empire, and the Thirty Years' War, people were seeing the first performances of the plays of Shakespeare and Molière, and were looking at the paintings of Rembrandt and Velasquez. Leibniz, Descartes, and Spinoza were challenging traditional philosophies, and while Newton was developing the principles of universal gravitation, Kepler was formulating laws governing the motion of the planets that laid the foundations for modern astronomy.

Born in Paris in 1600, Gabriel Naudé (fig. 1) reflected the climate of this century in his own life and thought. The son of respected but not wealthy parents, Naudé went first to a religious school, then enrolled in the University of Paris. Greatly influenced by Montaigne, for some time he could not decide whether to study philosophy, theology, or medicine. He eventually chose medicine, writing about and maintaining a lifelong interest in this subject. Although Louis XIII in 1632 honored him by appointing him royal physician with a salary, Naudé never practiced medicine, but was apparently more interested in general scholarship and the political life of his times. His friends considered him a skeptical moralist, a man who combined courage with tact. His numerous publications expressed strong personal opinions on controversial issues. The *Bibliothèque Nationale*

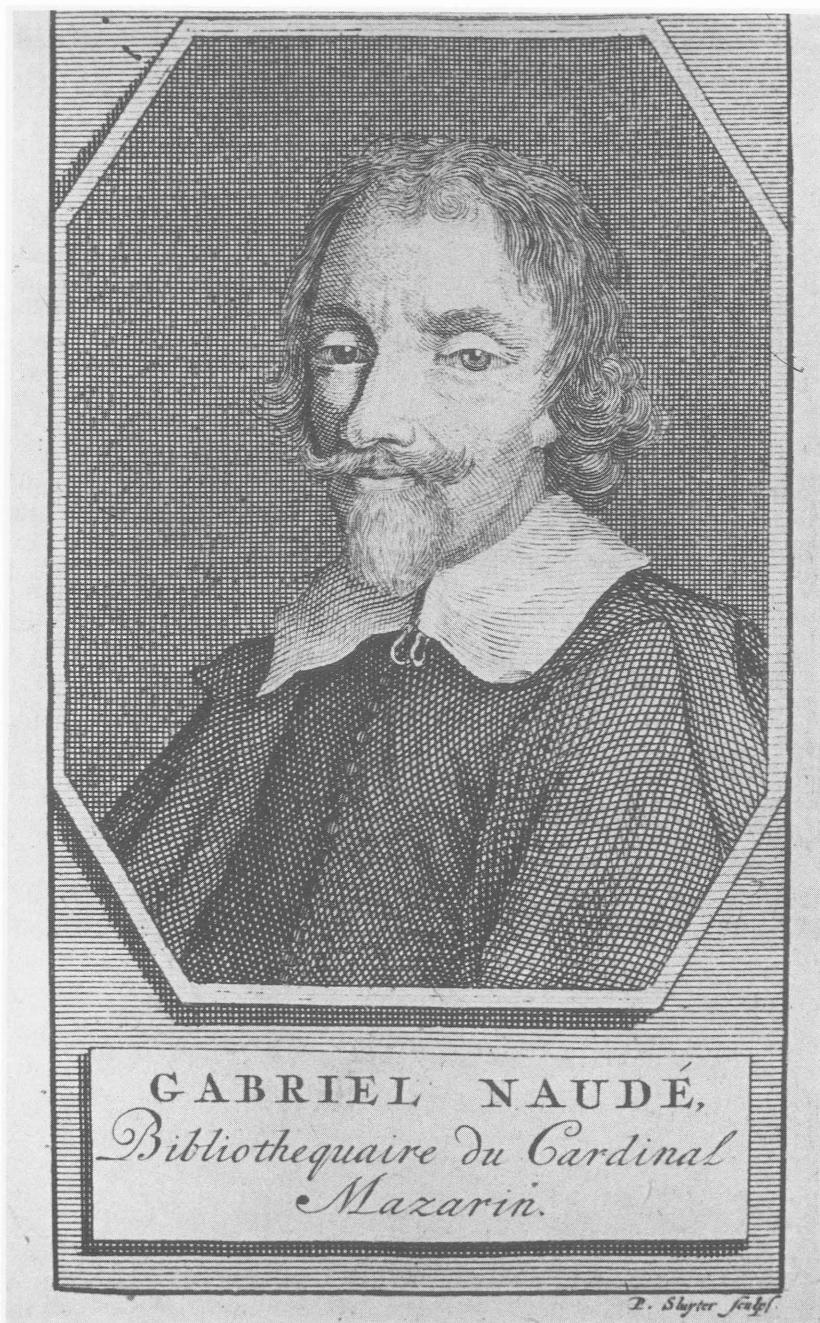


Fig. 1. Engraving of a portrait of Gabriel Naudé (reproduced from *Naudaeana et Patiniana*).

