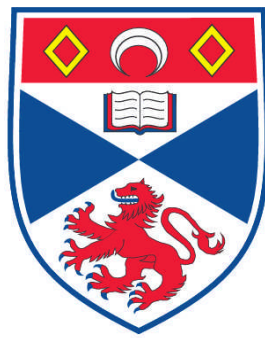


**HATRED IN PRINT : ASPECTS OF ANTI-PROTESTANT POLEMIC
IN THE FRENCH WARS OF RELIGION**

Luc Racaut

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St. Andrews**



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Hatred in Print: Aspects of Anti-Protestant polemic in the French Wars of Religion.

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D.

University of St Andrews

1999.



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Abstract:

‘Aspects of Anti-Protestant polemic during the French Wars of Religion’.

The medium of printing has been persistently associated with Protestantism. As a result, a large body of French Catholic anti-Protestant material was to a large extent ignored. In contrast with Germany, there is evidence to suggest that French authors used printing effectively and aggressively to promote the Catholic cause. During the French Wars of Religion, French Catholics were far more innovative than they were given credit for: the German paradigm of a leaden-footed Catholic response to the Reformation was inappropriately applied to France. This is ironic given that it was the Catholic cause which ultimately prevailed. In seeking to explain why France remained a Catholic country, the French Catholic response must be taken into account. Catholic polemical works, and their portrayal of Protestants in print in particular, is the central focus of this work.

The first chapter is devoted to a historiographical discussion of the problem of violence in the French Wars of Religion. The next two chapters are concerned with the comparison between Protestantism and medieval heresies, and particularly the recourse in polemic to the topos of the Albigensian Crusade. The next chapter addresses the use of cultural archetypes such as ‘the world turned upside down’ and the reversal of gender roles to deride the impact of the Reformation. The last two chapters are an attempt to assess the impact of the Catholic polemic on the Protestant culture and identity and on the emerging public opinion.

Rather than confront the Reformation on its own terms, the Catholic reaction concentrated on discrediting the Protestant cause in the eyes of the Catholic majority. They had a considerable impact on their readership and on an illiterate audience (through the interaction between written and oral), and on the French Protestants’ own self-perception and identity. This thesis aims to contribute to the ongoing debate over the nature of the French Wars of Religion, to explain why they were so violent and why they engaged the loyalties of such a large portion of the population. This study also provides an example of the successful defence of Catholicism developed independently and in advance of Tridentine reform which is of wider significance for the history of the Reformation in Europe.

‘Souvent, le conflit est fondé sur une différence de perception qu’a l’autre de la situation de son adversaire. Votre identité ne se définit pas en opposition à une autre identité. Si vous en êtes là, c’est que vous avez bien peu confiance en vous-mêmes’.

John Hume, Peace Nobel Prize winner, addressing the Corsican nationalists gathered at Bastia on 14 February 1999, ‘la leçon de pacifisme d’un Prix Nobel irlandais aux nationalistes corses’, Le Monde (Tuesday 16 February 1999), p. 1.

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The spelling of sixteenth century French was left untouched except to improve legibility: The use of 's' and 'ʃ', 'i' and 'j', 'u' and 'v', was standardized according to modern spelling. The contractions 'ā', 'ē', 'ū' and 'ō' were replaced with 'an', 'en', 'un' and 'on'.

In the footnotes, references to sixteenth century books is to the edition that was actually consulted. Where the first edition predates this, this is indicated between parentheses in the body of the text. The name of printers is added to the bibliographical references to sixteenth century books when known. Sometimes the name of the author, printer, the place or date of publication does not figure on the title page and when it was possible to identify this by other means, this is indicated between square brackets. When it was not possible to identify the printer, the place or date of publication, this information is simply omitted. When the author was not identified, the reference is marked with 'an.' for anonymous in the first instance and omitted in later references.

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List of abbreviations:

<u>AHR</u>	<u>Agricultural History Review</u>
<u>BHR</u>	<u>Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance</u>
<u>BSHPF</u>	<u>Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français</u>
<u>BSHPIF</u>	<u>Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Ile de France</u>
<u>CF</u>	<u>Cahiers de Fanjeaux</u>
<u>FH</u>	<u>French History</u>
<u>FHS</u>	<u>French Historical Studies</u>
<u>FRB</u>	Sixteenth Century French Religious Book Project (St Andrews Reformation Studies Institute)
<u>JEH</u>	<u>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</u>
<u>MRTS</u>	<u>Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies</u>
<u>P&P</u>	<u>Past and Present</u>
<u>PHS</u>	<u>Proceedings of the Huguenot Society</u>
<u>RS</u>	<u>Renaissance Studies</u>
<u>SCH</u>	<u>Studies in Church History</u>
<u>SCJ</u>	<u>Sixteenth Century Journal</u>
<u>THR</u>	<u>Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance</u>
<u>TLL</u>	<u>Travaux de Linguistique et de Littérature</u>

Introduction.

The historiography of the French Wars of Religion is dominated by a curious irony. From the very beginning, discussions of the polemical literature of the wars has been dominated by the Protestant side of the story. Ever since the Protestant national synods of the 1580s, the Reformed Church has frowned on those (like Lancelot du Voisin de la Popelinière) who did not adhere to the official history of the Reformation. At the time of the Enlightenment, when the Catholic Church came to epitomize obscurantism and superstition, this party line was wholeheartedly adopted by the proponents of the budding discipline that was history. This legacy is still with us today, to the point where the views of contemporary Calvinists are still the subject of sustained and, on the whole, sympathetic attention. Calvin's own works have pride of place in the historiography and, to a lesser degree, that of his lieutenants and supporters who followed the party line and promoted their views in print.

The Catholic writings of the period, in contrast, have been the focus of very little interest and little work has been done on them. This constitutes an important lacuna in the historiography of the French Wars of Religion and is, to some extent, a paradox, since it was the Catholic cause which ultimately prevailed in France. For all the energy and polemical zeal which accompanied the Huguenot movement in the middle years of the sixteenth century, its eventual achievement was limited, certainly in terms of its original ambitions. That this was a surprise to contemporaries, on both sides of the confessional divide, is well attested, even as hopes on both sides rose and sank with the ebb and flow of the fortunes of war.

The question of why France ultimately remained a Catholic country has not been properly addressed, and to do so fully would extend by far this present work's ambition and scope. Rather, this study hopes to contribute to the discussion by putting forward what it argues was a determining factor to the majority's continuing adherence to Catholicism. The large body of Catholic literature, which has been for the most part ignored by historians of the Reformation, contributed strong and persuasive arguments to the Reformation debate. The extent to which these arguments have been largely set aside, despite their obvious qualities and the quantity in which they were produced, warrant further explanation.

There has been a recurrent association, among religious historians, between print, heterodoxy and literacy. The lasting legacy of the Enlightenment, which made the Protestants the harbingers/heralds of the Revolution, and the positivism of the nineteenth century has produced the notion that the Reformation ushered in an era of progress for mankind. Although this respectable historiographical tradition has been relegated in this century to the scrap heap (in the wake of two world wars and the disillusionment that followed) the association between Protestantism and progress has stuck. This is no better illustrated than by the work of Max Weber and his notorious 'Protestant ethic and the spirit of Capitalism' which did more to ensure the posterity of this notion than any work of scholarship. According to this view, Protestantism promoted the spirit of enterprise and contributed to the emergence of our modern, utilitarian, eminently Zweckrational, society.¹ The fact that Weber did not have the European Reformation in mind when he wrote this essay, but the dissident movements which emigrated to America in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, seems to be of little consequence. In more ways than one, the historiography of the European Reformations in general, and of the German Reformation in particular, seems to be marked by this paradigm.

Printing is therefore inextricably linked with the emergence of the Reformation and, at first glance, the coincidence of the two 'revolutions', the Reformation and printing, may curtail further objections. The fact that printing had already reached maturity as a trade and means of communication by the time the Reformation had taken hold, however, is forgotten too often. The association between printing and the Reformation was established predominantly by scholars of the Lutheran Reformation. It seems that in the Empire, printing worked as a decentralizing force which was served by the political fragmentation and extensive urbanisation of this region of Europe. The Lutheran movement merged in time with a wider movement of disaffection, among the urban semi-literate élite, which carried it like a tsunami wave. Printing, and particularly the Flugschriften in the first instance, was the chosen medium for the expression of this disaffection and coinciding ideological and

¹ E. Gellner, 'L'animal qui évite les gaffes, ou un faisceau d'hypothèses', in P. Birnbaum and J. Leca (eds), Sur L'individualisme (Paris, 1991), 25-44, p. 40.

religious message. Consequently, the association between printing and Reformed ideology originates in a symbiotic relationship that emerged in the first decades of the Lutheran Reformation. This ‘German paradigm’ has much to answer for the predominant view that the Reformation went hand in hand with such innovations as printing.

However convincing this paradigm may be, and it has served very well generations of Reformation scholars, it does not hold universal truths when applied to other circumstances. France is particularly at odds with the ‘German paradigm’ as it could not be any more different, economically, politically and geographically, from the Empire than it was. Before the Reformation had made inroads into France, the printing presses had already been harnessed by what J. K. Farge has called, ‘le parti conservateur’:

Nous constatons, en ce qui concerne la religion, que la contre-Réforme en France commence non pas avec les décisions du concile de Trente... mais vingt-cinq ans auparavant, dans les années 1520, avec les délibérations de la faculté de théologie de Paris.... Nous n’hésitons pas à dire que, à partir de la lutte commune contre le Concordat de Bologne en 1516, la faculté de théologie était devenue le coeur du conservatisme en France, et le Parlement de Paris, le bras.²

What posterity has dubbed the ‘forces of reaction’ had a considerable head-start over the Reformers when it came to employing the printing press to their own ends. In the sixteenth century, Paris was the largest printing centre in the kingdom as well as the royal capital. Within Paris, printers were concentrated in the rue St Jacques, adjacent to the University of Paris, and the Île de la Cité, next to the Parlement and was traditionally controlled by these two institutions. Although Renaissance historians have conjured up a picture of printing workshops haunted by

² James K. Farge, Le parti conservateur au XVIe s.: université et Parlement de Paris à l’époque de la renaissance et de la réforme (Paris, 1992), pp. 31-2. See below, pp. 30, 213.

proof reading humanists, it was probably theologians and members of the Parlement who were their principal clients.³

From the outset, the Sorbonne and the Parlement of Paris reacted very quickly against the spread of the evangelical message in France. The Sorbonne put the works of Luther on its index very early on in the Reformation and remained vigilant throughout the first half of the sixteenth century. Censorship was very limited in the first decades of the Reformation and it is not until 1542 that precise legislation was issued regulating the book trade. From the Edict of Châteaubriant (1551) onwards printers needed a privilege of the Parlement of Paris, and the approval of the Sorbonne, before they could print religious works. The prerogatives of the Parlement and the Sorbonne had been strengthened during the reign of Henri II but were increasingly disputed after his death.

The close co-operation of the Parlement of Paris and the Sorbonne dates back to 1540 when the Parlement officially sanctioned the Sorbonne's list of forbidden books. The Parlement increased its censorship with an edict in 1542 in response to the publication of Calvin's Institutes for the first time in French in 1541.⁴ The edict attempted to curb clandestine printing by forbidding the production and sale of any books which did not bear the mark of a master printer, and had not been approved by a committee composed of members of the Faculty, the Parlement and booksellers. The enforcement of these procedures resulted in the publication of the Sorbonne's first index of forbidden books in 1544.⁵ Francis Higman argues that the increase in the

³ Denis Pallier, 'Les réponses catholiques', in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin (eds), Histoire de l'Édition Française (3 vols, Paris, 1983), I., 327-347, p. 328.

⁴ Jean Calvin, Institution de la religion chrestienne: en laquelle est comprinse une somme de pieté, et quasi tout ce qui est necessaire a congnoistre en la doctrine de salut (Geneva, 1541).

⁵ Francis Higman, Censorship and the Sorbonne: a bibliographical study of books in French censored by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, 1520-1551 (Geneva, 1979), pp. 49-50, 52.

number of forbidden books resulted from very effective raids of the Parisian bookshops by the officials of the Parlement and the Sorbonne. This curbed the contribution of Parisian printers to Protestant printing in France dramatically and led to the arrest, exile or death of a number of Parisian Protestant printers and booksellers. Indeed the publication of the Catalogue was followed in 1545 by the issue by the Parlement of Paris of a new edict forbidding the sale of the books contained in the index, which provoked an outcry from the booksellers. As Higman has pointed out, the publication of the Catalogue by the Sorbonne alone in 1544 had no effect. It only had an impact when it was backed with judicial power by the Parlement in 1545. Etienne Dolet, executed for heresy in August 1546, was the first victim of this increased co-operation between the ecclesiastical censors (the University of Paris) and the secular arm (the Parlement). According to Higman, the edict of Châteaubriant in 1551 was merely the consolidation of a process which had been initiated by the Faculty of Theology and the Parlement of Paris in the 1540s. The decisions of the Sorbonne concerned not only Paris but also the provincial printing centres as well, and these measures were issued for the whole of France.⁶

Higman argues that the 1545 legislation was designed to curb the importation of books from Geneva. The reaction of the Parisian booksellers would therefore be an indication of the role of Geneva on the French book market. The legislation was hardened in 1547, culminating in the banning of all books from Geneva in the Edict of Châteaubriant. This piece of legislation reinforced the co-operation between Sorbonne and Parlement as permission to print could be issued only with approval of the faculty of theology. The privilège had to be printed on the frontispiece of the book, characteristically on the verso of the title page (which usually read 'avec privilège') or before the beginning of the main text. A privilège marked the approval of the Parlement and the Sorbonne and thus became the hallmark of Catholic printers. The edict also includes a clause for Lyon which had neither a local Parlement nor University, a point which confirms that the Parlement extended its authority over the printing of books beyond Paris.

⁶ Higman, Censorship and the Sorbonne, pp. 15, 52, 61-2.

The successful censorship in Paris provoked the exile of many printers to Geneva, such as Jean Crespin, Conrad Badius and Robert Estienne, who added their expertise and funds to those of Jean Girard. The other consequence of effective censorship was that the trade in Genevan books went underground and it was increasingly difficult for the officials to find and therefore identify books to ban.⁷ Despite the persecutions, Protestant elements among the Parisian printing industry were not eliminated until the massacre of St Bartholomew.⁸ Furthermore, the business relationships that 'Catholic' printers entertained with Protestant printing centres, even after the beginning of the war, suggest that financial gain superseded confessional divisions,⁹ and the fact that the Conseil de Genève authorised Genevan printers to produce Catholic works after 1573 suggests that the same was true on the Protestant side.¹⁰ The increasing number of booksellers who began to escape the tight grip of the censoring bodies also made effective censorship increasingly difficult, (there could have been up to 1000 booksellers in Paris at the beginning of the seventeenth century).¹¹ Furthermore the enforcement of censorship was rendered largely ineffectual by the lack of co-operation between the Crown on the one hand, and the censoring bodies, the Parlement and the Sorbonne, on the other.

The Parlement came into conflict with the Crown when Catherine de Médicis appointed one of its members, Michel de l'Hôpital, as chancellor in June 1560. Members of the Parlement resented his appointment since he was the first chancellor

⁷ Higman, Censorship and the Sorbonne, p. 69.

⁸ Pallier, 'Les réponses catholiques', p. 329.

⁹ Denis Pallier, 'Les impressions de la Contre-Réforme en France et l'apparition des grandes companies de libraires parisiens', Revue Française d'Histoire du Livre, 31 (1981), 215-273, p. 249.

¹⁰ Pallier, 'Les réponses catholiques', p. 329.

