H. J. M. NELLEN

EDITING 17TH-CENTURY SCHOLARLY CORRESPONDENCE: GROTIIUS, HUYGENS AND MERSENNE

I

In this paper I shall be talking about scholarly correspondences, specifically those of Hugo Grotius, Constantijn Huygens and Marin Mersenne. Grotius' correspondence comprises some 7500 letters, that of Huygens a little over 8500, and Mersenne's letters number more than 1100. In all, that makes some 17000-odd letters, and as my talk is due to last twenty minutes, that means I have a minute for every 850 letters. This is not a particularly original joke: I stole it from a talk by T. Besterman, the famous editor of Voltaire's letters.¹ This is my way of covering up my own embarrassment about the appointed theme, for, as far as I can see, anything I write about the pros and cons of publishing complete text editions of scholars' letters will only end in the most obvious commonplaces. The idea that deciding on whether to publish a source document should depend on its intrinsic value will have occurred to everyone here; and it is no less obvious that the determining factor is not only intrinsic value but also the reputation of the writers themselves and the accessibility and readability of the letters in an unpublished state. These are all factors which must always be set against the resources that are available for the edition in question.²

In order to avoid too many statements of the obvious I shall organize this paper as follows: in a short historical overview I shall primarily use the examples of Grotius, Huygens and Mersenne to describe what reasons past and present have lain behind editions of their letters. This will be followed by an indication of a number of general problems which, I hope, will help promote the discussion.

II

Since the end of the fifteenth century, more and more editions of scholarly exchanges of letters have been published. This long tradition can be

divided into two very rough groups: either a scholar published parts of his own correspondence, or a selection was made from it by his heirs or friends out of piety for the deceased.

To the first category belong such illustrious examples as Erasmus, Lipsius and Muretus. In 1580, five years before his death, Marcus Antonius Muretus prepared an edition containing 97 letters from his own correspondence. What he has to say in one of these letters about editions such as this is very interesting: letters warranted publication if they were written in a distinct and attractive style, had some historical value or were written by an author who was so highly esteemed that even his private personal affairs were enough to fascinate a wide reading public.\(^3\)

The second category is a further development of this type of publication: posthumous editions of the collected letters of famous scholars. In the seventeenth century this practice led to the publication of the letters of the younger Scaliger, Casaubonus, Baudius, Vossius and Barlaeus. The intention of the editors in such cases was to honour the memory of and express their admiration for their dead friend. The prefaces of such editions often contain a more precise justification, emphasizing the notion that letters were a "mirror of the soul" and as such revealed the character of their writers. Furthermore, the letter gave a slant to the description of events which served to supplement and correct the official works of history. Lastly, the editors dwelt on the stylistic value of the letter, and pointed to the diversity of subjects touched upon, making it of interest to representatives of all kinds of scholarly disciplines.

These editions were not, of course, complete: answers were usually left out, only Latin letters were included, and the editors were heavily selective – not only in their choice of letters, but also in what they printed of each individual letter. The importance of printed seventeenth-century editions immediately becomes apparent, however, when one realises that it is thanks to them that many of the letters we know of have come down to us at all. In the case of a famous writer of letters such as Barlaeus, for example, the preservation of 50% of his letters and 25% of the replies is due to just such posthumous editions.\(^4\)

Hugo Grotius was also one of the scholars whose correspondence was published posthumously. In 1648 the Parisian Claude Sarrau published

---

3. J. IJsewijn, "Marcus Antonius Muretus epistolographus" in La correspondance d'Erasme et l'épistolographie humaniste. Colloque international tenu en novembre 1983. [Université libre de Bruxelles. Travaux de l'Institut Interuniversitaire pour l'étude de la Renaissance et de l'Humanisme VIII], Brussels 1985, p. 188. Of course many scholars also published letters with the aim of educating. In manuals on the art of letter writing they frequently included specimens to serve as models for the student.

