

Elisabetta Lurgo. *Philippe d'Orléans: Frère de Louis XIV*. Biographie. Paris: Éditions Perrin, 2018. 393 pp. €24,00. Review by ROBERT J. FULTON, EMMANUEL COLLEGE.

Having studied various personages in early modern France as part of my doctoral research into the relationship between the French state and warfare, I cannot imagine a more difficult subject to treat with than “Monsieur,” the brother of Louis XIV. In history textbooks, at least in the ones I use for my survey courses in Western Civilizations, the Sun King tends to overshadow (dare I say, outshine?) many of the most prominent of his entourage, including the great Colbert. What chance did Louis’s younger brother have to make his own mark? In her new book, *Philippe d'Orléans: Frère de Louis XIV* (2018), Elisabetta Lurgo admirably accepts this challenge. Lurgo has a doctorate in history from the Università du Piemonte Orientale (Italy, 2010) and she is currently a research professor at the Université de Savoie, Mont-Blanc. Much of her work focuses on the history of devotions and religious practices in modern times and on the relations between France and Savoy. It is on this latter area of expertise that she draws to reconstruct a more nuanced and energetic portrait of one of early modern French history’s most maligned characters, Philippe, duc d’Orléans.

Philippe was born on September 21, 1640, the second son of Louis XIII and younger brother of Louis XIV. His title until 1660 was duc d’Anjou. During his entire lifetime, Philippe appears to have played little role in domestic or international politics, and his generally hostile contemporaries have left us with a portrait overwhelmingly infused with degenerate qualities: an effeminate, weak, and homosexually oriented prince of the blood, far outstripped in character by both his brother, and his own son Philippe, who went on to become regent of France during the minority of Louis XV. Yet Lurgo uses her prior work, *Une Histoire oubliée, Philippe d'Orléans et la Maison de Savoie* (2018), as a springboard for launching her “recovery” of the more nuanced personality of the Sun King’s younger brother.

Our present caricatures are due to the fact that few prior histories of the duke, beyond a few nineteenth century works, have been published, and Lurgo’s intent is to correct this oversight. She takes issue with these few extant histories, as well as with the duke’s own

contemporaries such as Saint-Simon, by painting the accounts as two-dimensional, and thus flawed, stereotypes of Monsieur, his lifestyle, and his position in the orbits of the royal family. While he certainly did not hide his sexual preferences, in Lurgo's work this aspect of his life takes on a subsidiary role to a much more varied set of identities. She aims to get us beyond the biased and limited portrait, to show that Philippe "actively contributed to building the fortress of the absolute monarchy of the Sun-King" (8). He was his own person: he could fight, he could build, he could serve as a patron, and he deserves better than he received from prior writers.

One of the specific ways in which she affects the transformation is to shine a light on Philippe's diplomatic efforts with respect to the marriage arrangements involving his daughter, Anne-Marie d'Orléans, and Victor-Amadeus II of the royal family of Savoy. The marriage of these two royal houses eventually took place in 1684 and it was, in no small part, due to the efforts of Monsieur. To build her case, the author uses the unpublished correspondence of Philippe, as well as that of other diplomats, to reconstruct the complex initial negotiations, in advance of the more formal discussions, providing a more precise evaluation of the duke's diplomatic skills. Her primary sources include archival collections not only in France but also in Madrid and Turin. The archives in Turin, in particular, supply ample source material for her analysis of these complex marital negotiations. Her bibliography and her footnotes show an extensive knowledge of the literature, both past and present. More generally, her use of these sources shows that she is, in many cases, able to read between the caricatures to uncover important aspects of the duke's character. She includes a Chronology of Philippe's life, always appreciated by this reader.

Lurgo divides her book roughly into three sections, comprised of eight chapters, which progress chronologically in general. The first three chapters address his early life and education at the hands of a loving mother. The next three explore Philippe's involvement in the affairs of state, his marriages, and his brief military success in the shadow of his brother, and the last two chapters address his final years. Another nuanced analysis demonstrates that contrary to Monsieur's perceived unruliness, "Philippe of Orleans fully adheres to the model of absolute monarchy advocated by Louis XIV and actively collaborates in the

program to exalt the figure of the king” (69). During his first marriage to the sister of Charles II of England, described as turbulent, Lurgo illustrates the ways in which Philippe was a good father to his children. He was also an effective money manager. At his death, his debts totaled only about one year’s revenues from his estates, an amount “which was not entirely excessive, especially if we compare it to the amounts of debts accumulated by most of the nobles of the day” (106). Throughout his lifetime, Monsieur effectively managed his revenues to expand and decorate his residence at Saint-Cloud, west of Paris, which, unfortunately, burned down during the Franco-Prussian War.