¹¹ Jeffrey K. Sawyer, Printed Poison: Pamphlet Propaganda, Faction Politics, and the Public Sphere in Early Seventeenth-Century France (Oxford, 1990), p. 56.

who had not been appointed from the position of First President of the Parlement.¹² Michel de l'Hôpital was the chief instrument of Catherine de Médicis's conciliatory politics which clashed with the opinion of the majority of the members of Parlement. Parlement had suffered a crisis after it had been purged of its 'heretical' elements which culminated with the execution of Anne du Bourg.¹³ This had been a major victory for the ultra-Catholic members of the Parlement who did not approve of the change of policy at court, especially after the Tumult of Amboise in March 1560.

The traditional control of the Parisian institutions on the printing industry changed with the Edict of Moulins in 1566 when the Crown became the sole dispenser of privilèges.¹⁴ The mechanisms of censorship, developed during the reign of François I and Henri II in response to the Protestant threat, had previously been in the hands of the Sorbonne and the Parlement. They were reclaimed by the Crown as they could just as easily be turned against disaffected Catholics who disapproved of the official policy of conciliation than against Protestants. This is particularly true of the reign of Henri III, who used these prerogatives against the League, but it could be argued that this was already taking place during the reign of Charles IX. This conflict between the traditional censors, the Parlement and University of Paris, and the Crown has its origins in the year 1562 at the time of promulgation of the Edict of January. According to Geneviève Guilleminot-Chrétien, the publication of the Edict of January, authorized by the Crown when it had not been ratified by the Parlement, was a stepping stone towards the Edict of Moulins.¹⁵

¹² Nancy L. Roelker, One king, one faith : the Parlement of Paris and the religious reformations of the sixteenth century (Berkeley, 1996), p. 241.

¹³ J. H. Shennan, The Parlement of Paris (London, 1968), p. 207.

¹⁴ Denis Pallier, Recherches sur l'Imprimerie à Paris pendant la Ligue, 1585-1594 (Geneva, 1976), pp. 20, 37.

¹⁵ Geneviève Guilleminot-Chrétien, 'Le contrôle de l'édition en France dans les années 1560: la genèse de l'édit de Moulins', in P. Aquilon and H-J. Martin (eds), Le Livre dans l'Europe de la Renaissance: Actes du XXVIIIe Colloque international

This is the context in which Catholic authors, whose works constitute the centre of interest of this thesis, operated. Unlike Germany, the printing press in France was in the hands of the traditionalists who, if anything, were so averse to the policy of conciliation of the Médicis regency that they often openly wrote or preached against it. The efforts of these authors often went against the grain of official royal policy for much of the reign of Charles IX which gave their arguments all the more urgency. Increasingly, the anti-Protestant pamphlets were directed against the royal policy of conciliation, denouncing the edict of pacification which betrayed the Catholic cause. Heralding the development of the League which openly turned against the Crown, these pamphlets were as much a protest literature as were Protestant productions. The fact that these books were promoted by the Sorbonne and the Parlement of Paris does not mean that they were officially sanctioned by the Crown. On the contrary, there is strong evidence which warrants further study that a number of Parisian printers, notably Chesneau and Chaudière, were in the entourage of the Guise. From 1562 onwards the Crown gradually reclaimed the prerogatives over censorship which it had granted to the Sorbonne and the Parlement, which culminated in the Edict of Moulins in 1566.

The unsuitability of the ‘German paradigm’ for the French Reformation could not be any better demonstrated. When in Germany, the evangelical authors out-published their Catholic opponents many times over, in France, Catholic authors matched and often bested their Protestant opponents in terms of output throughout the religious wars.¹⁶ In Germany, Catholic authors were hard put to find publishers whereas in France the orthodox cause enjoyed the whole-hearted support of the Paris printing industry. In Germany, Luther was opposed by a small number of theologians who moved beyond the traditional Latin only with the greatest reluctance, whereas in France the vernacular was adopted from a very early stage, and arguably before the outset of the Reformation.

Why then, has this body of literature received so little attention? In the absence

d’Etudes humanistes de Tours (Nantes, 1988), 378-385.

¹⁶ Authors such as Pierre Doré and René Benoist were extremely prolific (the FRB).

of a usable bibliography of sixteenth-century French Reformation material, it is very difficult to reconstruct the full picture of the confessional debate. Given the imbalance in the historiography, the work of a large number of very prominent Catholic figures like Antoine de Mouchy, Robert Ceneau, or René Benoist has been virtually ignored. By contrast, the work of relatively obscure secondary figures of the Protestant movement have been recently edited and published.¹⁷ Of little interest to literary historians, those Catholic authors who have been the subject of some scholarly attention are systematically denigrated even by those who have studied them. Thus Giese, author of a bibliography of Artus Désiré: ‘He distinguished himself less for his intellectual qualities than for the violence and intransigence of his attitude’.¹⁸ I should like to argue, having read a substantial proportion of these men’s writings, that this is unfair and springs from an historiographical bias rather than familiarity with the sources. The intellectual qualities of two of these authors, Antoine de Mouchy and Robert Ceneau, were noted at Trent by an Italian cardinal which suggests that these polemical authors were men of exceptional talent. Their participation in the council of Trent also suggests that these men were prominent members of the Church who were handpicked to defend the Gallican Church. Far from being marginal figures of the Church, these polemical authors were on the contrary pillars of the establishment and represented the ‘parti conservateur’ identified with the Sorbonne and the Parlement of Paris.

The distinctions that were drawn between Protestant and Catholic mentalités are largely arbitrary and flow from the Enlightenment identification of the Reformation with reason and Catholicity with superstition. As it will be argued in the

¹⁷ The publishing house Droz has made a virtue of editing these texts. For a recent example see the anonymous Discours merveilleux de la vie, actions et deportements de Catherine de Médicis, Roynemère edited by Nicole Cazauran (Geneva, 1995) which is ‘the most vitriolic attack’ on Catherine de Médicis according to R. J. Knecht, Catherine De’ Medici (London, 1998), p. 285.

¹⁸ F. S. Giese, Artus Désiré Priest and Pamphleteer of the Sixteenth Century (Chapel Hill, 1973), p. 35.

following chapter, this identification clearly transpires in the historiography of religious violence. The analytical chapters which follow provide numerous examples of the cross-fertilization between the Catholic and Protestant mental worlds which essentially drew from the same sources. The Catholic polemic was at once grounded in tradition, drawing from familiar arguments which had been available to previous generations of writers, and contemporary, demonstrating the ability to exploit and respond to every twist and turn of new circumstances and events. The polemical material which form the central focus of this study, for the most part, had not been read since the sixteenth century, let alone been known. The themes laid out in the analytical chapters were drawn from a sample of about a hundred titles, overwhelmingly Catholic in persuasion, the dates of publication of which are concentrated around the key period between 1557 and 1572. This period is framed by two determining events, the affair of the rue St Jacques in September 1557 when a clandestine Calvinist meeting was discovered in Paris, and the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day in August 1572. Between these two symbolic events, a rhetoric of exclusion was spun by these Catholic authors who concentrated on portraying the Protestants in the worse possible light. Whether they achieved their aims can be determined from the close analysis of the content of these works which follows.

Chapter 1: The problem of violence during the French Wars of Religion.

It is very difficult for the modern historian to imagine what the violence of the French Wars of Religion must really have been like. Perhaps the recent adaptation to the screen of Alexandre Dumas' novel La Reine Margot (Patrice Chereau, 1993), can provide at least a glimpse of its full horror.¹ The press of Huguenots in the entourage of Henri of Navarre being thrown on the spears of the Paris watch or the random killing of innocents in the streets, makes a vivid impression on the viewer. Images, albeit cinematic ones, make a stronger impression than contemporary accounts of the massacres or journals of the period, and the spectator cannot help thinking: how could this ever happen? It is only recently that historians have taken this question seriously and tried to answer it. It is a particularly knotty problem to which a whole section of the historiography of the French Wars of Religion is devoted.

The massacre of St Bartholomew's Day has always excited the imagination. The novel of Alexandre Dumas is only one of many fictional accounts that this event inspired.² The task of explaining an event which began to be popularised and distorted almost as soon as it took place is a particularly difficult one. One can speculate on who was responsible, whether it was Catherine de Médicis, Charles IX, the Duc de Guise, or all three, all hypotheses which have been put forward over the years. No one knows what went on behind closed doors in the palace on the night of the 24 August 1572. What is known is that a surgical strike intended to take out the Huguenot noblemen in the entourage of Henri de Navarre, notably Coligny, degenerated into a free for all massacre of the Protestant population of Paris by their Catholic neighbours. If what can be considered as an act of war had not gone wrong, St Bartholomew's Day would probably be a footnote in history books. What struck the imagination of Dumas and still fascinates the spectator of the film 'La Reine

¹ Alexandre Dumas, La reine Margot (Paris, 1845).

² Philippe Joutard, Janine Estèbe et al. (eds), La Saint-Barthélemy: Ou les résonances d'un massacre (Neuchâtel, 1976), pp. 116-7.

Margot' is the seemingly unprovoked violence directed at French Protestants. It is this very violence which historians who have written on the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day have found difficult to explain.

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For the sake of brevity, only the historiography of the past 30 years, since publication of Janine Garrisson's seminal work, Tocsin pour un Massacre (1968), will be reviewed here.³ Characteristically for this period, the antagonism between Catholics and Protestants has been interpreted along social and economic lines, like grain riots, as a manifestation of a 'class war'. The victims of St Bartholomew's Day massacre were described as rich Huguenots who were resented for their wealth rather than their religion. This school of thought derives from the premise that there was a social factor in the adherence to Protestantism, which has been the subject of much controversy and debate. The consensus now seems to be that the evidence is much too sketchy to support the predominance of any one social group in the makeup of French Protestantism.⁴ Historians have even questioned the relevance of social factors, as religion seems to be coming back centre stage in the historiography of the French Wars of Religion.⁵

In her seminal article 'Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France', Natalie Davis departed from the traditional explanations of religious riots.⁶ She challenged the idea that violence was motivated by class conflict and suggested that there was a cultural facet to violence, which had been overlooked. Davis turned

³ Janine Garrisson-Estèbe, Tocsin pour un massacre ou la saison des Saint-Barthélemy (Paris, 1968).

⁴ Mark Greengrass, The French Reformation (Oxford, 1987), pp. 46-7.

⁵ Mack P. Holt, 'Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion', FHR, 18 (1993), 524-551.

⁶ Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France', P&P, 59 (1973), 51-91.

for the first time to the ritual signification of the violence of the French Wars of Religion and suggested that popular violence was inspired by official acts of violence perpetrated on criminals and heretics in public executions. In many ways the crowd felt that it was merely extending the mechanism of justice by taking the law into its own hands and passing judgement on heretics. This occurs, Davis argues, when official mechanisms for the persecution of heresy are seen to be failing and the crowd appropriates them for itself. The timing of religious riots does not coincide with the rise in grain prices, which was one of the arguments of the 'traditional explanation', but with religious rituals. The violence itself is described as ritual, the elements of which are borrowed from public executions, liturgy and popular culture. To quote Davis's own definition of the rites of violence:

I would suggest that they can be reduced to a repertory of actions, derived from the Bible, from the liturgy, from the action of political authority, or from the traditions of popular folk justice, intended to purify the religious community and humiliate the enemy and thus make him less harmful.

Davis also notes a distinction between Catholic and Protestant violence where the Catholics attacked the physical body of their victims whereas Protestants were more interested in objects and symbols. In this sense priests would have been the victims of Protestant attacks, not as individuals but as symbols of authority of the Roman Catholic Church.⁷ These are interesting avenues of thought which, as we shall see, have been developed by other historians, notably by David Nicholls and Denis Crouzet.⁸

The publication of 'Rites of Violence' provoked a reaction from Janine

⁷ N. Z. Davis, Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Oxford, 1995), pp. 155, 169, 173-4, 178.

⁸ David Nicholls, 'The theatre of martyrdom in the French Reformation', P&P, 121 (1988), 49-73; Denis Crouzet, Les Guerriers de Dieu: La violence au temps des troubles de religion vers 1525 - vers 1610 (2 vols, Paris, 1990).

Garrison who defended the traditional explanations of religious riots, notably the role of conjectural accidents.⁹ One of Garrison's strongest criticisms is that Davis excluded from the massacres the urban poor who, she argues, were the most likely to be affected by social and economic factors. Based on the assumption that social origin was not a factor in the adherence to Protestantism, Natalie Davis argued that Protestants were representative of all sections of urban society. Garrison, however, defended the idea that Protestants represented the élite and that class differences would have been a particular motivation in the urban massacres. Garrison does agree with Davis, however, that there is a noticeable difference between Catholic and Protestant violence, and adds that Protestant violence is pedagogic and demonstrative whereas Catholic violence is more purgative. Tentatively, Garrison writes that Catholics killed Protestants because 'they were not as others were, because they were different', which may not be as banal as it seems. Both agree that the difference between Catholic and Protestant violence could be ascribed to culture, an argument which has been further developed by Denis Crouzet.

These approaches, the socio-economic represented by Garrison, or the cultural represented by Davis, despite their differences, have something in common. Both attempt to provide a 'rational' explanatory framework for the otherwise incomprehensible violence of the French Wars of Religion, as though the incomprehensibility of violence would be mitigated if its perpetrators had good economic or social motives. This paradigm is summarized by Natalie Davis who provides an alternative explanation to the social-economic ones: 'To social historians it is the seeming irrationality of most sixteenth-century religious riot that has been puzzling Finally we may see their violence, however cruel, not as random and limitless but as aimed at defined targets and selected from a repertory of traditional punishments and forms of destruction'.¹⁰

⁹ Janine Estèbe, 'Debate: The Rites of Violence, Religious riot in Sixteenth-Century France, A Comment' followed by N. Z. Davis 'A Rejoinder', *P&P*, 67 (1975), 127-135.

¹⁰ Davis, *Society and Culture*, p. 154.

A more recent contender for the explanation of religious violence, however, has chosen to do away with reason altogether by pointing out what everyone else had missed out: the fact that in all attempts to explain religious violence, the word 'religious' had been ignored. Denis Crouzet dismisses the need to produce a rational explanation for religious violence, because as violence for God, with God and in God it belongs to a realm which operates beyond reason: the divine. Crouzet does not mean this literally, of course, but uses this phrase to describe what goes on in the minds of the actors of religious violence. To him, there are no motivations for the massacres of the French Wars of Religion, other than religion. For this reason Crouzet is very critical of all the approaches mentioned above and dismisses them as symptomatic of 'a history without God'. Crouzet criticizes the social interpretations of religious violence, denying its 'religious' specificity.

Denis Crouzet has elaborated, in his Guerriers de Dieu, an overarching theory which aims at explaining the astonishing violence of the Wars of Religion, as well as the appeal of the Reformed faith. His analysis is exclusively context-based and is a refutation of the 30 years or so of social historiography which has attributed religious violence to social or political tensions. His view, in short, is that the degree of violence of the French Wars of Religion can be explained only through the understanding of the 'discourse' of the times. The answer is not to be found in the social, political or confessional tensions of the 1560s, but in the eschatological literature which had gathered momentum during the previous 40 years. This 'genre' of eschatological writings would have driven the 'anguish', which we are told pervaded the religious life of the laity, to a head, culminating in the physical expression of these emotions through religious violence, on both sides of the confessional divide.