Grotius' Epistolae ad Gallos, a collection of 189 letters to French scholars.\(^5\) Much later, in 1687, this edition was followed by his Epistolae quotquot, a voluminous folio volume containing over 2500 letters, which was presented to the public without much ceremony as historical material that was useful for an understanding of Grotius and his times.\(^6\) There were also numerous anthologies of Grotius' letters, for example in Epistolae ecclesiasticae\(^7\) and Burman's Sylloge.\(^8\) The stream of publications swelled gradually until around 1900, when the great authority on the history of Remonstrantism, H.C. Rogge, worked out a plan for a more or less systematic edition of considerable parts of Grotius' Dutch correspondence.\(^9\) His work prepared the way for the complete edition of Grotius' Briefwisseling, the first volume of which was issued in 1928.\(^10\) The series will in all probability reach completion in the middle of the 1990's. The edition is comparable with that of Constantijn Huygens' correspondence, which was published in the period 1911-1917 by J.A. Worp\(^11\), and the recently finished Marin Mersenne series, the first volume of which appeared in 1932.\(^12\)

Huygens and Mersenne did not have the brilliant reputation of a scholar like Grotius, and so the history of their correspondence is less colourful. Mersenne's letters fell into oblivion after one or two very fragmentary publications and were not rediscovered as an important source for the history of science until the end of the nineteenth century.\(^13\) Huygens fared little better. He was not accorded a posthumous edition in his memory, even though in his will the poet had expressly referred to the Latin letters in his estate in terms of possible publication. His heirs


\(^6\) H. Grotii... Epistolae quotquot reperiri potuerunt..., Amsterdam 1687 (BG no. 1210).

\(^7\) Praestantium ac eruditorum virorum epistolae ecclesiasticae et theologicae..., Amsterdam 1660 (BG no. 1240). Reprinted in Amsterdam 1684 and 1704.

\(^8\) P. Burman, Sylloges epistoluarum a viris illustribus scriptarum tomi quinque, Leiden 1727 (BG no. 1251).

\(^9\) Cf. BG nos. 1228, 1229, 1260, 1263 and H. C. Rogge, Brieven van Nicolaes van Reigersberch aan Hugo de Groot. [Werken uitgegeven door het Historisch Genootschap, Derde serie no. 15], Amsterdam 1901.

\(^10\) P. C. Molhuysen, B. L. Meulbroek et al., Briefwisseling van Hugo Grotius. [Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, Grote serie], The Hague 1928-....


\(^13\) Correspondance Mersenne XVII, pp. 11-12 and 104-108.
ignored this exhortation, however, and it would take until well into the nineteenth century before researchers turned their attention to Huygens’ correspondence and made fragments of it available in print. Careless stewardship of the letters had already caused gaps to appear in the collection\(^4\), a sad development, the only advantage of which being that the task of the editor of the complete correspondence became progressively lighter.

### III

In the past nobody questioned the desirability of producing complete editions of the correspondence of the famous. The authority of a learned man like Grotius was sufficient to justify publishing even the most trivial jottings. It is only recently that the need for selection has been emphasized because of the high cost in relation to the limited advantages of publishing material which, it must be said, can also be consulted in its original state in libraries and archives. A good example of the dilemma between exhaustiveness and selectivity is the recent exchange that took place in the Dutch periodical *Spektator* between G.J. Hooykaas and M. Mathijsen, two editors of epistolary material.\(^5\) Hooykaas, the editor of Thorbecke’s letters, states that while subjective factors underlie every choice, this knowledge should not blind the editor to the conclusion that the abundance of material sometimes makes a choice inevitable. He then attempts to demonstrate the superfluity of a complete edition by printing what he regards as a trivial letter of Thorbecke’s. In so doing, however, he unwittingly gives his opponent, the editor of the correspondence of De Schoolmeester, a chance of “shooting into an open goal”. In her reply, Mathijsen emphasizes how important the note – a few lines Thorbecke wrote down for a friend – is: it provides insight into the friendship that existed between the two correspondents and gives information on the attitude, character and reading habits of the letter writer. Mathijsen concludes by remarking that she regards it as indefensible that this letter should be omitted from the edition Hooykaas is preparing, if only because the use of language is so interesting. The disagreement between Hooykaas and Mathijsen is in my view largely due to differences in appreciation of the epistolary material itself. Those who put the historical importance of Thorbecke’s letters first are much more likely to be selective than someone who stresses the aesthetic importance of the letters of a writer like

---


De Schoolmeester and for whom "historical facts" are "no more than a welcome extra".

