V R hæs ad te veterum iuris auctorum reliquias ultero deferam, non uncausa est, Praes amplissime, sed ea maxime iusta, quodque nonnullis fortasse contra Inisti-
niani principis interdictum in lucem pro-
late videbuntur, eas oportuit sanctiore
aliquo nomine defendi adversus ingratißimorum hominum
aut calumnias, aut ineptias, qui vel dissimulant, vel nesciunt, ab illo quidem comparationem modo & in iudiciis
recitationem apud suos prohibitam, nos vero Romanarum
legum maiestatem sic comitem conservare, ut tamen illis nihil
in nos licere patiamur, nisi quod earum ratione & aequitati
non auctoritate & sanctioni concedimus. Cum vero ad
hanc defensionem Augustus nomen eligi potuit quam tuum?
quod demum Praeside prior hæc Iurisprudentia vsu fori rece-
ptra est, quique iuris nostri in summo isto Gallia tribunali
K i j
ita clavum tenes, ita regis, ut quod ille olim vir maximus, tu quoque Senatus & quodammodo est ullares vires non immetito dicit poesis. Sed est quod tu iure quodam tuo virilem ti-bi protonem vindicare queas in nostris omnium operis quarum patronus es summus, aut potius pater, quando tibi pietatis quam potestatis nomen gratius esse summa tua humanitas non obscure suadet. Accedit illa paterna quandam erga te observantiae recordatio, qua te nuper non leuiter affectum sensi, cum patria nostra Historie particu-lam ea fronte exciperes, ut familiaris atque etiam amici quandam tui os, oculos, vultum, illam denique natura similitudinem in filio non inluenter recognoscere videreris. Que res, ut verum faterar, animum sic accendit meum, ut ab eo tempore optarim semper illum mihi diem dari quo benignitati tua aliqua saltem ex parte respondere, & genere quodam officij testari possem illum me paterna in te reverentiae hæreditatem non tam creuisse, quam continuatone quadam animi restinuisse. Accipies igitur hoc ab homine tibi tuisque virtutibus addicisse minum, non magnum illud quidem, sed talem tamen quale tibi & per te publica utilisit hic tempore prestare potuit, majora fortasse aliquando prestaturus si quem illi Deus boni ciuis animum erga Remp. dedit, eum ipsi pro sua singulare clementia quibus potest modis confirmet, auget, instruat, adiuuet, tueatur. Bene vale, vir amplissime. Lutetiae Parsiforum Kalend. Octobr. M. D. LXXII.
A. PIERRE PITHOU, DEDICATORY EPISTLE TO THE
MOSAYCARUM ET ROMANORUM LEGUM COLLATIO (1572)
in Pierre Pithou, Opera ... miscellanea (Paris 1609) 75–6 [Trans. CD]

To the most famous and most generous man, Christofle de Thou,² knight, first president of the court of
the kingdom,³ and senator of the sacred consistory,⁴ Pierre Pithou⁵ greeting!

There is no single reason why I offer these remains of old authors of the law to you, most generous
president, but this one seems particularly just: that it was fitting that these [remains] (which to some may
perhaps seem to be brought forth against the interdict of the prince Justinian) be defended by some more
holy⁶ name against the calumnies and foolishness of most ungracious men, who either pretend [not to
know] or in fact do not know that whereas he prohibited comparison and reading aloud in court among
his people, we in truth keep the majesty of the Roman laws so courteously that we nonetheless allow them
to have no license⁷ among us except what we concede to their reason and equity, not to their authority
and sanction. Whose name, in truth, could be chosen that would be more noble for this defense than
yours? Since, finally, under your presidency this purer jurisprudence has been received for the court’s
use, and since you so hold and so guide the rudder of our law in that highest tribunal of Gaul, that like
that very great man of old, you can not unworthily be called the soma⁸ of the Senate⁹ and, indeed, in
some sense, the empsychos nomos.¹⁰ And also that you can claim by a certain right that is yours a share¹¹
in our works, of all of which you are the chief patron, or rather father, when your highest humanity clearly
persuades you that the name of goodness¹² is more pleasing to you than the name of power. A further
reason is the recollection that of the respect my father once felt toward you, by which I have recently
sensed you are deeply affected, when you would take up a piece of the history of our country¹³ with such
an expression as if you seemed to recognize, not unwillingly¹⁴ in the child the mouth, eyes, face, and
finally that similitude of nature of an acquaintance or even a friend once dear to you.¹⁵ All these things,
to confess the truth, so enkindled my spirit, that from that time I always hoped to be given an occasion on
which I could respond in at least some way to your benignity and testify by some sort of service that that
inheritance of reverence for you that came to me from my father had not so much increased, as that I
myself had retained it¹⁶ by a certain continuance of spirit. May you therefore receive this gift from a man
most dedicated to your virtues, not any great thing, but one nonetheless that may at this time benefit you
and through you the public utility, you who will perhaps some time in the future be even more
distinguished as a man to whom God has given the spirit of a good citizen, and whom He confirms,
increases, instructs, aids, protects out of His singular clemency in every way he can. Fare you well, most
generous man. Paris, the Kalends of October, MDLXXII.¹⁷

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¹ With considerable help from Prof. E.A.R. Brown.
² Christopherus Thuanus Celius. Neither Professor Brown nor I can figure out what the ‘Celius’ is all about.
³ De Thou was premier président of the parlement of Paris, 1562–1582.
⁴ Perhaps a reference to de Thou’s position as conseiller of the Conseil privé.
⁵ Petrus Pithoeus.
⁶ I.e., respected.
⁷ I.e., authority.
⁸ Body.
⁹ I.e., parlement.
¹⁰ The law in spirit.
¹¹ Virilis portio.
¹² Pietatis.
¹³ Pithou must be referring here to some edition he published of work of French history. E.A.R.B.
¹⁴ Perhaps the meaning is “not without pleasure.”
¹⁵ Pithou’s father is unknown to us; must be checked.
¹⁶ I.e., the reverence.
¹⁷ 1 October, 1572. The St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre took place on the preceding 24 August.