Crouzet is characteristically non-judgemental of the authors who provide him with his source material, and rehabilitates Catholic pamphleteers such as Artus Desiré, who has been labelled as dim-witted and vulgar.¹¹ Seen within the context of the fear of the Last Judgement, Desiré is described as a 'prophet of the Apocalypse',

¹¹ Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. pp. 61, 75, 191; II. p. 287.

and his vulgarity ascribed to his anguish. He equally refrains from pronouncing an opinion on the political aspect of iconoclastic riots which shook the south east on the eve of the civil wars. These riots had previously been interpreted, by Janine Garrisson-Estèbe, as 'social' in nature rather than 'religious'. Instead, Crouzet prefers the influence of the eschatological preaching of Thomas Illyricus, who died long before the events, to more obvious or prosaic explanations. These two aspects, which by no means do justice to the whole book, bring up two historiographical problems which are worthy of attention. On one hand Crouzet is right in saying that the study of pamphlet literature so far has been one-sided and that far too little attention has been paid to Catholic authors. On the other hand, the prominent role that Crouzet gives to so-called 'prophets of the Apocalypse', like Thomas Illyricus, is perhaps detrimental to his argument.

The presence of Thomas Illyricus on the first page of Crouzet's second book, La nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy, indicates the centrality of this character to Crouzet's thought. Crouzet seems to ascribe much potency to the preaching of a man whose influence he argues could be felt more than two generations after his death. According to Crouzet, this man started preaching in 1518 at Condom, attracting his audience in tens of thousands, and preached subsequently in Bordeaux and Toulouse against the newly publicised ideas of Luther. Already in Les Guerriers de Dieu, Crouzet assigns the violence of the 1550s and 60s in the south of France to the preaching of Illyricus:

Et il me semble que, sans tomber dans un déterminisme primaire, l'on peut établir un lien de cause à effet entre cette imprégnation par un discours d'angoisse et de culpabilisation, et la dynamique massive de libération de l'angoisse qui s'articule à la poussée rapide et radicale du calvinisme durant les années 1555-1561.¹²

In La nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy, Crouzet outlines an evolution which culminates with the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day and, again, begins with the preaching of Illyricus at Condom in November 1518: 'Cette histoire pourrait alors

¹² Crouzet, Les Guerriers de Dieu, I. pp. 515, 526.

avoir dessiné ses premiers contours tôt et bien loin de Paris, dès le 27 octobre 1518 quand, monté sur un âne, le cordelier Thomas Illyricus entre dans la ville de Condom auréolé d'une réputation de prophète'.¹³

The eschatological anguish that Crouzet describes so eloquently would have had its root in the religious uncertainties of the final decades of the fifteenth century, finding its full expression in the confessional conflicts of the sixteenth century. This interpretation is in direct opposition to social and cultural explanations, replacing them with the fear of the Last Judgement as the only explanation for the violence of the French Wars of Religion.

His narrative account of the events themselves is interspersed with extracts of Catholic propaganda, and Biblical references, in a bid to show the relevance of 'stereotypes of a collective memory of prophetic writings'. A certain coherence is outlined between the descriptions of the Huguenots in Catholic sermons and polemic and violence carried out in urban massacres. Crouzet is the first to admit that it is unlikely that the perpetrators of these crimes knew the Old Testament prophets, but is adamant in calling upon a collective memory of 'prophetic representation': 'Il me semble impossible que ces rituels d'extermination ne se raccrochent pas aux stéréotypes d'une mémoire collective de la Parole des prophètes de Dieu'.¹⁴

That the description of ritual violence in contemporary accounts reflect a mixture of the imaginary and the real is obvious. Whether these accounts reflect the imagination of the chroniclers or that of the perpetrators, however, is something to be considered carefully. Denis Crouzet painstakingly establishes a 'rationale' which would account for the apparent irrationality of the religious violence, without resorting to social and cultural explanations. But the stress he places on the impact of eschatological preaching, however fascinating and revealing it may be, does not leave any room for more straightforward explanations.

¹³ Denis Crouzet, La nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy: un rêve perdu de la renaissance (Paris, 1994), p. 15.

¹⁴ Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. p. 247.

Crouzet is the first historian to construct a systematic argument explaining the explosion of religious violence in sixteenth-century France. As such, he is in the difficult position of having to face the criticisms of all those who did not have his courage, and should be given the credit that he is due. The complexity of Crouzet's ideas is reflected in his use of language which is sometimes somewhat opaque. It is nonetheless clear that Crouzet describes France in the sixteenth century as a civilization of anguish where everyone was afraid of the Last Judgement. Crouzet explains the rise of Calvinism by the fact that it provided a désangoissement to its adherents whose anxiety was relieved. This argument is not new and can be found in the work of Jean Delumeau, among others, who argued that Luther's sola fide was a specific remedy to anguish.¹⁵ An obvious implication of this argument, which is left unexplored, is that Catholicism could not fulfil this role. It also implies that people were more afraid of the end of time in the sixteenth century than at any other time in the history of Christendom. It seems difficult to accept the specificity of the sixteenth century in terms of its eschatology, since no period of history (including our own) is devoid of apocalyptic fears. What Crouzet is arguing about the sixteenth century is also true of the Middle Ages as Mark Greengrass argues in his review of Les Guerriers de Dieu.¹⁶ What is specific to the sixteenth century is that apocalypticism found new means of expression in print which were unavailable to the medieval peddlers of doom, and Crouzet's impressive bibliography lists many printed astrological tracts which add credibility to his argument. Crouzet argues that the success of this genre is an indication that France was a 'civilization of astrological anguish' even before the beginning of the Reformation in France.¹⁷ This numerical

¹⁵ Jean Delumeau, Naissance et affirmation de la réforme (Paris, 1965), pp. 48, 55; J. Delumeau, La Peur en Occident, XVe-XVIIIe siècles (Paris, 1980); Steven Ozment, Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland (London, 1975), p. 42.

¹⁶ M. Greengrass, 'The Psychology of Religious Violence', FH, 5 (1991), no. 4, 467-474, p. 472.

¹⁷ Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. p. 131.

approach is problematic at best as the selection of a particular genre of printed literature to the exclusion of any other might lead to gross generalisations if taken out of context. As it has been lucidly pointed out by Mark Greengrass: ‘When citing from such a vast mass of published materials over such a long chronology, it is easy to construct a plausible argument on the basis of small extracts from the text rather than to reflect the flavour of a text as a whole - or to rest too much by way of explanation upon one small point of reference’.¹⁸

A complete bibliography of sixteenth-century French religious books is currently in progress at the St Andrews Reformation Studies Institute. Preliminary statistics suggests that almanacs and astrological prophecies were not as prominent in the printed literature of the sixteenth century as Crouzet makes them out.¹⁹ Furthermore, Crouzet’s stress on the eschatological undertones of certain works has been questioned by other historians, notably by Mark Greengrass and Larissa Taylor. Another example is provided by Antoine de Mouchy’s Responce à quelque apologie (1558) which is given eschatological undertones by Crouzet: ‘Cette preuve, de Mouchy la découvre spécifiquement dans l’eschatologie néo-testamentaire, qui atteste que la fin du monde est proche et que ceux qui ne veulent plus, aujourd’hui, de l’Eglise catholique sont les faux prophètes ennemis de Dieu’.²⁰

This work is analysed in detail in the following chapters and a more sober reading reveals that de Mouchy was at once more prosaic and less subtle than Crouzet suggests. It is true that, as Crouzet points out, de Mouchy is calling for the persecution of Protestants but his justifications are not so much eschatological as traditional. De Mouchy was a sober, senior member of the Sorbonne, who defended the Gallican Church against the onslaught of the new religion. The instrumental role that is ascribed to him by Chandieu and de Bèze in the persecutions preceding the

¹⁸ Greengrass, ‘Psychology of Religious Violence’, p. 473.

¹⁹ Francis M. Higman, Piety and the People: Religious Printing in French, 1511-1551 (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 8-12.

²⁰ Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. p. 202.

Wars of Religion conjure up the image of an inquisitor rather than a 'prophet of the apocalypse'.

Crouzet was successful in putting eschatological anguish on the historiographical map of the French Wars of Religion, but whether it was as central as he makes it is a matter for serious consideration. Our own fears of a global ecological disaster on the eve of a new millennium should convince us that no historical argument can be built on the specificity of any period of history in respects of millenarianism. One could argue that apocalypticism has been part of human culture ever since men realised they were mortal: it is a lot easier to contemplate the end of all things than it is to contemplate one's own.

From the point of view of the authors I have outlined above, Crouzet is problematic since he specifically argues against a rationalization of religious violence. No rational explanation can be found (according to Crouzet) since those who took part in the massacres felt vindicated by God and motivated by the belief that the end was at hand. The work of Natalie Davis is built on the premise that religion is basically a social phenomenon and that religious rituals are ultimately concerned with this world. According to this school of thought, religion is inseparable from the community of believers and violence can be seen as justifiable in the defence of its boundaries from the pollution of heresy.²¹ Crouzet specifically rejects this Durkheimian school of thought and the utilitarianism and functionalism associated with it, as negating the specificity of religious violence which is conferred by its otherworldliness. Another major point of disagreement lies in the interpretation of the ritual aspects of religious violence which, to Crouzet, are prophetic. According to Crouzet, the failure to acknowledge the specificity of religious violence invalidates the work of his predecessors, like Janine Garrisson and Natalie Davis:

Il n'y aurait donc ni primitivisme, ni fonctionnalisme, dans le système d'une violence qui, en conséquence, ne pourrait être analysée que dans le champ spécifique du Sacré du XVIe siècle.

²¹ N. Z. Davis, 'The sacred & the body social in Sixteenth-Century Lyon', *P&P*, 90 (1981), 40-70, p. 63; *Culture and Society*, p. 157.

C'est parce que J. Garrisson-Estèbe et N. Z. Davis ont méconnu le panique catholique et la conscience prophétique qui étaient secrétés par les signes de Dieu, qu'elles en sont arrivées à exposer la violence des foules et individus de la religion ancienne dans une anthropologie certes différentielle, mais cependant réductrice, alors qu'elle se déroula dans une théophanie, dans la cristallisation de l'imaginaire sacré d'une société de crise.²²

A landmark in cultural anthropology, Natalie Davis's work has had the great merit of drawing attention to the similarity between cultural patterns and religious violence. Crouzet places himself in opposition to any cultural interpretation of religious violence when, for example, he denies the role of derision in the ritual murders of Huguenots:

Là toujours, à l'opposé de N. Z. Davis, je ne pense pas que l'ordonnement rituel ait eu pour fin d'humilier l'ennemi par la dérision. Au contraire, la violence ne cherche pas à faire rire les spectateurs; les violents ne veulent pas non plus rire des morts. Elle est représentation théâtrale du drame de l'Homme, de cette non-humanité au bord de laquelle son corps se place de façon permanente depuis la faute d'Adam, et dans laquelle se sont laissés tomber, selon les prophéties, ceux qui sont allés écouter les faux prédicateurs. ... Si la violence adopte les cris ou les symboles de la dérision, cela ne veut pas dire, répétons le, qu'elle mette en dérision l'hérétique, car la fonction de ces cris et symboles n'est que de signifier l'abandon de l'ennemi à son corps et aux tentations qui lui sont inhérentes, ainsi que l'implacable jugement que Dieu a exercé à son encontre.

Whereas derision is central to Davis's parallel between popular festivity and collective violence, Crouzet stresses the earnestness of the fear of the perpetrators of

²² Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. p. 235.

such atrocities.²³

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In defence of Davis's work, one should add the similarity between the debasement of Huguenots through implication of 'sexual promiscuity' and the popular custom of derisively portraying one's enemy as a lecher or a cuckold. Such was the sole purpose of the Charivari, well represented in all parts of Christendom, which featured the cuckold riding backwards on a donkey accompanied by the clatter of various kitchen implements to the great rejoicing of onlookers.²⁴ The social implication of such practices and the seasonal evocation of symbolic misrule and inversion during Carnival have been studied often enough to avoid the need for recapitulation here.²⁵ The theme of inversion and the world upside down, familiar to scholars of popular culture, features prominently in the polemic of the French Wars of Religion. Antoine Du Val's *Mirouer des calvinistes* (1559) provides a notable example: 'O que si aujourd'huy il estoit libre en France à un chacun vivre à sa fantasie, sans crainte & punition, combien en verroit on lever les cornes, combien verroit on de seditions, combien de dissensions & mutineries es maisons entre peres, meres, & enfans?'.²⁶

This familiar appeal to the cohesion of the 'great chain of beings' appeared whenever order was threatened. In this case the threat came from the Reformed faith which questioned the foundations of the social fabric. The cohesion of the social

²³ Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu*, I. pp. 233, 248, 255.

²⁴ Martin Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', *P&P*, 105 (1984), 79-113.

²⁵ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The idea of witchcraft in early modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997).

²⁶ Antoine du Val, *Mirouer des Calvinistes et Armure des Chrestiens, pour rembarre les Lutheriens & nouveaux Evangelistes de Genève* (Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1562), fol. 28^v.

fabric, even symbolic or imaginary, was at the centre of the procession of Corpus Christi. One is familiar with the importance of the eucharistic symbolism of the procession, reflecting the union of all Christians during Easter. After the fourth Lateran Council (1215), each Christian was bound to confess his sins before he could receive the body of Christ and be reunited to the great family of Christendom.²⁷ The importance of this process has been outlined by Barbara Diefendorf in Beneath the Cross (1991): ‘The Mass was thus expected to provide an emotional catharsis for its lay congregation and not simply to be perceived by them as a distant liturgical act’. And she has well established the synchronicity of the Corpus Christi processions held in Paris and religious violence on the eve of the first religious wars. In May 1562, the Corpus Christi sermon of the Cardinal de Lorraine was a combination of devotion to the real presence of Christ and encouragement to the people’s resistance while Condé’s army threatened the city.²⁸

It seems that this institution was a powerful vehicle for cohesion, on the one hand, but also a means of identifying the enemies of the community, on the other. Corpus Christi, like Carnival or Charivari, could turn from the expression of social cohesion into an opportunity for rebellion and revolt. A notorious example is provided by the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 in England which took place at the time of the feast of Corpus Christi.²⁹ The obvious dissimilarities between the French Wars of Religion and the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 should not deter us from identifying similarities. Both John of Gaunt and Admiral Coligny, for example, were identified as enemies of the community, the former by angry peasants and the latter by an official act of Parlement in 1569. Both men were executed in effigy in their absence, a symbolic act which was probably motivated by greed on both occasions: Gaunt’s

²⁷ John Bossy, ‘The Mass as a Social Institution 1200-1700’, P&P, 100 (1983), 29-61.

²⁸ Barbara B. Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris (Oxford, 1991), pp. 31, 65.

²⁹ Margaret Aston, ‘Corpus Christi and Corpus Regni: Heresy and the Peasants’ Revolt’, P&P, 143 (1994), 3-47.

palace was sacked by the crowd, while Coligny's property was confiscated by the Crown. When the rioters found John of Gaunt's house empty, they held one of his jackets up in the air and set it on fire, following the pattern of vicarious execution which is frequent in the religious struggles of the sixteenth century. When Coligny was accused of lèse-majesté after the battle of Jarnac in 1569, he was hanged in effigy by the people of Paris on the place de Grève.³⁰

The similarity between the burning of a straw man before the beginning of Lent during Carnival, and the 'real' execution of 'real' enemies (for legitimate or imaginary reasons) is more than anecdotal. In England, for example, straw Popes were frequently burned, during the war with Spain in the 1580s, which was the occasion for public rejoicing.³¹ In this light, Gaunt's jacket in 1381, Coligny's effigy in 1569, and the straw Popes in the 1580s were all enemies of the community and were ritually destroyed following the pattern found in Carnival.³² Natalie Davis's rites of violence has the merit of providing an explanation for the similarity between these apparently disparate phenomena. The similarities between mob violence, represented by the Peasants' Revolt, and officially sanctioned violence, demonstrated in Coligny's judgement in absentia, has been further explored by David Nicholls.