The dilemma reflected in the polemic described above is, in my view, insoluble. Whenever editors of this sort of material come together at conferences the pros and cons of unabridged editions are discussed, but without unequivocal guidelines being formulated. The situation is not made any clearer by the long list of recommendations and criteria compiled by W. Woesler in 1988. Woesler's first point is the hardly shocking statement that a scholarly "Gesamtausgabe" should contain all the author's literary and personal correspondence, but this conclusion is almost totally undermined by some of the points that follow. The possibility of a complete edition is, he goes on to say, not least dependent on the value and size of the correspondence, and a selection or publication in the form of summaries is not necessarily unscholarly. In another paper, I found the conclusion that scientific research is synonymous with selection, and that it is important to strike a sensible balance between the demands of scholarly rigour and what is financially feasible.

IV

The discussion about the desirability of complete editions is an endless one, for we all look at the problem with the particular correspondence we are working on in the backs of our minds. In what follows I should like to make my own contribution to the discussion of the value of unabridged editions of correspondences.

First of all, it should be said that access to a correspondence is largely achieved when an inventory such as those compiled for Lipsius, Gronovius, Rivet and Barlaeus becomes available, for such inventories give the researcher the framework of a source whose fragmentation makes it highly inaccessible. The very fact of sending letters automatically makes correspondents in the past the principle agents of the fragmentation of

their own correspondence. Moreover, they frequently kept the letters they received in a very haphazard manner, and to make matters even worse, more often than not the writer’s heirs had no notion of the value of the collections they had inherited — as in the case of Huygens mentioned above — which were then split up and, partly owing to autograph collectors, dispersed to all corners of the globe. The dispersal of collections creates many headaches, but with an inventory giving precise information on where and in what form — original, draft, copy, printed text — the letters are preserved, the researcher can see at a glance what may be of importance to him. Added to this, an inventory goes some way towards countering one objection of severe critics like Mathijsen, who consider selection in a body of letters quite indefensible and for whom striving after completeness in an edition is a principle from which scientific considerations allow no deviation. Indeed, the compilation of an inventory already satisfies one of the main conditions that apply to the edition of a scholarly correspondence: whoever opts for a selective edition should always include an inventory of the whole collection so that users can establish for themselves which selection procedures have been followed by the editor. This largely meets the objection that no editor should be allowed to determine the priorities of future users.

The first aim, therefore, is to compile a critical inventory, for I am convinced that the fragmentation is the main handicap for the researcher using this type of source. In the near future the dispersal of manuscript letters in the Netherlands will have effectively been catalogued thanks to the project led by Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck22, but there will still be plenty of problems to solve. I refer to the letters that have already been edited, a huge pile of material, which has been made reasonably accessible as far as Dutch scholars are concerned by P.C. Molhuysen, who examined some 350 editions to trace all correspondence to and from Dutch scholars. His findings are to be found in a file which is still available for consultation in Leiden University Library.23

Greater problems arise when we are dealing with auction catalogues. These are undoubtedly an important source, if only because catalogues allow the actual existence of a letter to be demonstrated and indeed often provide short fragments from the correspondence. Well-known auction catalogue collections, such as that of the Vereeniging ter Bevordering van de Belangen des Boekhandels in Amsterdam, or the C.V. series in the manuscript department of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, deserve

22. See also C. L. Heesakkers, “The cataloguing of scholarly correspondence held in Dutch libraries”, published in the publication referred to in n. 3 above, pp. 97-107.
23. Cf. P. C. Molhuysen, [Lijst van werken, geëxcerpeerd voor den catalogus van gedrukte brieven van en aan Nederlands, z.g. geleerden-brieven], Leiden 1908.
systematic examination, although it must be said that the absence of direct access to the names of the letter writers makes this operation a very time-consuming one.\textsuperscript{24}

It would certainly be going too far to say that the availability of an inventory is the end of the matter. In the past century is has been customary to prepare editions of the letters of correspondents regarded as key figures, i.e. scholars who distinguished themselves by their contribution to learning, their leading positions among their peers or their function as intermediaries. It was not, however, regarded as essential that the edition prepared should be a full one: often a selection was made from the total corpus of letters available, and in such cases it is now becoming clear that the sources eventually printed simply serve to intensify the need for those parts of the material omitted or only recorded in an inventory or summary. Revision of H.C. Rogge's edition of the correspondence of Johannes Wtenbogaert, however important it may be, is long overdue owing to the arbitrariness of the choice of material, the highly condensed summaries of unedited letters, and the omission of letters already published in the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{25} From a practical point of view Worp's edition of Huygens' correspondence also leaves much to be desired, since, time and again, summarized or omitted passages cry out for comparison with the original sources when precision research is being carried out.

