PROPOSITIONS
accompanying the dissertation

French ‘Reason of State’ from the Fall of La Rochelle to the Frondes

Political Prudence in the Writings of Henri duc de Rohan and Gabriel Naudé

by Jesper Schaap

1. Political praxis, even the often haphazard politics of ‘crisis-management’, in the era of the Cardinal-ministers Richelieu and Mazarin largely remained within the bounds of the French monarchical system. The premier ministres wielded no unlimited power nor did they draw and implement a blueprint for ‘absolute monarchy’.

2. The seventeenth-century French idiom of political prudence, including the family-resemblant terms of raison d’état and intérêt, was a flexible, pragmatic catchphrase that suited a variety of ‘parties’ and individuals with as many different interests.

3. Thinkers like Rohan and Naudé do not personify historiographical constructs as militant Protestantism and libertinage érudit.

4. A book historical approach is indispensable to the study of intellectual history.

5. Intellectual history is more than the study of concepts and intertextuality; proper contextualization incorporates biographical, bibliographical, social, intellectual and political contexts.

6. Internationalisation and publication pressure distract from the essence of the humanities as narrative sciences: the craft of writing in one’s native language and employing the beauty of words to convey interpretations.

7. There is no meaning without history.

8. In the rat-race of the mind everyone is hard of hearing (In de rattrace van de geest is iedereen hardhorend; Hans Verhagen).

9. Music soothes even the savage beast (The Offspring; after Lucan).

10. I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by flex-contracts... (after Allen Ginsberg).

11. Life’ll kill ya (Warren Zevon).