In many ways, the views of David Nicholls and Natalie Davis are complementary. Nicholls has argued in an article entitled 'The Theatre of Martyrdom' that the violence of urban massacres was inspired by repertoires of actions found in public executions. David Nicholls sharpens Davis's hypotheses by showing in detail how the actions of the crowd mirrored the officially sanctioned acts of cruelty known as the theatre of execution or martyrdom. David Nicholls describes how trials of heresy were staged to provide the spectacle of the humiliation of the

³⁰ Diefendorf, Beneath the cross, pp. 76, 84.

³¹ David Cressy, Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England (Berkeley, 1989).

³² Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Carnival: a people's uprising at Romans, 1579-1580 (London, 1980).

heretic. The theatre of execution borrowed from popular culture when, for example, clerical heretics were dressed up as fools and paraded through the streets before their execution.

Furthermore, Nicholls identifies the year 1562, the beginning of the Wars of Religion, as a watershed in the theatre of execution, after which date heretics were hanged rather than burned. Hanging was the punishment reserved for political crimes which is the category into which Protestantism fell after the outbreak of the Wars of Religion. This shift from religious to political crime was perhaps an attempt by officials to prevent spontaneous outbreaks of popular violence. David Nicholls noted that from about 1557 onwards, heresy trials were more likely to be the occasion of disorder as 'the audience at executions were no longer content to be mere spectators, but wanted to be executioners themselves'.³³ The increasingly participatory role of the audience in the theatre of public execution was also noted by Barbara Diefendorf. The fate of Huguenot prisoners was the occasion of friction between the crowd and the authorities who often prevented the prisoner from being summarily executed:

And on more than one occasion, the crowd became so unruly that it threatened to take the prisoner out of the hands of the executioners and attend to the burning itself. As the religious conflicts progressed, there were enough incidents of unruly mobs tearing down the bodies of executed heretics in order to mutilate them, drag them through the streets, or subject them to other atrocities that laws had to be passed forbidding such behavior.³⁴

This would have been a major concern for the authorities who strove to prevent spontaneous outbreaks of violence at public executions. Hanging, which was the fate reserved for political crimes, was less spectacular than burning which was reserved for heretics and part of the elaborate theatre of execution. The burning of heretics during the Middle Ages served a didactic function in which the spectators accepted

³³ Nicholls, 'The theatre of martyrdom', pp. 54, 56, 69.

³⁴ Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 53.

their role passively. It is clear that with the increase of religious tensions between 1557 and 1562, the theatre of execution was more likely to provoke rather than appease the population's lust for blood. Another argument for the abandonment of the theatre of execution was that these elaborate staged trials gave ammunition to the Protestants who started compiling martyrologies.³⁵ Orchestrated show-trials were no longer sufficient to appease the audience, and they increasingly turned into spontaneous and uncontrolled massacre. Whether the massacres reproduced Nicholls's theatre of execution or borrowed from Davis's rites of violence, or both, is unclear.

Ironically, the transition from burning to hanging gave no less occasion for disorder, as the bodies of the Protestants were taken from the places of execution to be the object of a number of desecrating rituals. This had been prevented before 1562 by the total annihilation of the body by fire. The desecration of the bodies was also carried out vicariously on effigies in the absence of the heretic, as was the case for Coligny in 1569.³⁶ His effigy was hanged and dragged through the streets by the people of Paris, a macabre rehearsal of the mutilation to which Coligny's body itself would be subject three years later.³⁷ According to Nicholls, this mechanism of vicarious execution denotes the symbolic nature of public execution, 'if an accused heretic could not be found, he or she was invariably executed in effigy, thereby underlining the ritual nature of the ceremony'.³⁸ This view is compatible with the assertion by Natalie Davis that the ritual elements of religious riots were inspired by the rites of violence of official executions. Retributory justice, such as the execution of Poltrot de Meré who was drawn and quartered on the place de Grève in March 1563, probably had more to do with the violence of the French Wars of Religion than

³⁵ Nicholls, 'Theatre of Martyrdom', p. 71.

³⁶ Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu*, I. p. 234.

³⁷ Diefendorf, *Beneath the cross*, pp. 76, 84.

³⁸ Nicholls, 'The theatre of martyrdom', pp. 54, 56.

‘a collective memory of prophetic writings’.³⁹

The emphasis on the period directly preceding the outbreak of the first War of Religion is crucial, since at this time, heresy became a political offence which was punished by hanging and was no longer the occasion for staged trials. As David Nicholls has shown, after that date Catholics were reluctant to create Protestant martyrs and saw the potential for propaganda which these trials provided to the Calvinist polemicists. The pattern laid out by Nicholls suggests that comedy and derision of the enemy worked only as long as the authorities were convinced everyone would get the joke. By 1562, the reluctance of the Parisian authorities to stage elaborate trials indicates that this was no longer the case. This indicates a shift from the medieval pattern of persecution when the Catholic Church was faced with the fact that Protestantism was more than just a mere ‘heresy’: ‘The theatre of martyrdom was at best an archaism, designed to be played in an ideologically constructed ideal society in which a united community, where everybody knew their place, expelled and extirpated a small number of disturbers of order’.⁴⁰ At a time when this order was threatened by a competing creed, propagated by the organized Calvinist Church, the symbolism expressed in staged trials could easily turn into the reality of unlicensed massacres.

Another example of how the issues explored by Crouzet could be more prosaically explained is the idea that the Protestants were lecherous. This stereotype is exploited by nearly all Catholic polemicists opposed to toleration on the eve of the civil war. Such authors were Antoine de Mouchy, Robert Ceneau, Esprit Rotier, Jean de La Vacquerie and Antoine du Val, all mentioned by Crouzet as members of an ‘intelligentsia of prophets of violence’.⁴¹ These authors, who had been previously dismissed as ‘embarrassing’ and worthless for the history of the Reformation, were rehabilitated by Crouzet who mentions their writings only within the context of the

³⁹ Diefendorf, Beneath the cross, p. 71.

⁴⁰ Nicholls, ‘Theatre of Martyrdom’, p. 72.

⁴¹ Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. pp. 201-2.

eschatological anguish: 'Il est hors de doute, donc, que la période décisive des clivages de religion a vu se développer un système de représentation catholique qui fonctionne sur un axe parallèle à celui que propose l'astrologie judiciaire'.⁴² Not only did the writings of these authors run parallel to prophetic writings but they had nothing in common with them. Within the scope of this study, by no means exhaustive, not a single instance of eschatological prophecy was found in the anti-Protestant works of these authors.

Their writings provide instead insights into the Catholic imaginary perceptions of the Protestants. The Reformed conventicles which were held in secret were thought to be the scene of sexual orgies and excuses for depravity, which contrasted with the false restraint of the Protestants in daylight. This view was published in 1558 by Antoine de Mouchy and Robert Ceneau, both prominent members of the Gallican Church who represented it at Trent, in the aftermath of the affair of the rue St Jacques.⁴³ This view in print is paralleled by the behaviour of the mob towards the women who were caught during a secret meeting in the rue St Jacques and treated like whores.⁴⁴ This is reported through various sources (Catholic and Protestant) relating the incident which suggests that it was at the origin of much prejudice.⁴⁵

The modes of expression of religious violence were therefore cultural in nature, borrowed from a pattern which had been set down in generations of practice. The stereotyping of Protestants in Catholic polemic is similar to the cultural process of scapegoating familiar to all students of medieval heresy. The use of medieval stereotypes by Catholic pamphleteers points to a cultural rather than eschatological explanation for the violence of the French Wars of Religion. A cultural approach

⁴² Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. pp. 191, 205.

⁴³ G. Wylie Sypher, 'Faisant ce qu'il leur vient a plaisir: The image of Protestantism in French Catholic Polemic on the Eve of the Religious Wars', SCJ, 11 (1980), no. 2, 59-84, p. 63.

⁴⁴ Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 50; Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. p. 244.

⁴⁵ Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 54.

might, in the end, provide a more convincing explanatory tool than Crouzet's 'eschatological anguish'.

It must be said at this point that Crouzet is particularly interested in Catholic violence, whereas for Natalie Davis, the rites of violence apply equally to both Catholics and Protestants. Crouzet's approach to Protestant violence is altogether different, and much less radical and original, than his approach to Catholic violence. Essentially, Crouzet's views on Protestant violence do not differ greatly from what Garrison or Davis have to say on the subject:

La violence réformée, iconoclaste ou meurtrière, ne peut être pensée que rationnellement, dans la mesure où les mécanismes mentaux qu'implique la conversion à la lumière de Vérité déterminent une mentalité rationnelle, et où la Vérité nomme rationnellement à l'homme ce que doit être sa vie; elle possède une finalité utopique qui est de promouvoir, dans le monde même, une existence humaine épousant et réalisant les préceptes de la Loi.

Se devine, en cette tension de programmation réfléchie de l'action, une certaine 'modernité'.⁴⁶

This is reminiscent of the theory of Max Weber who in his much debated essay 'The Protestant ethic and the spirit of Capitalism' makes the Protestants the agents of the introduction of Zweckrationalität into the world.⁴⁷ The word Zweckrationalität can be translated loosely as denoting instrumental reason which is geared towards the pursuit of defined goals, or to put it more prosaically, the means to an end.⁴⁸ Although Weber was writing about Lutheranism and nineteenth century American

⁴⁶ Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. pp. 625-6.

⁴⁷ Max Weber, L'éthique Protestante et L'esprit du Capitalisme (Paris, 1965).

⁴⁸ Gellner, 'L'animal qui évite les gaffes', p. 40.

sects, his conclusions were applied by historians to Protestantism as a whole.⁴⁹ As an herald of ‘progress’, Protestantism was identified with rationalism and positivism, which are the hallmarks of nineteenth century historiography. These values were a looking glass which distorted the historians’ reading of events and left a long-lasting legacy on future historiography. In many ways the historiography of the Reformation still suffers from this prejudice, as noted by Mark Greengrass: ‘Historians have tended to write the history of the French Reformation through the eyes of the protagonists of change’.⁵⁰ This has also been noted by James K. Farge:

En raison d’une absence d’étude scientifique des élites et des institutions conservatrices du seizième siècle, les historiens ont parfois été amenés à faire leurs les opinions des hommes ‘nouveaux’.... Si l’on ajoute à cette négligence le danger omniprésent pour tout historien d’adopter la perspective de son propre siècle, on se trouve alors menacé de mésestimer les traditionnalistes, et de les juger tout simplement comme ennemis des ‘lumières’ et du progrès. On court ainsi le risque de prendre à tort l’histoire d’une mentalité minoritaire pour l’histoire de l’époque entière.⁵¹

Although Crouzet has corrected this deficiency to a certain extent by paying more attention to the agents of tradition, he nonetheless perpetuates the Weberian paradigm by arguing that Protestant violence was more ‘rational’ than Catholic violence. Protestant violence is described as ‘human, rationalistic, cool - calculated and targeted to achieve a Protestant Reformation’⁵², clearly zweckrational, means to an end.

⁴⁹ Max Weber, Les Sectes Protestantes et L’Esprit du Capitalisme (Paris, 1965).

⁵⁰ Greengrass, ‘Psychology of Religious Violence’, p. 467.

⁵¹ Farge, Le Parti Conservateur, p. 25. See above, p. 3, and below, p. 213.

⁵² Greengrass, ‘Psychology of Religious Violence’, p. 469.

Mark Greengrass has offered a balanced view of religious violence, in an article dealing with the events in Toulouse in May 1562, where he rehabilitates the conjectural accidents defended by Garrison.⁵³ In this article, Mark Greengrass shows that practices associated with Davis's rites of violence (recourse to fire, the scouring of the sewers where Protestants were hiding, and the dumping of bodies in the river) may have been dictated by the pragmatism of war rather than by rituals of cleansing. Furthermore, Greengrass observes that a severe outbreak of plague in 1557 was probably a factor in the intensification of religious tensions, and that a rise in grain prices contributed to bringing the conflict to an end.

In addition to rehabilitating the 'conjectural accidents' and criticizing Davis's rites of violence, Mark Greengrass reproduces the Weberian paradigm in marking the difference between Catholic and Protestant violence:

The Protestants took greater care with human life, particularly at the beginning of the rising. Their coup was staged with little killing. They were considerate towards prisoners, banishing rather than executing them and attempting to convert them when possible.... For many Catholics, on the other hand, this was a 'holy war' against both traitors and infidels. There was no reason to spare the lives of those who were captured or to seek to redeem the enemy.⁵⁴

* * *

So there seems to be a consensus, as far as Protestant violence is concerned, between all the various explanations for religious violence illustrated above. The topic of Catholic violence, on the other hand, seems to be much less consensual. Natalie Davis, for example, diverges from Garrison's interpretation of St Bartholomew as an attempt by the Catholics to exterminate the Huguenots as a race:

⁵³ M. Greengrass, 'The Anatomy of a Religious Riot in Toulouse in May 1562', *JEH*, 34 (1983), no. 3, 367-391.

⁵⁴ Greengrass, 'Anatomy of a Religious Riot', pp. 369, 385, 389.

‘There seems to me very little evidence, however, that the Catholics killers wished to exterminate “a foreign race”. This exaggerates and misreads the evidence in regard to the killing of pregnant women and the castration of males. Heretics were hated for their polluting, divisive, and disorderly actions, not as a “race”’.⁵⁵

For Davis, Protestants were not killed for what they were but for what they believed, whereas for Garrison Protestants were killed ‘because they were not as others were, because they were different’.⁵⁶ What seems a minor disagreement may offer, on the contrary, a considerable hindsight for understanding Catholic violence. As Garrison suggests, Protestants were not killed for their faith but for what they were perceived to be. It is clear on all parts that it is the physical presence of Protestants itself that gave rise to Catholic hatred, unlike Protestant violence that was directed at symbols, images and figures of authority.⁵⁷ Protestants were killed for what the Catholics believed them to be, not for what they believed: not as human beings but as monsters. If we accept this premise, then the demonization of Protestants in the Catholic polemic is absolutely crucial to the understanding of the violence of the French Wars of Religion. The members of the Faculty of Theology of Paris, the Sorbonne, who demonized the Protestants, drew from an earlier tradition of persecuting heretics.

A major characteristic of Catholic polemic is its reliance on the authority of precedents which were the building blocks of the legitimacy of any argument during this period. Catholics plundered the history of the Roman Catholic Church’s repeated brush with heresy from the third century onward, with a particular peak during the central Middle Ages. The lengthy arguments which had been used against a variety of heretical groups, ranging from Donatists, Manichees, Albigensians and Waldensians to mention only the most prominent, were quoted out of context and

⁵⁵ Davis, Society and Culture, p. 160.

⁵⁶ Estèbe and Davis, ‘Debate: The Rites of Violence’, pp. 130, 134.

⁵⁷ O. Christin, Une révolution symbolique: l’iconoclasme huguenot et la reconstruction catholique (Paris, 1991).

applied unashamedly to Protestants. Theological arguments grossly misrepresented the Reformed propositions so that they could fit the pattern of previous refutations. But what is more relevant to the problem of violence outlined above, Protestants were also compared to previous heretical groups on the grounds of their moral character.

This enabled the Catholic polemicists to use a register of ready-made stereotypes which had been applied to heretics before and allowed them to put down Protestantism to a mere repetition of history. This also placed them in a rhetorical position of superiority implying that since these heretical groups had been defeated before, Protestantism would soon know the same fate. A particularly strong case was made in this vein of the similarity between the Albigensian Crusade in the thirteenth century and the Protestant movement. It was first used in the wake of the tumult of Amboise in March 1560 and then elaborated upon in the thick of the Wars of Religion and during the League. Ironically, this kinship was embraced by the Protestants and was at the origin of the enduring myth that Albigensians had been forerunners of the Reformation.