in Paris lists ninety entries under his name today. These include translations of Latin classics and of works by Italian Renaissance scholars, many of whom he introduced to France. Paul Kristeller, the Renaissance scholar at Columbia University, considers Naudé a major figure in historical and philological scholarship of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> At that time the center of humanistic thought moved from Italy to France, and Naudé was an influential force in this development.

Naudé's many original works include *Considerations politiques sur les coups d'estat* (1639), a widely read attack on the Rosicrucians; and a rather interesting volume, *Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont esté faussement soupçonnez de magie*, which lists among the suspected Pythagoras and Roger Bacon. Some of these writings had attracted the attention of Henri de Mesme, the president of the French Parliament. Naudé was able to convince de Mesme—who was neither a scholar nor a bibliophile—that he could gain unique prestige and lasting fame by establishing a great library that would be open to the public. To this end Naudé wrote his *Advis pour dresser une bibliotheque*, published in 1627 (fig. 2). This *Advice on Establishing a Library*, which has become a classic in librarianship, will be discussed later in the context of his years as librarian to Cardinal Mazarin. Through his writings Naudé had by 1630 become well known in both political and religious circles. He not only wrote books and pamphlets in philosophy, science, history, and biography, but also took a keen interest in typography and supervised the printing of his own publications.

When Guido di Bagni, ambassador from the Vatican to Paris, returned to the Papal States (which covered a much larger territory than the Vatican today) he asked Naudé to come to Italy as his librarian, and there Naudé spent perhaps the most enjoyable ten years of his life. He delighted in the intellectual climate of Italy; immediately on arrival, he indulged his devouring curiosity about all phenomena, natural or unnatural, by writing an essay on the eruptions of Mount Vesuvius. He was a prolific letter writer, corresponding most notably with Hugo Grotius, Hobbes, Bacon, Kepler, Galileo,

1. See Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Between the Italian Renaissance and the French Enlightenment: Gabriel Naudé as an Editor", *Renaissance Quarterly* 32 (1979): 41–72.

A D V I S  
POVR DRESSER  
V N E  
BIBLIOTHEQVE.

*Presenté à Monseigneur le  
President de M E S M E.*

Par G. N A U D É' P.

Omnia quæ magna sunt atque admirabilia,  
tempus aliquod quo primum efficerentur  
habuerunt. *Quintil. lib. 12.*



A P A R I S,  
Chez FRANÇOIS TARGA, au premier  
pillier de la grand' Salle du Palais,  
deuant les Consultations.

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M. D C. X X V I I.

Fig. 2. Title page of the first edition of Naudé's *Advis pour dresser une bibliotheque*.

and Descartes, as well as other scholars. He became a member of academies of savants at Rome, Urbino, and Florence, and it was through the Roman Academie degli Humoristi that he met Mazarin. It was, however, Cardinal Richelieu, the great patron of literature and the arts, and in 1635 the founder of the French Academy, who, impressed by Naudé's scholarly achievements, invited him to return to Paris and assemble a major library.<sup>2</sup> Although happy in Italy, Naudé returned to Paris on 10 March 1642. A few months after his arrival Richelieu died, and his successor Cardinal Mazarin appointed Naudé as his librarian and designated one wing of the Palais Tubeuf to serve as a library.