However pioneering Worp's work may have been, it is worth considering a reexamination of the adequacy of his approach. The user of the edition of Huygens' correspondence is quite happy to overlook the incomplete references to the locations of the material offered, is prepared to put up with the omission of signatures and addresses, and has every sympathy for the fact that for purely practical reasons the editor decided not to devote any time to comparing variants in the draft versions of the letters with the originals in Huygens' hand that are quite often still extant. On the other hand, there are justifiable fears that Worp, again influenced by understandable practical considerations, did omit too much. For

\textsuperscript{24} A more or less systematic examination of auction catalogue references to the manuscripts of, for instance, Hugo Grotius would yield a rich harvest. It sometimes turns out that letters from private estates eventually end up in public archives. All too frequently, however, the fact has to be accepted that the letters recorded in such catalogues are no longer to be traced. Anyone interested in forming an impression of Grotiana still in private hands at the beginning of the 18th century but later dispersed or lost should consult the \textit{Bulletin du bibliophile belge, publié par F. Heusner XVI (2e série, tome VII)}, Brussels 1860, pp. 279 et seq.: description by F. L. Hoffmann of the David Flud van Giffen collection auctioned in the Hague in 1705.

\textsuperscript{25} H. C. Rogge, \textit{Brieven en onuitgegeven stukken van Johannes Wtenbogaert. [Werken uitgegeven door het Historisch Genootschap, Nieuwe reeks nos. 11, 12, 15, 17, 19, 20 and 22]}, Utrecht 1868-1875. Cf. \textit{Briefwisseling H. Grotius III}, p. XI.
example, not all letters were numbered and it appears that the summaries of Huygens' Latin correspondence are very rigorous condensations of the original letters or drafts. Two closely-written pages from Huygens to the Dordrecht physician Johan van Beverwijck are reduced by Worp to eight lines, and three full pages of Latin (a letter to Erycius Puteanus) are squeezed into eleven lines of print. Worp's procedures also become clear from a comparison with letters that are published in full elsewhere, as in the Correspondance Mersenne, for example. Worp omits long passages, even though for the letter writers themselves these must have been an integral element in their exchanges of views.

Should we then reject the idea of selection out of hand and leave it at that? It is with some difficulty that I admit that while advocating a complete edition of Huygens' correspondence, I am assailed with doubt in the case of Grotius. Our predecessor, B.L. Meulenbroek, strove after completeness – including, that is, all the diplomatic post. As the Swedish ambassador at the French court, it was Grotius' custom to provide not only his family but also his diplomatic colleagues with news. And so it was that every week he sat down and wrote letters in Dutch to Reigersberch, in Latin to Oxenstierna and Camerarius, and in French to Wicquefort and Marini, telling of the latest developments at the front or at court. Sometimes Meulenbroek's desire for completeness even made him go so far as to print totally identical passages from letters to different correspondents. Fortunately, this practice has since been dropped, but we still print the Latin, French and Dutch newsletters in toto, with the result that the user of our edition can now read two or three versions of how Richelieu eliminated opponents like Cinq-Mars while king Louis XIII whiled away the hours making plum jam.

26. Over 1000 letters regarded as unimportant by Worp only received a short mention in the notes belonging to other letters to or from the same correspondents which he did include in his edition. Cf. Briefwisseling Const. Huygens VI, p. 514.

27. Cf. The Hague, Royal Library, KA XLIV, f. 375, no. 307 and Briefwisseling Const. Huygens III, no. 2747, to J. van Beverwijck, 25 June 1641. See also ibidem II, no. 2041, to J. van Beverwijck, 7 February 1639: Worp's digest (6 lines) whets the appetite for Huygens' own draft (a page and a half in KA XLIV, f. 334, no. 271).


29. See, for example, Briefwisseling Const. Huygens III, no. 2980, Huygens to Mersenne, 7 April 1642, reproduced in full in Correspondance Mersenne XI, no. 1078; cf. the digest in Briefwisseling Const. Huygens III, no. 2564, Mersenne to Huygens, 3 November 1640, with the complete version in Correspondance Mersenne X, no. 933. On occasion Worp also subjected Huygens' French correspondence to drastic exception. Cf. Royal Library, KA XLIX-2,-3, passim.