Kinship with medieval heresy enabled Catholic polemicists to push forward a policy of intolerance in spite of the conciliatory effort of Catherine de Médicis and Michel de L'Hôpital. This radicalism, which is the hallmark of the members of the Sorbonne and Parlement of Paris and Toulouse, found resonance in the intransigence of the Guise faction which can be said to have been one of the brokers of religious war. But comparison with medieval heresy can also more tentatively be said to have played an undisputed role in the violence of anti-Protestant religious riots. The texts which inspired the Sorbonne belonged to a tradition which had been set up during the central Middle Ages at a time when orthodoxy was under threat from popular heresy. This period ranging between the two Lateran Councils of 1179 and 1215 has been described by Robert Moore as the time when a persecuting society was formed.⁵⁸ The relevance of this period of history to the problem of violence in the French Wars

⁵⁸ R. I. Moore, The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and deviance in western Europe 950-1250 (Oxford, 1987).

of Religion is demonstrated by the recurrence of a story which was used against heretics in France at the beginning of the twelfth century. Although this story has its roots in the persecution of Christians during the Roman Empire, it was particularly widespread during the Middle Ages. There are as many variations to this story as there are versions, but all share the belief that heretics met in private at night to have orgies and that children born as a consequence were ritually killed and eaten. The same story reappears in Catholic polemic in the context of a Protestant clandestine meeting which was discovered in the rue St Jacques in Paris in September 1557. This story was then circulated and peddled by Catholic authors and preachers and was soon accepted as true of all Protestant meetings.

This thesis is an attempt to show that the dissemination of these stories must have contributed to the violence that befell Protestants during the French Wars of Religion, and not least St Bartholomew's Day massacre. This would place much more responsibility on the Catholic authors, pamphleteers and preachers than has previously been suggested. So much is hinted at by Mark Greengrass in his review of Les Guerriers de Dieu who also intimates that France was still in the sixteenth century the persecuting society described by Moore:

In France, the public context must surely include, at the least, the institutions, ecclesiastical and lay, which had done so much, traditionally, to influence religious discourse. One historian of the central Middle Ages has recently argued, for example, that the pursuit of heresy was far from having 'popular' roots, although there may have been some grafted on at a later date. Its origins lay in a 'persecuting society', that is to say, a set of institutions and attitudes which were manipulated by governing groups to promote the need for a consensus in society at large through the preservation of the purity of the majority and the persecution of identifiable minorities. Transposed to the sixteenth century, was France not still a 'persecuting society'? Should we not look for at least some of the roots and chronology of 'panic mentality' in the instruments and individuals most engaged in the prosecution of Protestant heresy in sixteenth-century France?

The crisis of the French Wars of Religion could be explained by the breakdown of the mechanisms of the persecution of heresy in the sixteenth century.⁵⁹ It would have been replaced by the urban mobs who replaced the official mechanisms of the persecution of heresy. The kinship between Protestantism and medieval heresy, which is such a strong feature of Catholic polemic, suggests that there was a concerted effort by the Sorbonne to revive those mechanisms in the wake of the Calvinist challenge. But it did not lead to the endorsement of those mechanisms by the Crown, as it had been envisaged, but to the unlicensed massacres of the urban population. This would be explained by the lack of resolve of the Crown after the demise of Henri II in 1559, and indicate that the mechanisms found an outlet in the violence of the urban mob instead. This would be consistent with David Nicholls's theory of the decline around 1562 of the theatre of execution mentioned above.⁶⁰

This would also be consistent with the analysis of Natalie Davis who marks the beginning of religious violence at the point where the official persecuting mechanisms failed: 'Working from the crowd behaviour itself, I have merely stressed the fact that religious riot is likely to occur when it is believed that religious and/or political authorities are failing in their duties or need help in fulfilling them'.⁶¹

The understanding of the medieval mechanisms of persecution, from which Catholic polemical authors drew extensively, is therefore a valuable addition to the discussion outlined above. The portrayal of Protestants in Catholic polemic as medieval heretics and the dissemination of deeply ingrained stereotypes fuelled the notion that Protestants were not human beings but 'monsters'. This in turn enabled the Catholic urban mobs to take part in what Natalie Davis has called 'guilt free massacres' which benefited from the de facto assent of some members of the Sorbonne and Parlement of Paris. It should have become clear that the objectives of a portion of Catholic polemic was to apply the mechanisms of a persecuting society to

⁵⁹ Greengrass, 'Psychology of Religious Violence', pp. 472-3.

⁶⁰ Nicholls, 'Theatre of Martyrdom', p. 72.

⁶¹ Davis, Culture and Society, p. 169.

the new threat posed by Calvinism. It could be argued that the aim of these authors was to impose their own agenda of persecution on the Crown which had chosen to pursue the opposite policies of conciliation and toleration.

The effect that the dissemination of these ideas through print would have on the population at large were probably unforeseen by their authors. Nevertheless the use of medieval stereotypes to describe Protestants must have contributed to building a mental picture of Protestants as heretics and as such 'non human'. This would explain why Catholics had so little respect for human life during urban massacres and why they attempted to exterminate Protestants to the last man. This would be consistent with the observations of Natalie Davis who found that contrary to the desacralizing violence of Protestants which was directed towards objects and symbols, the mutilations of the Catholics were taken out on the bodies of their victims.⁶² These mutilations would have been the enactment in the flesh of what was first found in print: namely that Protestants were not human beings but monsters. The study of the mechanisms of stereotyping in Catholic printed polemic should further our understanding of violence in the French Wars of Religion.

This modest contribution to the subject of religious violence cannot compare favourably with the scope and richness of the works that are reviewed here. The stereotyping of Protestants should be added to the factors enumerated above, without superseding or nullifying them, but enriching our understanding of religious violence. This study rests on the reading of Catholic polemic printed between 1557 and 1572 particularly; a period which has been identified by historians as critical. Between those crucial years, Calvinism emerged from relative anonymity to become the banner under which a whole section of French society chose to break away from the consensus. At this time, members of the Sorbonne, self-appointed champions of orthodoxy, rose to the challenge with unprecedented vigour. Although polemic had been a familiar element of French print before 1555, it rose to prominence when the Genevan presses started producing en masse Protestant material intended for France.

This is also a time when the French Catholic community became increasingly

⁶² Davis, Culture and Society, p. 179.

aware of the presence of clandestine Protestant communities in its midst. Symptomatic of this awareness is the incident of the rue St Jacques in September 1557 when between three and four hundred Protestants were found conducting Reformed worship next door to the Sorbonne. In the ten years between the outbreak of the first War of Religion in 1562 and St Bartholomew's Day massacre in 1572, the character of Catholic polemic did not change significantly and merely repeated the themes which were drawn out during the preceding period. On the other side, Protestant printing changed dramatically at this time as the Genevan Reformers were torn between support and condemnation of the rebellion of the Prince of Condé. Needless to say, Protestant printing within France remained marginal and was concentrated around the strongholds of French Calvinism in the south and east of France.⁶³

It is therefore essential to analyse in detail the themes which were used by the Catholic polemicists, predominantly doctors of the Sorbonne, during this key period between 1557 and 1562. What emerges very strongly from this material is fear of the impact and popularity of Calvinism at this time, which was perhaps an exaggeration. It is as if those grave men of learning, repositories of knowledge and tradition, were taken by surprise by the scope and ambitions of the Calvinist Church. In concert with the Parlement of Paris, without the authorization with which no religious books could be legally printed in France, they set out to exploit their hold on the Parisian book industry.

Catholic printing at this time is characterised by the increasing number of works in the vernacular to counter the proselytising efforts of the Genevan presses, whereas before the middle of the century they had been the exception rather than the rule. Catholic printing seemed to be split equally between theological defences of tenets of the faith and very offensive (in both senses of the word) attacks on the character of the Protestants themselves. It is to this second class of writing that this work devotes most of its attention, although this distinction is an arbitrary one and

⁶³ Andrew Pettegree, 'Religious Printing in Sixteenth-Century France: the St Andrews project', *PHS*, 26 (1997), no. 5, 650-659.

many books actually contained elements of both. This aspect of Catholic polemic has probably been overlooked in the historiography because of its distasteful and embarrassing nature, which has been observed by a number of historians. In a 1980 article to which this work owes much of its inspiration, Wylie Sypher made inroads in the jungle of a polemical genre which had been previously ignored by historians of the French Wars of Religion. Although Wylie Sypher completely missed the mark when saying that this historiographical oversight had been caused by a ‘scarcity of surviving work’, he duly noted the disdain of many historians for this genre which ‘deliberately wallowed “in triviality, in filthy vulgarity”’.⁶⁴ Wylie Sypher brought for the first time the names of Antoine de Mouchy, Gentian Hervet, René Benoist, Jean de la Vacquerie, Antoine du Val, Jean Gay and Artus Desiré to the attention of the academic community. The significance of these authors has been acknowledged by historians since (notably by Denis Crouzet), and motivated much of this research.⁶⁵ Significantly, these authors were also among the better published of the period as the St Andrews Reformation Studies Institute bibliographical project, however incomplete, has already indicated.

As for the content developed in the hundreds of pages of these books, it cannot be done justice in the space allocated here. The most striking themes are outlined in chapters 2 to 4 with extensive recourse to examples and quotes from the text themselves. Chapters 5 and 6 are concerned by the impact and response that this polemic solicited, among the Protestants in particular and the Catholic readership in general. Chapter 2 deals with the portrayal of Protestants and Protestantism on the eve of the French Wars of Religion from the affair of the rue St Jacques to the outbreak of civil war. Chapter 3 explores the comparison between Protestantism and medieval heresy, concentrating of the Albigensian Crusade which seems to have been specific to the French Reformation. Chapter 4 deals with the theme of the world turned upside down, which has been touched upon above, particularly in relations to the perceived role of women in the Reformation. Moving from the specific

⁶⁴ Sypher, ‘The Image of Protestantism’, pp. 61-2.

⁶⁵ Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu*, I. pp. 201-6.

response to the comparison with the Albigensians, Chapter 5 explores the more general Protestant response to the Catholic polemic outlined in the preceding chapters. Finally Chapter 6 is an attempt to assess the impact and relevance of the Catholic portrayal of Protestantism on the emerging public opinion.

Chapter 2: Catholic polemic on the eve of the French Wars of Religion.

This chapter is concerned with the portrayal of Protestantism in the closing years of the reign of Henri II and during the ensuing period of political instability which followed his death up to the outbreak of the French Wars of Religion. Catholic authors deliberately exploited the clandestine nature of Protestant gatherings to accuse them of conducting orgies and, after the politicisation of the conflict, plot against the Crown. Accusations of orgies were not new and had been borrowed from the medieval tradition of accusing heretics and other minority groups of despicable crimes in order to turn public opinion against them. This provided their opponents with arguments, as unlike any other groups, Protestants were able to turn these accusations to their advantage as a sign of election and martyrdom. The accusation of a plot against the Crown, which was mixed with the topos of the orgy, was more difficult to dispel as the unstable political situation made it more plausible. The aim of these authors was to justify the persecution of Protestantism during the reign of Henri II, and forestall the efforts towards conciliation which were made during the regency of Catherine de Médicis. These accusations were published by the most committed anti-Protestants in the ranks of the Sorbonne and the Parlement of Paris, with the obvious aim of swaying public opinion and policy at Court against religious concord.

Although the themes of orgy and conspiracy overlap in the polemic of this period, there is a noticeable change in the tone of the polemic between the death of Henri II and the tumult of Amboise in March 1560. During this period, Protestants grew more confident and started assembling in public, which provoked a change in the Catholic polemical response. This chapter will therefore be concerned with the transition from the topos of the orgy to the emergence of the idea of a Protestant conspiracy against the Crown.

* * *

In the night of 4 September 1557, students of the Collège du Plessis stumbled upon a clandestine Protestant meeting in a house nearby where between three and four hundred people had gathered to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Many people were arrested, notably women, who were led through the assembled crowd. Subsequently

the rumour that they had assembled there to take part in an orgy was publicized by Catholic authors. By all accounts, this event marked the intensification of religious divisions and the stepping up of persecutions, as well as the beginning of a Catholic polemical campaign to revile the Protestants. The Catholic polemicists used this event as the basis for accusing Protestants of conducting orgies and engaging in acts of sexual promiscuity including adultery, incest, and sodomy. Accusations of ritual murder, infanticide and cannibalism appeared in the course of the controversy as the persecutions emboldened Catholic preachers and polemicists. The affair of the rue St Jacques was earmarked as a significant event in the history of persecution by the Protestants, and described by Barbara Diefendorf as contributing to the ‘intensification of religious hatreds’.¹

The Histoire Ecclésiastique relates that the women who were arrested were treated like whores in the belief that the people of the rue St Jacques had been taking part in an orgy:

Elles furent donc appellées putains, chargées de toutes sortes d’injures, outragées de coups, leurs acoustremens furent mis en pieces, leurs chapperons abbattus de dessus leurs testes, leurs cheveux arrachés & leurs visages souillés & couvers d’ordures & fange... la commune opinion estoit, qu’on s’estoit là assemblé pour faire un beau banquet & puis paillarder pesle mesle les chandelles estaintes.

The Histoire Ecclésiastique also identified the Catholic polemicists as the authors of these accusations which were disseminated in print in order to reach a wider audience:

Cependant le bruit couroit par tout de ceste prise & propos divers se tenoient de çà et de là, touchant ce qui s’estoit fait en

¹ Antoine de la Roche Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions, et martyrs de l’Eglise de Paris, depuis l’an 1557. Jusques au temps du Roy Charles neufviesme (Lyon), [Senneton freres], (1563); Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 50.

l'assemblée, & comme l'ignorance se fait aisement à croire le pis qu'elle peut de ceux qu'elle a en haine.... Les Curés & Prescheurs de leur costé employoient leurs prosnes & Sermons à imprimer ces mensonges au peuple.²

It was indeed the Catholic clergy who were responsible for the spreading of these rumours in print, and chief among them was Antoine de Mouchy (1494-1574), syndic of the Sorbonne, who had been designated by the King to lead the fight against heresy. In his Responce a quelque apologie (1558), de Mouchy reiterated the accusation in response to Protestant tracts which had been written in the wake of the affair of the rue St Jacques:

C'est que nous disons qu'ils s'assemblent du soir, en quelque maison secrettement, pour ouir de nuict quelque barbet, qui leur presche & lise quelque nouvelle doctrine, toutefois tres meschante & perverse, & apres leur faict (ainsi comme ils appellent) la cene. Et cela faict, ils se retirent de l'assemblée, ainsi que bon leur plaist, les uns avec les autres, aux chambres & lieux de ladicte maison ou ils sont assemblez: la ou ils demeurent secretement & à part, les hommes avec les femmes, faisant ce qu'il leur vient à plaisir, tout le reste de la nuict. Que s'ils ne sont contens de la nuict, pourront encores demeurer le jour ensemble, tant qu'ils voudront, car ils sont si charitables les uns envers les autres, qu'ils ne chassent personnes hors la maison: ains est permis aux hommes de hanter (s'ils veulent) avec les femmes: & aussi pareillement aux femmes avec les hommes.³

² Baum and Cunitz (eds), Histoire Ecclésiastique des Eglises Réformées au Royaume de France (3 vols, Paris, 1883), I. pp. 143-4.

³ Antoine de Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie que les heretiques ces jours passés ont mis en avant sous ce titre: Apologie ou deffence des bons Chrestiens contre les ennemis de l'Eglise catholique (Paris, Claude Frémy, 1558), sigs F4^{r-v}; Sypher, 'The image of Protestantism', p. 59.