There is little doubt that the right patron and the right bookman had come together and that neither Mazarin nor Naudé could have accomplished singly what they achieved in the next years together. Theirs was a genuine interest in learning, and Naudé, the implementor of their passion, was not dogmatic. Instead, he had come to the job with an open mind, a broad education, and a great joy of vocation. Because of Mazarin, he now had the chance to bring to fruition what he had recommended in his 1627 *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*. This volume is addressed to "Monseigneur le President de Mesme" and the first pages provide a marvelous example of baroque prose, including the flattery of a patron: "To come directly to the heart of the matter—common sense tells us that it is altogether laudable, generous, and worthy of a courage which defies mortality, to save from oblivion, preserve, and erect again, like another Pompey, all these images, not of bodies, but of minds of so many distinguished gentlemen who have spared neither time nor industry in transmitting to us a lively portrait of what was most noble in themselves". He continues to enumerate the benefits of a great library and promises that de Mesme, with such a creation, "may (with reason) call himself cosmopolitan, a citizen of the whole world, [since] he may know all, see all and be ignorant of nothing".<sup>3</sup>

2. One of his scholarly achievements endeared him to Richelieu because it embarrassed the Benedictines. In 1641 during a debate on the authorship of the popular religious guide *Imitation of Christ* of 1426, Richelieu had asked Naudé to authenticate four key manuscripts in Rome. He concluded that all four were fakes, although the Benedictines had already accepted them as genuine.

3. Gabriel Naudé, *Advice on Establishing a Library* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950), 5.



To these high-flown sentiments he adds a practical note: “I do not intend to engage you in any superfluous or extraordinary expense since I do not subscribe to the opinion of those who consider gold and silver the heart and soul of a library. . . . Neither is it my intention to persuade you that so great a collection can be made without cost or with your purse closed, knowing well that the saying of Plautus is as true in this respect as in many others, ‘He who seeks gain must make an outlay’.”<sup>4</sup>

About his own role and about his book Naudé states that “it is certain that of the almost infinite number of men who have taken pen in hand there has not yet been one, to my knowledge, whose advice a man might follow concerning the choice of books, the means of procuring them, and the arranging of them in the most useful and attractive manner for a handsome and stately library.”<sup>5</sup>

To this day, librarians agree with the author: his is the first systematic, comprehensive treatise on librarianship. The famous *Philobiblon*, written in the fourteenth century by Richard de Bury (1287–1345), and other earlier works on book collecting focus on books—not on libraries, their organization, their users, and their administration.

Several of the nine chapters begin with “Now, Monseigneur” and then use the first person to explain carefully, clearly, and in practical terms what has to be done, and why. This direct discourse does make the *Advis* lively and enjoyable reading, and prevents it from becoming too theoretical, the weakness of many handbooks.

Naudé’s first recommendation to the librarian is to read about and to consult great book collectors. As a start, and while the first volumes are being acquired, the catalogues of all interesting libraries, whether ancient or modern, public or private, in the collector’s country or abroad—especially those of small collections—should be transcribed, to have them available in the library.<sup>6</sup> This step serves two main purposes: to make known what is available—since no one library can have everything—and to document the history of knowl-

4. Naudé, *Advice*, 9.

5. *Ibid.*, 1.

6. Naudé, who was familiar with the great Italian libraries, most likely knew that the Duke of Urbino, Federigo de Montefeltro, had, in the fifteenth century, already suggested the transcription of the catalogues of great libraries for the same reasons.

edge. In addition we can find out what an author has written, and glean many other useful morsels of information.<sup>7</sup>

The two chapters on the selection and procurement of books occupy over half of the nine-chapter treatise, a sure indication that Naudé considered the development of a collection the most important among the librarian's responsibilities. Concerning the number of books and serial publications, Naudé reminds us that, while a large collection is appealing, selection according to the purpose of the library is essential. To this subject he devotes a whole chapter with detailed examples.

A library, he urged, should be furnished with all principal authors, ancient and modern, obscure or well-known, religious or secular, in the best editions. This inclusiveness was not the recommendation of most of Naudé's contemporaries. Even Sir Thomas Bodley (1545–1613), founder of the famous Bodleian Library at Oxford, did not accept modern literature and considered some authors—Shakespeare for example—frivolous. Gabriel Naudé, on the other hand, was liberal and against exclusion based on personal taste or orthodoxy. His concept, that a library should inform and delight all, was quite revolutionary, and by no means would be followed by all librarians in coming generations.

