

TWO HUGUENOT BROTHERS

Letters of Andrew and James Coltée Ducarel · 1732–1773



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A NEW PUBLICATION FROM THE GARENDON PRESS

James Coltéé Ducarel's letters sent from France to his elder brother Andrew in London are a hitherto unknown resource for the study of the Enlightenment and the French Huguenots in the mid-eighteenth century. Andrew kept James's letters and had them bound. 216 years later they came into the possession of Gerard de Lisle, a collateral descendent.

The letters paint a picture of the last years of the *ancien régime* with its cumbersome bureaucracy, growing anticlericalism and increasing violence underlying surface prosperity – all ominous signs of approaching revolution. James's lively, gossipy style, his accounts of hazardous travels through France as he attempts to recover the family patrimony, his hunt for books, prints and drawings for his brother and the Archbishop of Canterbury and his visits to abbeys and cathedrals on Andrew's behalf are vivid and engaging. None of Andrew's replies survive; but in the Gloucestershire Record Office, there are a few of Andrew's letters to James before he left England and others to uncles and cousins in France, which we have included. These are in a formal courteous French which shows the contrasting character of the two brothers.

They were originally three, the sons of a successful Huguenot banker, whose status protected the family from harassment; but his death in 1718 left his widow and children vulnerable to religious persecution. She fled with them to England, where she remarried, but died in childbirth a year later. Their stepfather established the boys in their own fully-staffed house, where they enjoyed large personal allowances and the best education.

The youngest, Adrian became a successful merchant and banker, married and had four children, but died of small pox aged 27. Andrew prospered as an advocate of Doctors' Commons, the elite college of ecclesiastical and maritime lawyers, was thirty years the Archbishop of Canterbury's librarian at Lambeth, a life-long Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and he published a groundbreaking work on Anglo-Norman architecture. James moved in high society but, unable to sustain that life style, in 1757 he fled to his native France to avoid imprisonment for debt. He never returned.

Scholarly essays, by Randolph Vigne on the Huguenots in eighteenth century France and by Robin Myers on the life and times of the brothers precede the fully annotated transcript of the letters. An appendix includes family trees tracing the ramifications of the extended Ducarel family and a select bibliography. A special feature is the Who's Who compiled by Lorren Boniface giving details of the host of names mentioned, many not to be found elsewhere. There is a full name, place and subject index.

The book is to be published at the end of March 2019, price £85, in a limited edition of 200 numbered copies. It runs to 240 pages in a large format, 300 × 240mm. It is illustrated by fine colour portraits and miniatures from oil paintings in the possession of the family, a map of old Normandy and facsimile pages of a few of the letters. The volume, bound in full cloth and with an eye-catching jacket, is designed by Robert Dalrymple and printed by Albe De Coker, Antwerp.

It can be ordered from Alice Ford-Smith at the distributors Messrs Bernard Quaritch Ltd, 40 South Audley Street, London W1K 2PR or a.ford-smith@quaritch.com.