De Mouchy was the most senior member of the Sorbonne, and acted as the grand Inquisitor of Paris, appointed to seek out heterodoxy among Catholics and Protestants alike. He was instrumental in the trial of Anne du Bourg, took part in the Colloquy of Poissy and the Council of Trent, and also wrote a number of theological treatises defending the tenets of Catholicism.⁴ The above piece responded to an anonymous Protestant tract, now lost, in defence of the accusations levelled at the Protestants after the affair of the rue St Jacques. De Mouchy's work was answered in turn by Nicolas des Gallars in the Seconde apologie ou defense des vrais chrestiens (1559), where he addressed de Mouchy directly:

Quant à l'impudente calomnie par laquelle tu nous accuses, que nous enseignons les jeunes femmes mariées à laisser leurs maris & leurs maisons la nuict, & aller és maisons estranges, & puis qu'en la predication on esteint les chandelles, afin qu'hommes & femmes se retirent és chambres pour se mesler ensemble en toute confusion, il ne me seroit besoing d'y repondre, si ce n'estoit qu'il est necessaire qu'on descouvre de plus en plus le venin qui sort de vos cervelles pourries, & de vos coeurs empunaisis de toute infection.⁵

It should be noted at this point that although de Mouchy had accused the Protestants of being promiscuous, it is the Protestant authors who introduced the topos of ritual murder to emphasize their kinship with the early Church martyrs. Nicolas des Gallars added to the accusations of de Mouchy in order to draw on a comparison with the persecutions of the early Church Christians: 'N'est-ce point la mesme calomnie qui estoit anciennement dressée contre les Chrestiens, faisant à

⁴ P. Feret, La Faculté de Théologie de Paris et ses Docteurs les plus célèbres: Epoque Moderne XVI - XVIIIème siècle, (6 vols, Paris, 1900-09), II. pp. 51-5.

⁵ [Nicolas des Gallars], Seconde apologie ou defense des vrais chrestiens, contre les calomnies impudentes des ennemis de l'Eglise catholique. Ou il est respondu aux diffames redoublez par un nommé Demochares docteur de la Sorbonne [Geneva, Jean Crespin], (1559), sig. C5^v.

croire qu'ils tuoyent les petits enfans pour les manger?'⁶ The parallel between Protestants and the early Church martyrs became the official Protestant response and it is reproduced in the Histoire Ecclésiastique which also added 'disans mesmes qu'on y tuoit les petis enfans, & autres choses semblables desquelles Satan a voulu diffamer l'ancienne Eglise'.⁷ The first Protestant Apologie, and des Gallars's own Seconde Apologie deliberately mimicked the Apologeticus that Tertullian had written in response to the persecutions of the Emperor Trajan in the third century.⁸

Astonishingly, in drawing a parallel with the persecutions of the early Christians, the author of the Apologie had identified the point of origin of the story disseminated by de Mouchy.⁹ Indeed, the idea that extinguishing the light was the signal for the beginning of an orgy is found in both Tertullian's Apology and de Mouchy's Responce. This indicates an uncanny resemblance between the accusations targeted at the early Church martyrs and the Protestants of the rue St Jacques. This detail is found in the Histoire Ecclésiastique: 'la commune opinion estoit, qu'on s'estoit là assemblé pour faire un beau banquet & puis paillarder pesle mesle les chandelles estaintes' and in all subsequent accounts. Barbara Diefendorf also noted this detail when dealing with the memoirs of Claude Haton, who relates the incident of the rue St Jacques:

The belief that the Protestants were debauched is clearly evident in the memoirs of the priest of Provins, Claude Haton, who dwells at length on the sexual activities thought to take place at Calvinist assemblies, in particular the 'charite fraterne et voluptueuse' said

⁶ [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie, sigs D8^{r-v}.

⁷ Baum and Cunitz, Histoire Ecclésiastique, I. pp. 143-4.

⁸ Feret, La Faculté de Théologie, II. pp. 372-80.

⁹ Edward Gibbon, The History of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (6 vols, Philadelphia, 1872), II. p. 11.

to be enjoyed after the candles were extinguished.¹⁰

The Protestants had rightly identified the persecution of the early Church Christians as the origin of the story retold by de Mouchy, and yet, de Mouchy had not accused the Protestants of committing infanticide and cannibalism which had also been part of the accusations against which Tertullian had written: ‘We are called abominable from the sacrament of infanticide and the feeding thereon, as well as the incestuous intercourse, following the banquet, because the dogs, that overturn the lamp, (our pimps forsooth of the darkness) bring about the shamelessness engendered by our impious lusts’.¹¹

When Catholics resorted to this story in the aftermath of the rue St Jacques, they probably did not expect the Protestants to turn it to their own advantage and make a parallel with the early Church martyrs. De Mouchy, and others, resorted to this story because it had been used repeatedly against heretics for generations long before the advent of the Reformation, especially in the first Christian centuries and the central Middle Ages. De Mouchy was aware of the parallel with Tertullian and attempted to draw attention away from the Christian persecutions. Perhaps this is the reason why he omitted the accusation of infanticide and cannibalism and steered the discussion back to the alleged lechery of patristic and medieval heretics:

Davantage il est bien certain, par les escritures alleguées, que les heretiques anciens, & qui faisoient leurs amas en secret & à part, estoient paillards: parquoy qui ne croira de ceux cy le pareil: veu & considéré qu’ils les ensuivent en opinions & façons de faire... comme ont fait leurs predecesseurs, qui ont esté tous paillards.... Voila qui pourra suffir pour exemple des anciens heretiques, il y a plus d’unze cens ans, comme en leurs assemblées ils paillardoient.¹²

¹⁰ Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, p. 54.

¹¹ J. E. B. Mayor ed., *Tertullian: Apologeticus* (Cambridge, 1917), p. 27.

¹² Mouchy, *Responce a quelque apologie*, sigs F2^{r-v}, J8^v, K1^v.

The comparison with earlier heresies, whose precedents served to justify the accusations levelled at the Protestants, was the lynchpin of the Catholic argument against the Reformation. In fact, the story against which Tertullian wrote was perpetuated by the Catholic Church after the conversion of Constantine, when it was turned against heterodoxy. Christians took the accusations that had been used against them and turned them against their enemies without changing a single word. The story of the orgy found in Tertullian was reproduced almost word for word by the Church Fathers.¹³

Clement of Alexandria (150-215), an almost exact contemporary of Tertullian, used the story against the Valentinians, who were among the first challengers of Christian orthodoxy. This story is here reported by Thomas Beauxamis who compiled a catalogue of heresies in 1570:

L'armée des Gnostiques fut beaucoup avancée par Carpocrates (l'an 144)... On raconte, dit Clement d'Alexandrie, que lors qu'ils s'assembloient à leurs cenes, ayans détourné la lampe ardante qui leur pouvoit donner quelque vergongne, tous hommes & femmes, apres s'être remplis de vin & viande pour s'aguilloner d'avantage à paillardise, s'entremesloient en concupiscence, comme si en ceste dilection ils eussent inventé la vraye communion.... Voire ils procuroient rendre le fruit abortif de leur charnelle dilection: puis meslé de quelques épices, le mangeoient.¹⁴

Another contemporary, Irenaeus of Lyon (c. 177), casts some doubt as to the veracity of such tales about Carpocrates: 'Commettent-ils effectivement toutes ces impiétés toutes ces abominations, tous ces crimes? Pour ma part j'ai quelque peine à

¹³ Louis Rougier, Celse contre les chrétiens: la réaction païenne sous l'empire romain (Paris, 1977), p. 150.

¹⁴ Thomas Beauxamis, Histoire des sectes tirées de l'armée sathanique (Paris, Guillaume Chaudière, 1576), p. 24; Clement of Alexandria, 'Stromatum', extracted from the Patrologia Latina Database (Chadwyck-Healey, 1996), pp. 34-5.

le croire'.¹⁵ St Augustine (354-430), is probably the most notorious author who used the story to defame his heretical contemporaries, the Manichees, although he was a little reluctant at first, having been one of their converts in his youth. In his Contra Fortunatum (392) Augustine refused to pronounce himself on the Manichees' morals, on the grounds that, although he had been one of their followers, he had not been one of the 'elect':

Quid autem inter vos agatis, qui Electis estis, ego scire non possum.
Nam et Eucharistiam audiui a vobis saepe quod accipiatis: tempus
autem accipiendi cum me lateret, quid accipiatis, unde nosse
potui?¹⁶

On the other hand, near the end of his life, Augustine had fewer scruples about spreading scandalous rumours about the Manichees when he wrote De Haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum (429). Here he describes the Manichees' Eucharist as 'consersam cum semine humano'.¹⁷ The Manichees served as a yard-stick against which every subsequent heresy was measured, probably because the Church Fathers had written so much against them.

The story was relayed by medieval authors, among whom we find Guibert of Nogent (1055-1125) who describes in his autobiography the bacchanalia of the heretics of Soissons at the beginning of the twelfth century:

Dans des caveaux ou dans des endroits souterrains bien dissimulés,
ils tiennent leurs conciliabules. Là, les deux sexes confondus, ils

¹⁵ Irenée de Lyon, Contre les Hérésies: Dénonciation et réfutation de la gnose au nom menteur (Paris, 1984), p. 116.

¹⁶ Augustine, Acta Seu Disputatio Contra Fortunatum Manicheum (Paris, 1961), p. 137.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 766; Augustine, 'De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum', extracted from the Patrologia Latina Database, 46.13. It is probably this passage that Beauxamis, Histoire des sectes, p. 44 finds 'unfit to be repeated here'.

allument des chandelles et ils s'en viennent les présenter, de dos, à une donzelle qui, prosternée, offre à la vue de tous ses fesses dévoilées: c'est là ce que l'on dit. Peu après, ils éteignent ces flambeaux, ils se mettent à crier de tout côtés: 'chaos'! Aussitôt, chacun se précipite pour posséder la première partenaire qui lui tombe sous la main. Que si, à la suite de cela, une femme devient grosse, ils retourneront au même endroit après l'accouchement: on allume cette fois un grand feu, les gens assis tout autour se passent l'enfant de main en main, puis le jettent dans les flammes où il va se consumer; lorsqu'il se trouve réduit en cendres, ils fabriquent avec ces cendres un pain dont un morceau est distribué à chacun; un hérétique ne vient presque jamais à résipiscence lorsqu'il a participé à cette espèce d'eucharistie. Si vous relisez l'énumération qu'Augustin a opérée des hérésies, vous verrez que tout cela s'applique, mieux qu'à aucune autre, à celle des manichéens.¹⁸

The story was used once more in the twelfth and thirteenth century when the Church was faced with a second wave of heterodoxy in the wake of the Gregorian Reform. What was termed the 'twelfth-century renaissance' saw the proliferation of heretical groups which sprang from the rediscovery of the ideals of the Vita Apostolica. This period saw the emergence of a new breed of monasticism which was based on the ideals of poverty and humility. Although the foundation of the Franciscan and Dominican orders was condoned by the Papacy, all other apostolic movements were deemed heretical. The Albigensians and Waldensians posed the most immediate threat to orthodoxy in this period but there were many more. Both groups were depicted as a renewal of Manicheism, which provided a precedent for their persecution, and the orgy story was used once more against them. Very similar stories were used at regular intervals against a variety of undesirable groups like the Fraticelli in 1298, the Templars in 1310, or the Beguines in 1315, implying that these

¹⁸ E. R. Labande ed., Guibert de Nogent: Autobiographie (Paris, 1981), pp. 430-1.

groups had branched off from the 'medieval Manichee'.¹⁹

Significantly, Jews had also been accused of ritual murder from antiquity onwards, and some versions of their story are very similar to the accusations that were targeted at heretics. The sixteenth-century Catholic theologian Thomas Beauxamis has noted the parallel between the story that was used against the early Christians, and the accusations of ritual murder which were used against Jews under Emperor Caius: 'Telles estoient les Sycophanties des Ethniques contre les nostres, non dissemblable à celles qu'autrefois Appion sema devant l'Empereur Caius contre les juifs, disant qu'ils massacroient un enfant Grec en leur temple, & en sucçoient le sang, après l'avoir engraisi durant une année'.²⁰ This story is actually pre-Christian and Posidonius relates how Antiochus Epiphanes, ruler of Syria, invaded the temple of Jerusalem in 168 BC to find a Greek who told him that every seven years the Jews carried out a similar ritual.²¹

This story re-emerged during the Middle Ages, where the large Jewish communities in Europe were increasingly persecuted and either expelled or placed into ghettos. As the devotion of the body of Christ increased from the twelfth century onwards, miracle stories linked with the desecration of the Eucharist started to appear. The miracles manifested the sanctity of the Eucharist and chastised the desecrators, who were often Jews. The similarities with miracle stories related to the desecration of the host by Protestants, notably the miracle that took place in Laon in

¹⁹ Jean de la Vacquerie, Catholique remonstrance aux roys et princes chrestiens, a tous magistrats & gouverneurs de Repub. touchant l'abolition des heresies, troubles & scismes qui regnent aujourd'huy en la Chrestienté (Paris, Claude Frémy, 1560), sig. E7^r; Beauxamis, Histoire des sectes, p. 83; Michel de Castelnau, Mémoires (Paris, Sebastien Chappelet, 1621), p. 7; R. I. Moore, The Origins of European Dissent (Oxford, 1985), pp. 9-20, 243-6. See below, p. 243.

²⁰ Beauxamis, Histoire des sectes, p. 18.

²¹ Gavin I. Langmuir, 'Thomas of Monmouth: Detector of Ritual Murder', Speculum, 59 (1984), 820-46, p. 823.

1566, are striking.²² The graves of the victims of ritual murder perpetrated by Jews in the Middle Ages were worshipped like those of saints and were also the site of miracles. Probably the first occurrence of this phenomenon is the martyrdom of William of Norwich, who was canonized at the beginning of the twelfth century:

In his time, the Jews of Norwich bought a Christian child before Easter and tortured him with all the torture that our Lord was tortured with; and on Good Friday hanged him on a cross on account of our Lord, and then buried him. They expected it would be concealed, but our Lord made it plain that he was a holy martyr, and the monks took him and buried him with ceremony in the monastery, and through our Lord he works wonderful and varied miracles, and he is called St William.²³

Later accusations, which focus on the drawing of blood, show a clear kinship to the stories of antiquity and it is likely that all these stories, used against heretics and Jews, came from one and single source. Another case of the Jews ritually killing a Christian child who became 'Little Saint Hugh', occurred in 1255 in Lincoln, and the town became the site of miracles and pilgrimages. In Trent in 1475, Jews were put on trial for the killing of a child who shortly became 'blessed Simon martyr', accused of having drawn blood for the purpose of celebrating Passover.²⁴ The detail of the drawing of blood shows that it was probably the same story that was used against early Christians and later on against medieval heretics and ultimately Protestants.

The fact that both Jews and heretics were accused of similar crimes in the Middle Ages has led some historians to suggest that they were the victims of a single

²² Guillaume Postel and Jean Boulaese, *Le Miracle de Laon: 1566*, ed. Irena Backus (Geneva, 1995).

²³ Langmuir, 'Thomas of Monmouth', p. 820.