Books in foreign languages should be acquired in both the original language and the best possible translations "for the use of many persons who have not the knowledge of foreign tongues". Special attention must be given to controversial subjects, and no efforts spared to have present in the library the pros and cons of these. We should:

not neglect all the works of the principal heretics or adherents of religions that are new and differ from the one most commonly revered among ourselves as being more sound and true . . . it is necessary that our scholars should find these authors somewhere available in order to refute them. . . . There are no scruples about having a Talmud or a Koran,

7. Today we have many examples of comprehensive catalogue reprinting that expand our own collections. In addition to the *National Union Catalog*, which includes most of the holdings of the Library of Congress and selected holdings of many American research libraries, we have many invaluable printed catalogues of specialized collections.

which belch forth against Jesus Christ and our religion a thousand blasphemies infinitely more dangerous than those of the heretics; since God permits us to profit from our enemies . . . I think it neither an absurdity nor a danger to have in a library all the works of the most learned and famous heretics.<sup>8</sup>

These famous heretics include Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, and Beza.

Throughout the *Advis*, Naudé not only writes about principles and procedures but also lists and comments on authors who should be included in public collections.<sup>9</sup> He recommends the acquisition of materials on esoteric subjects, books on the Cabbala, on mnemonic devices, and on divination.<sup>10</sup> When discussing the physical arrangement of books, however, Naudé rejected mnemonic devices because they spoil and pervert our natural memory.

The *Advis* gives special emphasis to reference works and anthologies. Naudé states, "I consider these collections highly useful and necessary because of the brevity of our life and because the multitude of things which we are now obliged to know . . . do not permit us to do all by ourselves. . . . In this connection, one should put into practice Hippocrates' aphorism which advises us to make concession to time, place, and custom; that is to say certain kinds of books being sometimes in vogue in one country and not so in another."<sup>11</sup> Such books, as he explains, are needed to make readers aware of changes in popular taste in different countries and centuries.

In addition to books, libraries should collect dissertations, pamphlets, and, especially, manuscripts. "It is the essence of a library to have a great number of manuscripts because they are now most in demand and least available".<sup>12</sup> Naudé, of course, was referring pri-

8. Naudé, *Advice*, 26–28.

9. About Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), the author of *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, he mentions for example that he "learnedly refuted the astrologers"; about Argenterio (1513–1572) that he took to task Galen, the court physician to Marcus Aurelius (130–200). (Galen had been virtually undisputed until the sixteenth century, a fact that had hampered medical progress for over a millenium.)

10. Naudé, *Advice*, 23.

11. *Ibid.*, 31–32.

12. *Ibid.*, 44.

marily to manuscripts of classical authors preceding the invention of printing with movable type. But his recommendation applies to original documents of any time. Such documents bear the mark of the person who created the text and are unique sources for serious study, for criticism, for biographies, or, as Leopold von Ranke said, “to know how it really was”. Like books, manuscripts should be collected not for their “superfluity of ornaments” (as found in many medieval religious texts), but for their content. Illustrations that clarify the text are, of course, acceptable, but decoration for its own sake is not. Thus he also assures his patron that he will not squander money on luxurious bindings. This chapter on the quality of books ends with an admonition that it is impossible to evaluate any works, especially those treating obscure or difficult subjects, or those by little-known authors, by applying rigid rules. This can only be done “by weighing thoughtfully the book’s actual character and usefulness”.<sup>13</sup>

The chapter on “Procuring Books” begins with an emphatic statement on preservation: “A library will never be much benefited if that which is collected with so much care and industry should be lost for want of care”.<sup>14</sup> It then continues with a recommendation that librarians pay special attention to what is quickly out of print: “broad-sides, theses, scraps, proofs and the like”. Today we take the research value of ephemera for granted, but in Naudé’s time this was a new venture and not universally heeded.

Important for all collection development (the procurement of single volumes as well as whole collections) are scholarship, friendships, travel, and the advertising of one’s own library. “One’s affection for books and strong desire to form a library” should be as widely publicized as possible. One never knows where a gift or a clue to treasures may come from. In addition to the use of conventional sources like bibliographies and booksellers’ services, Naudé has some good advice for the acquisition of scholarly works: “Finally, the man with great affection for books should visit the shops of those who often buy old paper or parchment to see whether, by accident or otherwise, there may fall into their hands anything that may be worth collecting for a library. And in truth we should be much encouraged in this search by the example of Poggio [1380–1459], who found Quintilian on a

13. *Ibid.*, 45–46.