In contrast to his detractors’ portraits of effeminacy, Philippe displayed a flair for military strategy and tactics when he commanded a small army during the Dutch War (1672–1678). At the Battle of Cassel in April of 1679, he defeated William of Orange. The victory, however, did not sit well with his brother, and he was never again to command any of Louis’s troops. In particular, the betrayal of their uncle, Gaston d’Orléans, during the years of the Fronde would “leave an indelible recollection in the memories of Louis XIV and Philippe” (22). Not only did such memories drive Louis’s relations with his nobles, they must also have deeply affected his attitude and his dealings with his younger brother, as “he had [now] known treason within his own family” (27). Yet Louis also depended upon his brother for support and did not try to keep him on a short leash.

If this book has any drawbacks, it is the one common to any biographic exploration of so-called famous people, that is, the tendency of the author to slide into bias towards an exalted status of the “hero” of the story. Here, Lurgo subscribes to more favorable interpretations than other authors, such as when she evaluates Louis’ decision to remove his brother from future participation in his wars. After the victory at Cassel in 1677, Philippe never again went to war, and her assessment is that it was for his own protection: while the “presence of the royal family, which must set an example by their bravery, galvanized the morale of the generals and soldiers, ... the death or capture of the king, his brother or, later, the heir to the throne would be a disaster. Monsieur had shown an astonishing disregard for danger, but his safety was more important [than a defeat that] would dangerously jeopardize the almost supernatural prestige enjoyed by the royal family” (165).

In these matters, she errs on the side of positive motives.

Assessing motives is made all the more difficult by the generally bad press of the duke's contemporaries. Monsieur did suffer tremendous amounts of bad publicity, much of it because of his homosexuality. However, while the challenge is considerable, Lurgo does an admirable job sorting it all out. She effectively shows that Philippe absorbed and internalized a sense of duty to help uphold his brother's "absolute" rule. Neither he nor any of his lovers seem to have intentionally caused problems or scandals that would have embarrassed the king. Indeed, Lurgo maintains that Philippe's understanding of etiquette and protocol served the king well, especially as Philippe made it a point to often be in residence at the Palais-Royal in Paris, thus serving as proxy for the king among the Parisians. In addition, despite his possibly exaggerated homosexual attractions, Philippe seems to have been able to fulfill his dynastic responsibilities. His first wife, the English princess Henriette Stuart (1644–1670), bore him several children but died young (suspected poisoning was never proved). His second wife was the Princess Palatine, Elisabeth-Charlotte (1652–1722), who bore him three children; when she took ill in 1675, he barely left her side.

Lurgo's book is an important addition to our understanding of the operations of a royal family at the forefront of "absolutist" rule. And herein lies the basis of her analysis of contemporary sources such as Saint-Simon, for instance regarding the final, supposedly vitriolic, conversation between Louis and Philippe before the latter's death. Saint-Simon's is the single source for this supposed conversation, and in her view, it seems unlikely that he alone would have recounted such an unusual disagreement between the brothers, given Philippe's noted obeisance to the king. No mention is made by Dangeau, Sourches, Madame de Sévigné, or even in the letters of Elisabeth-Charlotte. Indeed, Saint-Simon was writing many years later, and for the public but even more so for posterity: in this "retrospective writing, the author promulgated his own ideas as forms of truth ... like the dauphin, Monsieur is, according to Saint-Simon, wrong to be fully in line with the king's political project. His last day is an opportunity to write historical words: during the last act of the drama, ... Philippe d'Orléans cannot remain silent, he must, finally, recognize that his son's extraordinary marriage has brought him only shame and dishonor"

(294). With such deftness, Lurgo is able to refashion an old and very jaded picture of a much-maligned personage. Four of his children (three daughters and a son) made it to adulthood and intermarried with some of the finest royal families in Europe. Many of the royal families in Europe can trace lineage back to Philippe d'Orléans, and they can thank Dr. Lurgo for recovering their ancestor's reputation, at least in part.

Christophe Schuwey. *Interfaces. L'apport des humanités numériques à la littérature*. Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Editions Livreo-Alphil, 2019. x + 136 pp. \$21.00. Review by HÉLÈNE HUET, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA.

In his book, *Interfaces: L'apport des humanités numériques à la littérature*, Christophe Schuwey encourages digital humanists to pay closer attention to user interfaces in DH literary studies projects. These interfaces, Schuwey argues, have the potential to change literary studies by reinventing users' relationship to texts and reading. Schuwey's approach departs from more conventional ways of looking at digital humanities projects. Typically, digital humanists have focused on identifying the right digital tools to answer their research questions but have given less thought to how users will interact with their projects. Instead, Schuwey invites us to consider what we want our digital project to look like as well as how we want our information to be displayed and searched. The way we present data, Schuwey concludes—whether through maps, networks, photos or graphs—can lead researchers to rethink their approaches to texts and literature in general. Each chapter in the book highlights what a stronger focus on the role of interfaces in digital humanities can bring to literary studies. Because of Schuwey's background and interests, he focuses on digital projects in the field of Ancien Régime French literary studies. Though readers can apply his critical reflections to a wide variety of projects, the book would have been stronger had it contained more diverse examples.

In chapter 2, Schuwey explains that the interface is more than mere window dressing. While the aesthetic dimension of an interface matters, the most important thing to consider when choosing or designing an interface is how the interface helps us build our relationships with