²⁴ R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Trent 1475: Stories of a ritual murder trial* (Michigan, 1992), p. 4.

persecutory mechanism specific to medieval Christianity. R. I. Moore has argued that the tightening of the boundaries of orthodoxy between the third and fourth Lateran Council of 1179 and 1215 corresponded to the emergence of a persecuting mechanism. Any minority groups became legitimate targets and grisly stories were used to legitimize the indiscriminate persecution of Jews, heretics and lepers alike:

The images of nightmares are not always consistent, but they always feed the same fear. For all imaginative purposes heretics, Jews and lepers were interchangeable. They had the same qualities from the same source, and they presented the same threat : through them the Devil was at work to subvert the Christian order and bring the world to chaos.²⁵

Lepers were indeed accused of similar crimes, often in conjunction with Jews. A common accusation which was used against Jews and lepers during the Middle Ages was of poisoning wells and other sources of fresh water to provoke epidemics of plague or leprosy. What was not known at the time is that unlike the plague, leprosy is not infectious, and lepers because of their repulsive appearance made prime suspects for the spreading of disease and contagion. Bernard Gui reports a plot in 1321 involving lepers ‘diseased of mind and body’ who infected the water supplies of France in a conspiracy to take over the whole kingdom. In 1328, Jews were also included in the conspiracy as accomplices of the lepers, and another version had the Muslim King of Granada finance the whole operation. Jews and lepers had been compared with each other in antiquity and Flavius Josephus, in his Against Appion, mentions a legend that Jews originated from a group of lepers who had been driven out of Egypt. Flavius Josephus’ Against Appion enabled these stories to survive into the Middle Ages which in turn transmitted them to the early modern period. Both Jews and lepers were segregated from the time of the fourth Lateran Council (1215) onwards, and they were made to wear distinctive badges reminiscent of the Nazi yellow star. Jews chose to live in ghettos from this point onwards to avoid persecution from Christians, and after 1321, lepers were also

²⁵ Moore, Formation of a Persecuting Society, p. 65.

segregated and forced to live in leper houses.²⁶

The fact that similar accusations were targeted at heretics, Jews and lepers throughout the Middle Ages strengthens Moore's theory that a persecuting mechanism did indeed emerge around the beginning of the thirteenth century. Jews and lepers have been identified by medieval historians as the targets of indiscriminate accusations of infanticide, ritual murder, and attempts to poison the wells of the kingdom. The analogy with heresy, which was to the body politic what a disease is to the body, is particularly significant and explains why heresy was perceived as 'spiritual leprosy'.²⁷ The fact that Protestants were accused of similar crimes suggests that the Catholic polemical authors borrowed from existing persecutory mechanisms which have their origins in the central Middle Ages.

* * *

Of course, the comparison between Protestantism and heresies of late antiquity and the medieval period was a common staple of the anti-Protestant polemic. These key periods of Church history were marked by two fundamental Church Councils (Nicea in 325 and the fourth Lateran Council in 1215) which defined orthodoxy in the face of heresy. The heretics condemned at these Councils became indistinguishable in the course of time as they were used as precedents to condemn further heresies. For all intents and purposes all these heretical groups (Arians, Donatists, Manichees and Albigensians) became indistinguishable, and whenever heterodoxy appeared in later years, it would immediately be added to the 'great tree of heresy'. The great tree of heresy had already been described by St Augustine and the great medieval summas perpetuated this image and passed it on to the sixteenth century.²⁸ For example, Bernard of Luxembourg's Catalogus haereticorum omnium

²⁶ Carlo Ginzburg, Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath (London, 1991), pp. 33, 36, 38-9.

²⁷ R. I. Moore, 'Heresy as Disease', in D. W. Lourdeaux and D. Verhelst (eds), The Concept of Heresy in the Middle Ages (Louvain, 1976), 1-11.

²⁸ M-M. Fragonard, 'La détermination des frontières symboliques: nommer et définir

(1522) and Alphonso de Castro's Adversus omnes haereses (1534) catalogue heresies along the principles laid out by St Augustine.²⁹

Catholic theologians, from the outset of the Reformation, compared Protestants with what they saw as their medieval counterparts: the heretics that had been condemned at the Council of Nicea and the third and fourth Lateran Councils. This is what the former Lutheran George Witzel (1501-1573), wrote about the Lutherans in 1537:

Voici ce que veux faire maintenant (pource que ton epistre m'y convie) c'est que tu entendes que les sectes de ceste aage, ont grande affinité avec les anciennes: ou plus tost les anciennes avec celles qui regnent.... La similitude du naturel & des meurs, à par tout grande force.³⁰

French Catholics reproduced these arguments and adapted Witzel to their needs by substituting 'Calvinists' for 'Lutherans' in the 1567 French edition.³¹ In order to fuel their arguments French Catholics also translated and borrowed heavily from Church Fathers' treatises against heretics.³² The translator of an edition of Vincent of

les groupes hérétiques', in Robert Sauzet ed. Les Frontières religieuses en europe du XVe au XVIIe siècle (Paris, 1992), 37-49.

²⁹ Augustine, De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum.

³⁰ Georg Witzel, Discours des moeurs tant des anciens hérétiques que nouveaux Lutheriens & Calvinistes auquel leur ressemblance est clairement démontrée (Paris, Claude Frémy, 1567), p. 5.

³¹ The original edition was in Latin: G. Wicelius, Libellus de moribus veterum haereticorum (Leipzig, 1537).

³² Among those feature Optat, Histoire du schisme, blasphemes & autres impietez des Donatiens (Paris, Frederic Morel, 1564) translated by Pierre Viel, and a translation of Vincentii Lirinensis, Commonitorium pro Catholicae fidei antiquitate et veritate.

Lérins's Pour la Verité et Antiquité de la Foy Catholique (1560) thought that no modern author could be as eloquent, or brief, on the subject of heresy:

Mais puisque nous sommes en une saison, ou il est malaisé de... cognoistre [la vérité]... j'ay pense estre bon, sans rien definir de moymesme, la vous faire entendre par ce petit escrit de Vincent Lirinense, homme François de Nation, & de zele tant Chrestien, que les plus doctes de nostre temps confessent n'avoir lu en aucun autre auteur, plus de saintes sentences en si peu de papier.³³

The arguments were interchangeable and when Georg Witzel compared the doctrine of salvation by faith with the Manichees' beliefs, he was echoed by the French authors who wrote against the Calvinists:

Ces Manichees estimoient que les ames de leurs auditeurs au partir du corps, retournoient avec les eslus. Nous avons dit aussi sy devant, que la secte qui court, beatifie ceux qui luy adherent à cause de son Evangile, & avoue ce qu'elle fait, sans avoir esgard à la vie, soit bonne ou mauvaise.... Les Manichées s'efforçoient exterminer tout le franc arbitre. Les Lutheriens en pareil travaillent à le detruire.... Car tout ainsi que les Manichees se vantoient estre seuls Chrestiens: ainsi font les Lutheriens.³⁴

The same argument was used by Nicolas Durand, Chevalier de Villegagnon, who compared the doctrine of predestination to the dualism of the Manichees in a letter addressed to Catherine de Médicis in 1561:

Si vous voulez scavoir ma Dame: quelle Cene ilz vous preschet de prendre & recevoir quittant la vostre, cest celle en substance de lenrage Manichee: dont parle Saint Augustin au vingtiesme livre

³³ Vincent de Lérins, Petit traite de Vincent Lerineuse pour la verite et antiquite de la foy catholique (Paris, Vascosan, 1563).

³⁴ Witzel, Discours des moeurs, pp. 22-5.

contre luy au treiziesme Chapitre. Voyez doncques ma Dame: quel change vous feriez. Le bon Calvin abuseur sest delecte de ceste la entre toutes les autres: pource quil avoit prins plaisir a la bestiale predestination dudict Manichee, affin de pecher sans scrupule: & que la craincte ne luy ostast le plaisir du peche: et par lopinion destre predestine a bien ou mal: sans faire discretion des oeuvres il voluptuast en plus grand plaisir dordure.³⁵

For all intents and purposes, all heretics were interchangeable and were guilty of the same crimes. When the Catholic authors compared Protestantism with Manicheism, they could also have compared them with a number of other heretical groups. Significantly, Protestants were also compared to Jews by Georg Witzel who drew a very extensive list of similarities between them:

Ils se monstrent aussi fort affins des Juifs, quand mal volontiers ils endurent des vierges entre eux, & ne veulent avoir que femmes mariées: quand ils rapportent leurs mariages au canon & regle du levitique qui est hors d'usage. Quand ils devorent de la chair en carême: Quand ils abominent l'Eglise & assemblée des Catholiques: Quand ils se moquent des pieuses observations d'icelles: Quand ils sentent mal des saints ja regnans avec Dieu: Quand ils prophanent le Sabbat chrestien: Quand ils persecutent les pretres et moines: Quand ils demolissent les images: Quand ils meprisent les conciles: Quand ils font quelques autre chose en quoy se plaisent les juifs.³⁶

This comparison was continued by Jean Gay, a member of the Parlement of Toulouse, whose primary purpose was to draw out the similarities between

³⁵ Nicolas Durand, Lettres du Chevallier de Villegaignon sur les remonstrances, a la Royne Mere du Roy la souveraine Dame, touchant la Religion (F. T., 1561), sigs B3^r

v.

³⁶ Witzel, Discours des moeurs, p. 50.

Protestants and Albigensians:

Ils se sont appertement renduz vrayz Juifs, ennemis & adversaires de Dieu... comme ceulz qui à la maniere & imitation de malice Judaïque, ont abattu tous les Estandars... de notre Seigneur qui est la Ste Croix, ainsi que vous trouverez aussi avoir esté faict par lesdicts Heretiques Albigeois.... Et sans oublier les usures publiques, qu'ilz permettent plus que Juifs.³⁷

Usury seems to have been a particular bone of contention for Catholics, and Robert Ceneau (1483-1560), a doctor of the Sorbonne also wrote vehemently against the Protestant toleration of usury and use it as grounds to compare Protestants with Jews:

Mais noz Calvinistes commettent usure trop plus grande que celle des Juifs, encore du bien d'autrui, sçavoir de l'argent extirpé par une plusque tyrannique violence, des eglises, usurpé par sacrilege, de la quele pecunne ces crueles harpyes font des banquiers & changeurs, n'aïans autre chose recommandee, sinon de ressasier leur insatiable convoitise de ce gaing dehonneste & usuraire.... Donner son argent à usure, prendre les dons de l'innocent, mesme à plus estrange condition que les juifs infideles n'ont accoustumé.... Aussi ont les inventeurs de ce gaing usuraire de commun avec les Juifs, que tous jusques à un, combien que la conscience les remord, ne veulent jamais laisser ce gaing tant dehonneste, de peur qu'ils soient contraints de rendre ce que injustement ils ont usurpé. Car rapine envers eux est presque une servitude d'idoles, comme dit à

³⁷ Jean Gay, L'Histoire des scismes et heresies des Albigeois, conforme a celle de present, par laquelle appert que plusieurs grans princes et seigneurs sont tombez en extremes desolations et ruines pour avoir favorise aux heretiques (Paris, Pierre Gaultier, 1561), pp. 37, 39.

propos le Satyrique.³⁸

Finally, leprosy was also a strong feature of anti-Protestant polemic, although Protestants were not literally compared to lepers. Gentian Hervet made a comparison with Jews and argued that unlike them, Protestants were able to mix freely among the Catholic population and spread their heresy as they would the plague:

Et si bien ils [les Juifs] sont alienez de la vraye religion, on les auroit aussi en tel estime qu'ils meritent et fuyroit on leur conversation, et pour les mieux cognoistre ils auroient leur marque, comme ils ont es autres pays.... Mais vous..., vous estes tellement meslez parmy les autres que... on est contrainct bon gré mal gré de converser avecques vous, et neantmoins vostre conversation est si contagieuse que la peste ne l'est pas plus.³⁹

Protestantism was also described as a form of leprosy, in agreement with the medieval tradition of describing heresy as 'spiritual leprosy'. For example the Polish cardinal Stanislas Hozius (1504-1579) wrote in a work first published in Latin in 1559 and translated into French in 1561:

Un membre poury se coupe, de peur qu'il ne gaste le reste du corps: On separe les corps des hommes lepreux ou teigneux, de peur qu'ils n'infectent les sains de leur lepre, & male teigne: combien plus doit on mettre à part ceux qui sont dedans leurs cueurs entachez de la lepre spirituelle, de peur qu'ils n'en infectent les brebis de Jesus Christ?⁴⁰

³⁸ Robert Ceneau, Response catholique contre les heretiques de ce temps (Paris, Guillaume Julien, 1562), sigs C3^r-C4^r.

³⁹ Gentian Hervet, Discours sur ce que les pilleurs, voleurs, & brusleurs d'Eglises disent qu'ilz n'en veulent qu'aux prestres (Reims, Jean de Foigny, 1562).

⁴⁰ Stanislas Hozius, Des sectes et heresies de nostre temps: traicte composé premierement en Latin, par reverend Pere en Dieu monseigneur Stanislas Hozie,

Antoine de Mouchy, in his Responce a quelque Apologie uses a similar analogy:

Pour autant dit tres bien saint Hierosme, il faut couper les chairs pourries, & la brebis rongneuse fault getter hors du tropeau, à fin que toute la maison, la masse, le corps, & les brebis ne bruslent, ne soient corrompues, ne pourrissent, ne perissent.⁴¹

Protestants were also accused of poisoning Christendom more directly, both figuratively and literally. The persecution of Jews and lepers for poisoning wells during the reign of Philippe V is used by de Mouchy to argue that because they were burned, so should the Protestants for ‘poisoning the souls with false doctrine’:

A nostre probation pourrons aussi servir les punitions qu’on a accoustumé garder contre les empoisonneurs, lesquels on brusle. Guaguin de ce donne evident tesmoignage, lequel recite que du temps du Roy Loys Hutin, une femme nommée Claude, fut bruslée à Paris, & environ ce temps furent prinses quatre femmes avec leurs poisons, qui furent aussi bruslées. Et du temps du Roy Philippe le long, recite qu’aucuns ladres avoient empoisonnez les puy: lesquels Philippe fait par tout chercher, avec les Juifs qui estoient auteurs de tels empoisonnemens, & les fait tous bruslers.⁴²

Although de Mouchy’s accusation might have been intended figuratively, it was interpreted literally by Claude de Ruby during the plague epidemics of Lyon in 1564 and 1576:

Evesque de Varme en Pouloigne, dedié au roy de Pouloigne, & nouvellement mis en François (Paris, Vascosan, 1561), p. 78; René Fédou, ‘Editions et Traductions du Cardinal Hosius en France’, Collection du Centre d’Histoire du Catholicisme, Université Lyon II, 10 (1972), 49-55.

⁴¹ Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie, sig. C8^v.