14. *Ibid.*, 47.

pork butcher's counter when he was at the Council of Constance."<sup>15</sup>

Naudé himself, having exhausted the resources of Paris, traveled through Flanders, Italy, Germany, and England. About his own methods of acquisition we have amusing contemporary descriptions. From Italy, where he spent almost a year (1645–46) and returned with an estimated 14,000 volumes, comes this account:

When Naudé has been in town, the booksellers' shops seem devastated as by a whirlwind. Having bought up in every last one of them all the books, whether in manuscript or in print, dealing in any language whatever with any subject or division of learning no matter what, he has left the stores stripped and bare. Sometimes, moreover, as if he had come to those shops not as a purchaser of books, but to get at the size of the walls, he measures with a surveyor's rod all the books and the shelves clear to the roof, and names his figure on the basis of that measurement. Not infrequently he comes to a place where there are on view heaps of books, piles of a hundred or a thousand apiece; he asks the price; the seller names it; they fail to agree; they wrangle; but in the end it is he who by insisting, by pushing, and finally by sheer malignancy, has his way so that he carries off the very best volumes cheaper than if they were pears or lemons, while the merchant, thinking over the transaction at his leisure, complains that a veil was cast over his eyes and his hand forced, because for those books he could have got a far better price from the spice merchants, for casing incense or pepper; or from the food merchants, for wrapping up butter. But you just ought to see the fellow dashing out of the bookshops; you could not help laughing, so covered from head to foot is he with cobwebs and the dust of learning.<sup>16</sup>

Indeed, Naudé must have haunted places with books and urged his friends to do the same whenever they traveled. In addition he had a keen eye for new publications, as well as a network of scholarly

15. Naudé, *Advice*, 58.

16. Gian Vittorio Rossi, *Epistolae ad Tyrrenum et ad diversos* (Cologne, 1645–49), cols. 11, 18–19. Quoted in Jack A. Clarke, "Gabriel Naudé and the Foundation of the Scholarly Library", *Library Quarterly* 39 (October 1969): 338.

contacts alerted to donate and/or purchase new books for the Mazarin Library.

Besides reflecting the life of the cities of the seventeenth century, the chapter on the building and location of libraries contains some excellent suggestions for all time. While centrally located within the community it serves, a library should be at some distance from the noisiest streets. It should, if possible, be situated “between some spacious court and a pleasant garden, from which it may enjoy good light, a wide and agreeable prospect, and pure air, unpolluted by marshes, sinks, or dunghills; the whole arrangement so well planned and ordered that it is compelled to share nothing unpleasant or obviously inconvenient”.<sup>17</sup>

In his instructions for illumination and general comfort, Naudé includes an amazing reference to Hippocrates, who stated that “south winds cause deafness, dimness of vision, heaviness of the head, torpor, and they are relaxing because they fill the head with certain vapors, obstruct the passages, obfuscate the senses, and render us dull and almost unfit of any sort of action”. Naudé adds that if one is “unable to arrange for east winds, one should have recourse to those from the north which, cold and dry, engender no humidity and conserve both books and papers”.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to tables, rugs, and comfortable chairs, the library should provide “feather dusters, clocks, pens, paper, ink, penknife, sand, a calendar, and other small items and suchlike instruments, which cost so little and are yet so necessary”.<sup>19</sup> Naudé again and again emphasizes the importance of a congenial atmosphere and the convenience of the reader. Not in his *Advice*, but in his later recommendations for the remodeling of the library in the Palais Tubeuf by the architect François Mansart (who introduced the style of roof now named after him), Naudé made the appealing, sensitive suggestion that in addition to the regal main staircase, there should be a backdoor to the library for shy people.

He recommends that just as money should not be spent on expensive, fancy buildings and illustrations that serve only decorative purposes, a library has no need for valuable original statues. More appropriate, he argues, would be good copies of the portraits of famous

17. Naudé, *Advice*, 60.

18. *Ibid.*, 62.