31. ibidem XIII, correspondence from the second half of the year 1642.
Should Grotius' correspondence then not be printed in full? I still hesitate, for his diplomatic correspondence on the France of Richelieu and Mazarin provides a richly detailed and impressive picture which is still not fully appreciated by French historians. But there is yet another argument in favour of complete editions of correspondences such as those of Grotius and Huygens. It is certainly useful to edit those letters that have little to do with their activities as scholar or poet. Just to take Grotius as an example, by publishing not only his personal letters to learned friends and relatives but also the diplomatic, strictly official correspondence, we see his scholarly activities in the context of his life as a whole. We see the lengths he sometimes had to go to in order to combine two incompatible domains and how he described recent political developments with the accent on events he considered important for the success of some personal endeavour, such as his struggle for church unity.\(^{32}\) The conclusion is obvious: it is only by presenting the whole collection of letters that a truly satisfactory impression can be gained of the character and aspirations of a scholar of Grotius' stature.

For some famous letter writers, such as Justus Lipsius, Hugo Grotius, Constantijn Huygens and Christiaan Huygens there are, or will soon be, virtually complete editions of their correspondence. Should we stop there? What about men like Josephus Justus Scaliger, Daniel Heinsius and Gerardus Joannes Vossius? It is difficult to decide whether or not to go on in the same way. Perhaps it would be better if collections of scholarly letters were issued on another, broader, basis, bearing in mind that the value of an edition is enhanced by a multi-faceted approach. It may be attractive, for instance, to combine parallel correspondences in a single edition and to bring together letters written by men with similar backgrounds, an example of this being the letters of the Lingelsheim and Bernegger circle which A. Reifferscheid edited in the last century.\(^{33}\) It is important to ensure that selection takes place according to strictly formal, i.e. verifiable, criteria so that the user can check for himself which documents have been included and which have not. The time limits must be established clearly, and the edition must contain all available material of a correspondence between two scholars.

Leaving financial considerations aside for the moment, the decision on the type of edition remains a subjective affair. Such general criteria as intrinsic value, accessibility and readability can be applied, but certainty

---


as to the usefulness of a particular edition can only be attained by establishing at a later stage the frequency with which the edition is referred to. Whether or not to include a letter, essentially a confidential document written with a particular addressee in mind and usually concerning topics of an ephemeral nature, is ultimately determined by the value the editor attaches to it. It should not, however, be forgotten that much depends on the extent to which the letters chosen for publication supplement and support other letters or comparable sources. In my view, the scope of one letter or even a collection of letters is in itself too limited to be of any decisive significance in historical research; confirmation must always be sought in parallel correspondences or other testimonies if insight is to be gained into seventeenth-century intellectual life. In this way a letter in combination with other letters and supplementary documents can shed light on historical processes that might otherwise be largely concealed from us. As there were no professional journals or organized criticism in the seventeenth century, it is these scholarly correspondences – a complex jigsaw, as it were, consisting of many pieces – that reflect intricate phenomena like the rise of new research methods, revolutionary cosmologies, religious reform movements and repressive tendencies from church and state. Without having studied a great many of these collections of letters, a man like René Pintard would not have been able to draw so grand a panorama of a virtually intangible but influential movement such as erudite libertinism.  

The proof that the combination of different correspondences has a cross-fertilizing effect is given by the editors of the Correspondance Mersenne, who supplemented the relatively limited correspondence with numerous letters exchanged by others and explanatory appendices. In this way they enable the user to trace the various views that held sway in the first half of the seventeenth century in such disciplines as astronomy, physics, philosophy, theology and music.

The Correspondance Mersenne also demonstrates that detailed and thorough annotations greatly enhance the value of editions of this kind. The primary aim remains, of course, to make the text itself available for research, but this does not alter the fact that the editor, with his expertise built up over the years, is the obvious person to lead the users of his edition through the jungle of supplementary sources and relevant contemporary literature. There are, however, no unequivocal guidelines for the preparation of useful notes. Generally speaking, the researcher simply has to decide whether a monograph or an article might not be a more appropriate vehicle to publish the knowledge and insights gained during his research.