19. *Ibid.*, 73.

literary figures, “so we may at one and the same time form a judgment of the minds of authors by their books and their bodily shape and facial expression which may serve in my opinion as a powerful motivation to encourage readers to follow in their footsteps and to continue steadfastly in the spirit of some noble enterprise resolved upon”.<sup>20</sup>

Concerning the physical arrangement of a collection, Naudé favored subject divisions. Although, as we have seen, he recommended the acquisition of books on mnemonic devices, he denied that books could be arranged usefully in this mechanical way. Librarians should design a system with which the people who use the library feel comfortable. He suggested that a library collection be grouped under the same general subject headings used by the university curricula because most readers would be familiar with them. However, the danger in a subject arrangement is its tendency to become inflexible and therefore to hinder, not to help. Among the examples he gives to illustrate this point, he quotes with disfavor a certain Jean Mabun who suggested that all books should be arranged:

[according to the] words of the Psalmist, “Teach me discipline, goodness and knowledge”, for placing all books under three classes and principal headings of Morals, Sciences, and Devotion . . . which seems to have no other purpose than to torture and eternally crucify the memory. . . . I [Naudé] conceive that arrangement to be always the best which is easiest, least intricate, most natural, most used, and which follows the subjects of theology, medicine, jurisprudence, history, philosophy, mathematics, humanities, and so on, each of which should be classified under subheadings according to their several divisions, which for this purpose should be reasonably well understood by the librarian in charge.<sup>21</sup>

Although all except the rarest books must be on open shelves, the reader does need catalogues. There should be two kinds: one arranged by authors and the other by subjects.

Naudé then suggests further break-downs by language, chronology,

20. Naudé, *Advice*, 72.

21. *Ibid.*, 64–65.

and other features. The principle for subdivisions is illustrated by the classification of theology: “. . . all the Bibles should be placed first in order of their languages; next to these the Councils, Synods, Decrees, Canons, and all that concerns the Constitutions of the Church, and the more since they hold the second place of authority among us; after these, the Fathers, Greek and Latin, then the commentators, scholastics, learned men of various schools, and historians; and finally, the heretics”.<sup>22</sup>

To achieve his aims—knowledgeable acquisition, logical organization, and effective service—the librarian must be a learned and honorable person. He also must be given a commensurate salary. In high civilizations, Naudé assures us, the post of librarian was a most honored position, and “honorable librarians have made their libraries honorable”.

The volume concludes with thoughts on the purpose of the library: “Therefore I shall tell you, Monseigneur, with as much freedom as I have affection for your service, that in vain does he strive to carry out any of the preceding suggestions . . . who does not intend to devote them to the public use and never to withhold them from the humblest of those who may reap any benefit thereby”.<sup>23</sup> As a reward for having made this possible, the patron will “receive wide acclaim, an infinitude of thanks, and indescribable satisfaction”.<sup>24</sup>

The *Advis* is a testimony to Naudé’s erudition, his methodical thinking, and his astute comprehension of a library’s potential. Beyond its importance for future librarians, it holds a significant place in the history of learning. John Cotton Dana writes in the introduction to the 1903 reprint of the English edition of 1661:

The *Advis* was written and printed in 1627 to save the labor of writing out the many copies asked for by his friends, of his opinion and advice on books and libraries . . . it embodies, in fact, the very spirit of Naudé; it forecasts his career, it suggests by its many allusions the young man’s learning; and above all it sets forth the principles its brilliant author was to follow twenty years later, first in building, next in making

22. *Ibid.*, 65.

23. *Ibid.*, 74.

24. *Ibid.*, 79.



“open to all the world, without excluding a living soul” the great library of Cardinal Mazarin.<sup>25</sup>

On 30 January 1644 the Mazarin Library (fig. 3) opened to the public with great fanfare. The *Paris Gazette* of that date reported that Mazarin welcomed in his library all learned and curious people every Thursday from morning to evening to “feuilleter”, literally “leaf through”, his rich collection. Naudé was described as being the most “thoughtful, wise and hardworking librarian and scholar”, who possesses “perfect” knowledge of books. His library was soon called “without flattery, ‘une bibliothèque vivante’”—a living, lively library.<sup>26</sup>

His appointment by Cardinal Mazarin had given Naudé the opportunity to realize his ideals. Scholars from many countries—Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) the Dutch philosopher, among them—came to pursue their research at this unique library. A German seventeenth-century scholar, Johannes Lomeier (1636–1699), commented in his *View of European Libraries* that the library of Cardinal Jules Mazarin, organized by Naudé and comprising over 40,000 books, scarcely had an equal and “could have provided a model for the perfect library, had not Parliament decreed that it should be divided and sold”.<sup>27</sup>

And this is indeed what had happened. Many members of the French aristocracy were discontented with the influence that Cardinal Mazarin exerted on the Regent, Queen Anne of Austria, while Louis XIV was still a minor. Between 1648 and 1653 the Fronde, a series of rebellions by the nobility, was organized to oust the Cardinal. At the height of the uprisings, on 6 February 1651, Cardinal Mazarin left Paris at night. Eight days later, on 14 February, Gabriel

25. Gabriel Naudé, *Instructions Concerning Erecting of a Library, presented to my Lord the President de Mesme*, ed. John Cotton Dana, and trans. John Evelyn. (Cambridge, Mass.: Printed for Houghton and Mifflin at the Riverside Press, 1903), iii–iv.

26. Cornélis de Waard, ed., *Correspondance du P. Marin Mersenne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1933–65). Quoted in Sidney L. Jackson, “Gabriel Naudé, Most Erudite and Most Zealous for the Common Good”, *Stechert Hafner Book News* 23, no. 5 (January 1969): 65.

27. Johannes Lomeier, *A Seventeenth Century View of European Libraries*, trans. J. W. Montgomery, University of California Publications in Librarianship, vol. 3 (Berkeley, 1962), 49.

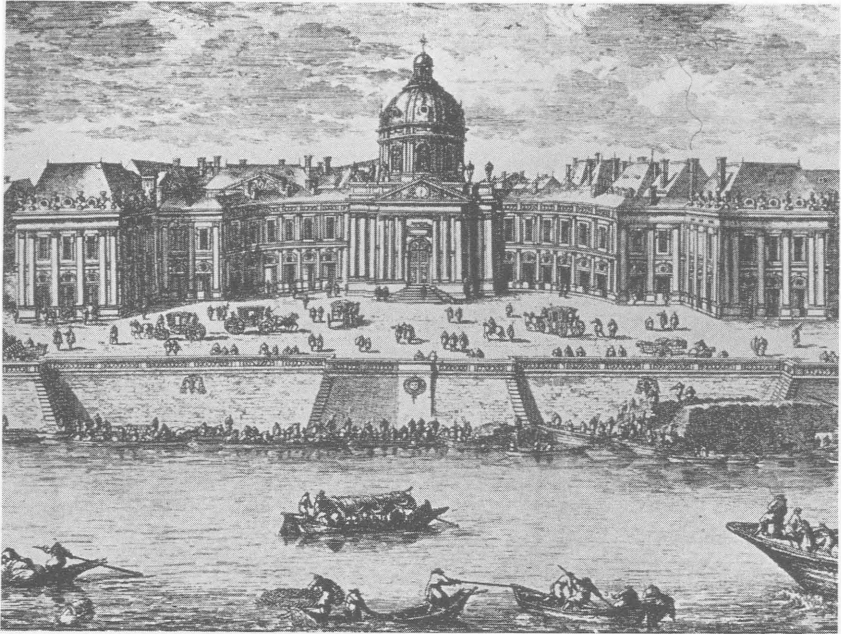


Fig. 3. "College of the Four Nations", Mazarin's legacy to France, presently housing the Académie Française and the Bibliothèque Mazarin.

Naudé was summoned to appear at the Palais Tubeuf and surrender the keys to the library to the President of the Chambre des Comptes.

Naudé tells about this in his essay *Remise de la bibliothèque de Monsieur le Cardinal Mazarin par le Sieur de Naudé entre les mains de Monsieur Tubeuf*, which was published in 1652 with his *News from France; or, The Description of the Library of Cardinal Mazarin Before it was Utterly Ruined*, first in England and later in France and Germany. After he had explained his personal obligation to keep the collection intact, he described how, with great care, he led M. Tubeuf through the library, room by room, explaining the value of each section. "I implored Tubeuf to do his utmost to prevent the dissipation of the finest and largest library the world had ever seen, and withdrew with tears in my eyes, thinking that the public might be deprived of so great a treasure, and that the noble intentions of His Eminence were being so ill repaid."<sup>28</sup>

28. Gabriel Naudé, *News from France; or, A Description of the Library of Cardinal Mazarin*, preceded by *The Surrender of the Library* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1907), 53.