34. R. Pintard, Le libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle, Paris 1943.
To put my principle point briefly: often an edition's existence will be justified by the fact that it combines with correspondence from other quarters to furnish the researcher with a reliable picture of the past which will help his work forward. This could easily be shown with reference to the letters our three scholars Grotius, Huygens and Mersenne sent one another; the combined correspondence of these men gives us a unique view of the activities of seventeenth-century intellectuals. All three were prolific writers of letters, they were close contemporaries, and it should come as no surprise that they should have exchanged letters. Furthermore, they continually referred to one another's views and actions in letters written to others.

What do these fairly complete collections of letters reveal about the relationship between these men? The material does tell us that they knew one another well, and that they formed a curious threesome. Huygens and Mersenne wrote to each other regularly, but Huygens could not refrain from writing to another correspondent, André Rivet, about how much he disliked Mersenne's pushiness. Like Grotius, Mersenne lived in Paris, so that he did not need to write to the former very often. Nevertheless a number of short notes are preserved which testify to a very cordial relationship between them. Mersenne lent Grotius books, studied his polemic with André Rivet on church unity - sometimes helped by recent books sent by Huygens - and then gave his pen free rein in his letters to Huygens, Rivet and others. He praised Rivet, remarked on Socinianist tendencies in Grotius' exegesis, and expressed his scepticism about the chances Grotius' struggle for unity had of success, but at the same time he protected him against sharp criticism. For his part, Grotius did not write very frequently to Huygens, whom he held in deep distrust because of his closeness to Frederick Henry. One or two letters did pass between them, but ultimately Grotius was too distrustful of Huygens for there to be any possibility of rapprochement. In 1642 Huygens sent Grotius a letter

35. See Briefwisseling Const. Huygens III, nos. 2379, 2389, 2396 and 2886, Constantijn Huygens to André Rivet, 28 May 1640, 3 June 1640, 8 June 1640 and 8 October 1641; cf. ibidem II, no. 2214, to J. Bannius, 26 August 1639.
36. For example, in 1642 Grotius returned a book, possibly Hobbes' De Cive, with an accompanying letter containing the remark that he found many of the author's propositions far too daring to condone. Cf. Correspondance Mersenne XI, no. 1094, Grotius to Mersenne, 7 May 1642. See too ibidem VIII, nos. 754 and 755, Mersenne to Grotius, [13 August 1639] and 14 August [1639].
37. Cf. ibidem XI, no. 1078, Huygens to Mersenne, 7 April 1642.
38. ibidem X, nos. 1040 and 1045, Mersenne to Rivet, 1 and 25 November 1641.
39. ibidem XI, nos. 1067 and 1101, Mersenne to Rivet, 8 February and 3 June 1642.
40. ibidem XIV, nos. 1506 and 1528, Mersenne to Rivet, 7 September and 11 October 1646. Cf. ibidem XI, no. 1097, Mersenne to M. Ruarus, 15 May 1642.
under a pseudonym, an admittedly splendid piece of writing, in which he criticized Grotius' crusade for church unity. Shortly afterwards this document was published by Rivet in one of his pamphlets against Grotius.\textsuperscript{41} Huygens regarded Grotius' ideal of unity as nothing less than a genuflexion towards Rome; he thought therefore that he could attack him in private with impunity. At the same time his letters do express his admiration for Grotius; if he defected to Rome, the true church would suffer its greatest loss since the Reformation.\textsuperscript{42}

Although the triad Grotius-Huygens-Mersenne is only a small segment of the seventeenth-century Republic of Letters, the letters that have come down to us provide a rich and subtle impression of the scholarly attitudes, religious preferences and controversies which exercised the minds and divided the opinions of the day. The epistolary culture of these learned men lies far behind us; whenever we wish to give vent to our feelings and the distance is too great for us to do so in person, we reach out for the telephone. As our ordinary everyday dealings require us to write so little, the historian of a few hundred years from now will not need to agonize about whether or not a complete edition of twentieth-century correspondence would be too costly.


\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Correspondance Mersenne} X, no. 1050, Huygens to Mersenne, 15 December 1641: "C'est un rare personnage, et jamais n'aurions nous fait perte plus sensible depuis la Reformation." The letter is not included in \textit{Briefwisseling Const. Huygens}. 