Several efforts were made to save the library. Even the young king, Louis XIV, wrote letters ordering a halt to the sale. Tubeuf, however, was not able to preserve the library, and Mazarin's enemies made a special point of selling it in small, discrete lots, for fear that the Cardinal might regain possession through his agents if it were found in one place.

In his *News from France* Naudé published his letter to the Parliament. The French title reads: *Advis a Monseigneurs de Parlement sur la vente de la bibliotheque de M. le Cardinal Mazarin*. (Again, Naudé used the neutral term "Advis" in the title of his plea, hoping to dissuade Parliament from the sale):

Gentlemen: Since all the ordinances of your famous company are like thunderbolts, which dash in pieces each person whom they strike, and make dumb or astonish every one that sees them fall: Give me leave to tell you . . . that what you thundered out on the twenty-ninth of the last, against the library of the most eminent Cardinal Mazarin, hath produced those two effects, with so much force and violence, that forasmuch as concerns the said library, it is not likely it should ever recover those losses which it had suffered, unless by some very remarkable effect of your singular goodness and protection.

And, as for me, who cherish it as the work of my hands and the miracle of my life, I protest to you ingenuously, that, since that stroke of thunder—which was cast from the heaven of your justice . . . I have been so extremely astonished, that if this cause . . . did not now untie my tongue I should remain eternally dumb.<sup>29</sup>

He then describes the library, enumerates those who have contributed to it, and refers to the lawyers, schoolmen, bishops, hospitals, and other individuals and institutions who would continue to benefit from it. It is a forceful and moving statement that culminates with the threat that the ruin of this library will be more carefully marked in all histories than the sacking of Constantinople.

29. Naudé, *News*, 61–63.

Must such a rich and learned work be dissolv'd,  
Can eyes with patience see 't in flames involv'd?  
Methinks the flames should spare it, sure the fire  
(More merciful than men) will sav 't intire.  
A, sweet Apollo, hinder! Muses, stay  
Their violence! And what though fond men say  
"It is decreed; the ordinance is made;  
The will of supreme power must be obey'd"?  
Rather let laws be broke, let reverend power  
Lie prostrate, ere 't be said, that in one hour  
A work so toil'd for many years, was late  
Quite ruin'd by commandment from the state.<sup>30</sup>

Naudé's pleas were ignored. Parliament was not moved. Naudé accepted the invitation of Queen Christina of Sweden to go to Stockholm. Under her rule, the Swedish court had become a haven for refugee intellectuals and artists, and knowing of Naudé's reputation, the Queen appointed him royal librarian. However, he did not stay long.

Mazarin, after his return to power in 1653, asked Naudé to come back to Paris and, Naudé, still loyal, returned. Mazarin had already begun an amazingly successful effort to reassemble the collection. As Naudé himself had bought all the medical books at the sale of the collection, that part survived intact. Even members of the Fronde, now eager to please the Cardinal, helped with the restoration of the collection in the hope that it might again be available to the public.

Sadly, Naudé fell ill during the trip. He died at the age of 53 in Abbeille (Somme) before he reached Paris.

For Naudé literature and congenial friends must have been fulfilling. He once wrote, "I cannot make up my mind to marry, that manner of life is too thorny and difficult for a man who loves study".<sup>31</sup> His contemporaries report that his tastes were simple and modest, that he lived like a true philosopher, and that his sobriety was proverbial.

Today the Bibliothèque Mazarin is the oldest public library in Paris. Since 1945 it has been administered by the Institut de France, which

30. *Ibid.*, 75.

31. *Ibid.*, 32.

was founded in 1795 and has been located from its beginnings in the Collège Mazarin. Readers must present their national identity cards or passports. Beyond this there are no restrictions for use. A bust of Gabriel Naudé reminds visitors of the man who had told his first patron that: “Those who create a library defy mortality, they transmit to us a lively portrait of what was most noble in themselves”.<sup>32</sup> This Gabriel Naudé certainly did.

32. Naudé, *Advice*, 5.