⁴² Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie, sigs C7^{r-v}.

cuydans rompre ce desseing de sa majesté, & despeupler la ville de si grand nombre de Catholicques & bons François d'ou à leur grand regret ilz la voyoient peulee, ilz se servirent à ces fins de ceste grande & memorable contagion de peste qui fut en la ville de Basle, d'ou ilz firent apporter dans les balles de marchandises certaines pastes infectes de ceste contagion, qu'ils semerent puis par toute la ville, & jusques dans la maison du Roy & des Princes... ceste ville n'a ennemys que les Calvinistes, pour s'estre tousjours virilement opposee à leurs conjurations voylees du pretexte de religion, pouvons nous avec la verité affermer que comme en l'an 1564. Ilz se servirent de la peste de Basle & d'Allemaigne, pour infecter ceste ville, aussi se sont ilz ceste presente annee serviz de la peste de Venize, Milan & Lombardie à mesmes fins.⁴³

So Protestants were associated or compared to all the minority groups that R. I. Moore has identified as the victims of the medieval persecuting society: heretics, Jews and lepers. Accusations of lechery, infanticide and cannibalism were also an integral part of this long standing tradition and Catholics used them against Protestants from the beginning. These accusations were relayed by no less than Desiderius Erasmus in 1533 who used them against the Anabaptists:

But these examples are all in the past. Surely much more to be deplored is that within recent memory there have been discovered nightly gatherings at which, after praise has been given to God, the lights are extinguished and the men and women consort in promiscuous love. Or the ceremonies in which mothers freely hand over their infants to be butchered, and even watch serenely the horrid crime, so persuaded are they that their children will thus find a high place in heaven.... This madness seems to have taken its

⁴³ Claude de Ruby, Discours sur la contagion de la peste qui a esté ceste presente annee en la ville de Lyon (Lyon, J. d'Ogerolles, 1577), sigs C1^{r-v}. I am grateful to W. Naphy, University of Aberdeen, for this quote.

origin from the heresy καταφρυγας, which would make the Eucharist from flour mixed with the blood of an infant. This blood they would draw from small pinpricks, and if in the process the child died, it was venerated as a martyr.⁴⁴

It is striking that Erasmus, noted for his scepticism and erudition, relayed the orgy story without acknowledging its origins, although he clearly writes against the radical Reformation rather than mainstream Protestantism . This was also the context in which Stanislas Hozius wrote, although he used Erasmus as an authority to turn the accusations against the Reformation as a whole:

par quoy je ne veux point arrester à reciter plus au long les trois cens qui... apres avoir dechanté les louanges de Dieu, esteignirent toutes les lumieres, & se souillerent les uns les autres de vilaine & abominable luxure comme bestes brutes... Et semblablement de quelques autres assemblées (dont Erasme fait mention) esquelles les meres propres livroient leurs enfants à tuer, & se regardoient avec une joyeuse chere ceste tant horrible forfaiture... Pourroit on dire chose aucune plus abominable, ne plus detestable, & horrible que celle là?⁴⁵

Antoine du Val in the Mirouer des Calvinistes (1562) also used Erasmus as an authority inferring that what he described is what took place at the assembly of the rue St Jacques:

Noz Calvinistes ressemblent encores à ceulx cy: en ce qu'ilz chantent leurs psalmes & autres chansons, qu'ilz appellent

⁴⁴ Desiderius Erasmus, Liber de sarcienda Ecclesiae concordia deque sedandis opinionum dissidiis (Basel, 1533); the extract is taken from J. P. Dolan ed., The essential Erasmus (New York, 1964), pp. 442-3; [Des Gallars], Seconde Apologie, sigs. D6^v, D8^{r-v}.

⁴⁵ Hozius, Des sectes et heresies de nostre temps, pp. 166-7.

spirituelles. Et apres que ilz ont ce fait, n'est-il pas vray, que souvent ilz esteignent les chandelles: De ce qu'ilz font après, je m'en rapporte... en celle qui se fist à Paris, la nuict du 4 jour du mois de Septembre, l'an 1557. en la grande rue S. Jaques, là ou ilz estoient plus de cinq cens.... Nous reciterons choses certes grandement à deplorer: A sçavoir les conventicules qui ont esté trouvez de nostre temps. Auquelz... après avoir chanté louanges à Dieu, les chandelles esteinctes, les homme pesle mesle, & sans aucune difference, se mesloient avec les femmes. Dit d'avantage en ce mesme lieu ledict Erasme, en son livre de l'admirable concorde de l'Eglise... que bien pis se faisoit en ces assemblées nocturnes, ausquelles les peres de leur propre volonté donoyent leurs enfans pour estre tuez, regardans tel & s'exécrable faict, d'un oeil fort joyeux, ayans ceste folle opinion, que leurs enfans, ainsi tuez, feroient des premiers & des plus excellens, entre les saintz martyrs. Telle folie & rage, semble avoir prins son origine de l'heresie appellée Cataphrigas: Laquelle faisoit l'Eucharistie de farine meslée avecques sang d'un enfant, lequel ilz recueilloyent par petites piqueurs, qu'ilz fairoient au corps de l'enfant. Que si cest enfant venoit à mourir, il estoit honoré de par eux comme martyr.⁴⁶

The topos of the orgy had been the standard Catholic reaction to any form of heterodoxy for centuries, and the fact that Erasmus himself reproduced it almost without thought testifies to its efficacy. From the affair of the rue St Jacques and the tumult of Amboise, the accusation of the orgy was relayed by no fewer than five different authors, and by many more throughout the French Wars of Religion. By using this story, the Catholic polemicists were hoping to associate Protestantism with a long list of heretics and thus justify their persecution at a time when the Court seemed to sway in their favour. The story was used hand in hand with arguments that Protestantism threatened to take over the whole body politic like a disease and turn

⁴⁶ Du Val, Mirouer des Calvinistes, fols 9^v, 10^r.

the whole moral order upside down. These authors condemned Protestantism without trial as their doctrine had already been condemned before in the Church Councils of the past. In their eyes, Protestantism was nothing more than another manifestation of the undying monster that the Catholic Church had defeated before. The Catholic authors perpetuated the medieval tradition and weighed any arguments in the light of a lengthy list of precedents which had been approved by the Church. This allowed the Catholics to ignore the Protestant plea for toleration and evade the serious issues that the popularity of Protestantism was raising. The use of this story against the Protestants of the rue St Jacques must be seen in the context of centuries of characterization of heretics which had become ingrained in the culture of western Christendom. The story had become an integral part of the institutionalized Church's response to heresy and the Catholic authors who used it were in direct line with what R. I. Moore has called the persecuting society.

But unlike their predecessors, Protestants were not simply the victims of a persecuting mechanism which had been set up in the central Middle Ages. R. I. Moore's persecuting society was remarkably successful given the track record of the single story quoted above used at different times against different people. But it worked only as long as the boundaries between heresy and orthodoxy were clearly marked. This was no longer the case in the sixteenth century where the Reformation challenged the very roots on which Catholic orthodoxy was based. The ability of the Protestants to challenge these accusations and draw a parallel with the early Christians was unprecedented and called for a different strategy. Catholics who used this story in the wake of the rue St Jacques probably did not anticipate that it would be turned in the Protestants' advantage and used to claim kinship with the early Church martyrs.⁴⁷

* * *

The controversy between de Mouchy and des Gallars testifies to the novel approach that the Protestants were taking by pointing out that the story had originated in the persecutions of the first Christian centuries. It is obvious that de

⁴⁷ See Chapter 5 below.

Mouchy was ill at ease with this argument and conspicuously avoided reproducing the accusations of infanticide and cannibalism which had been used so successfully in the past. Indeed, Antoine de la Roche Chandieu, who recounts the whole episode in his Histoire des persecutions (1563), wrote that it had been a decisive argument:

Aucuns Docteurs de Sorbonne s'efforcerent d'y faire response: mais les pauvres bestes, comme en toutes autres choses, ne firent en cela que descouvrir leur ignorance. L'un nommé Mouchi, se fondant sur une resolution Doctorale que nous sommes heretiques, sans en faire aucune preuve, emploie tout son livre à discourir sur la punition des heretiques: & monstre qu'ilz doibvent estre bruslez: & là dessus crie au feu, & aux glaives.⁴⁸

None of the heretics against whom the story had been used had done what the Protestants did: turn it around as an argument of martyrdom and election. By pointing out the similarities between the persecutions of the early Church and their own situation, Protestants strengthened their claim to represent the true Church of the Apostles. This is probably why de Mouchy edited the story and simply accused those assembled in the rue St Jacques of being lecherous. The same 'sanitised' version was used by another author, Jean de la Vacquerie, who nonetheless implied that 'other impieties' might have been committed by the Protestants at their assemblies:

Toutes lesquelles choses, & encores plus execrables, il est de nécessité advenir en voz assemblées satanicques: Esquelles apres le sermon plein de blaspheme, & ceste cene abominable on estainct les lumieres, pour vacquer à luxure & intemperance, chascun indifferemment, soy prenant à celuy ou celle que premier il rencontre. Et qui seroit celuy qui ne se persuaderoit facilement en un tant grand brasier de libidinosité, en tant obscures tenebres, en tant grande impunité & liberté de mal faire, se commectre plusieurs choses contre raison & ordonnance naturelle? Et se donner lieu aux

⁴⁸ Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions, sig. d1^v.

amours depravez & detestable peché de Sodomites.⁴⁹

In parallel with the use of this topos in print, there was a concerted effort on the part of Antoine de Mouchy, the Maréchal St André and the Cardinal de Lorraine to produce false witnesses who would add credence to these stories at Court. The full story is told in the Histoire Ecclésiastique which reproduces in large part Antoine de la Roche Chandieu's first hand account of the persecutions.⁵⁰ The Histoire Ecclésiastique uncovers a web of intrigue which goes back to the beginning of the Reformation when relapsed Protestants served as informers for the authorities. Three characters are mentioned in particular, Russanges & Claude David, both goldsmiths, and Georges Renard, a tailor, who are described as former Protestants who exchanged the names of their co-religionists for clemency. The latter, Georges Renard is said to have been arrested during the very first wave of persecutions in the aftermath of the affair of the Placards, whereas Claude David was the brother of an official of the Parlement of Paris.⁵¹ Russanges, or Ruffanges, was a minor official who was arrested sometime before the death of Henri II and offered a hand-written list of names of prominent figures of the Protestant community. All accounts of this episode mention Antoine de Mouchy and Maréchal St André as the recipients of this information and say that the persecutions were interrupted by the death of Henri II. During the wave of arrests that followed, two apprentices came forward and offered to testify to what they had allegedly seen at the Protestants' secret meeting. The two young apprentices had been in the employ of a Protestant master who had offered to take them to a secret Protestant meeting before they were dismissed. The accounts

⁴⁹ Vacquerie, Catholique remonstrance, sig. B7^r.

⁵⁰ It is mentioned in passing in Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 135. See below, pp. 190, 198.

⁵¹ Théodore de Bèze, Histoire Ecclesiastique des Eglises Reformes au Royaume de France (3 vols, Antwerp, Jean Remy, 1580), I. p. 228; Lancelot du Voisin de la Popelinière, L'Histoire de France enrichie des plus notables occurances survenues ez Provinces de l'Europe & pays voisins [La Rochelle, Abraham Hautin], (2vols, 1581), I. fol. 147^v.

mention that their mother forced them to confess that they had attended an heretical meeting, and it was the priests who had heard their confession who reported them to St André and de Mouchy. Young and impressionable, the two apprentices were manipulated into revealing the names of those who had taken part and testify to what had taken place at the Protestants' secret meeting. Antoine de la Roche Chandieu provides a more detailed account of what they said than the Histoire Ecclésiastique:

Le peintre pour se venger de son maistre, va rapporter aux Juges qu'iceluy l'avoit mené à l'assemblée. Et quand on le voit ainsi prompt à accuser, on luy fait de grandes promesses, s'il veut reveler ceux qu'il y a cognus. Ce qu'il fait, & n'espargne personne. Et adjouste ce qu'on disoit communement des assemblées estre vrai, qu'on y paillardoit pesle mesle, les chandelle esteintes: & qu'il y avoit en la compagnie quelques filles, lesquelles il nommoit.⁵²

This episode is mentioned by Barbara Diefendorf as sparking an unprecedented wave of persecution in Paris, coinciding with the arrest of Anne du Bourg, and Chandieu reports that the persecutions lasted from August 1559 to March 1560.⁵³ The fact that the testimony of these two unfortunate apprentices was used as a ploy by the Cardinal de Lorraine to further his political agenda at Court is undeniable. The Cardinal attempted to use their testimony to convince Catherine de Médicis of the wickedness of the heretics. Furthermore, in the course of the arrests made in the wake of the denunciations, an inflammatory Protestant pamphlet was found in one of the noble Protestants' house. Like many Protestant pieces that were written after the death of Henri II, this particular piece attributed the death of the monarch to divine providence, as punishment for the persecutions.⁵⁴ The Cardinal de Lorraine added to

⁵² Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions, sigs x7^{r-v}-x8^r.

⁵³ Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 55.

⁵⁴ An., La Maniere d'appaiser les troubles, qui sont maintenant en France, & y pourront estre cy apres: A la Royne mere du Roy [Lyon, Jean Saugrain], (1561), sig.

this pamphlet the testimonies of the two apprentices who were presented before Catherine de Médicis. The Histoire Ecclésiastique offers us a rare insight into the role the Cardinal himself may have played in spreading these rumours, as he proceeded to reproduce the argument that is found in Antoine de Mouchy's Response a quelque Apologie:

Le Cardinal de sa part ne laissa dormir ses informations. Car ayant au poing le sac ou elles estoient, & à sa queue les deux enfans, il alla trouver la Royne mere, & avec exclamations incroyables, luy dechiffra de point en point le contenu d'icelles, n'oubliant rien pour rendre ceux de la religion les plus maudites & abominables creatures, qui eussent esté dès la creation du monde. Mesmes afin de ne rien laisser en arriere, elles furent par luy enrichies de toutes les pollutions desquelles se souillerent jadis les anciens heretiques Psalliens, Gnostiques Euchytes, Messaliens, Borborites, Origenistes & autres que Satan a autresfois suscités pour obscurcir la lumiere de l'Evangile, quand elle fut du commencement preschee en cachettes, à cause de la persecution que leur faisoient les Empereurs payens & idolatres.⁵⁵

The long list of heretics provided by the Cardinal de Lorraine corresponds to the medieval precedents used by the polemicists who spread the rumour in the first place. There could be no better evidence of the confluence between the agenda of the Guise and the productions of the Catholic polemicists; and one of these authors, Antoine de Mouchy, actually took an active part in interrogating the two apprentices who confirmed what he had published. According to the Histoire Ecclésiastique, Catherine de Médicis was swayed by the testimony of the two apprentices but was advised to have them cross-examined:

Davantage, la Royne ayant trouvé à part quelques siennes

B2^r.

⁵⁵ Bèze, Histoire Ecclesiastique, I. p. 236.

Damoyselles, qui favorisoient ceux de la religion, leur declara le rapport à elle fait de ces informations, ausquelles elle disoit ajouster telle foy, que si elle savoit pour tout certain quelles en fussent, elle les feroit mourir, quelque amitié ou faveur qu'elle leur portast. Les plus familières & advisees d'entre elles, insisterent tant contre elle, que de la faire condescendre à ouïr ces enfans, dont il luy fust fort aisé de connoistre l'encloveure.⁵⁶

The cross-examination of the witnesses revealed that they had been lying and the whole matter was dropped. There is evidence, however, that the belief that Protestants took part in orgies survived the retraction of the false witnesses. Penny Roberts has uncovered the case of a city councillor of Troyes who escaped prosecution in 1562 by arguing that his only reason for attending a Protestant meeting was the hope of taking part in such an orgy:

Quelques uns aussy se rendirent prisonniers a la conciergerie au palais, ou ilz tremerent assez long temps. Le conseiller de Pleurre fut de ce nombre. Estant mande pardevant messieurs de la cour de parlement, pour estre interrogué, confesse a celle en estoit plus tost rendit et sortir hors de prison, que la verité estoit qu'il s'estoit trouve estant en assemblee et presche de la religion, pour accomplir son intention charnelle et jouir de celle qu'il luy eust pleu, estimant que ce qu'on en disoit feust vray, ascavoir qu'on faisoit la charite es assemblee. Mays ayant veu et congneu que cela estoit faulx, et qu'il n'y avoit pas trouve ce qu'il cherchoit il n'y estoit plus retourne et puis retenoit. La court s'estant pres a rire de ceste responce se relascha de Pleurre.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Bèze, Histoire Ecclesiastique, I. p. 237.

⁵⁷ BN Dupuy MS 698 (Pithou), fol. 243^v; Penny Roberts, A city in conflict: Troyes during the French Wars of Religion (Manchester, 1996) p. 84, n. 64. I owe thanks to Penny Roberts for the transcript of this document.

This anecdote shows that the polemical campaign depicting Protestants as taking part in orgies enjoyed a certain degree of success. The myth of the orgiastic Protestants was mixed with the horrible reality of the Parisian persecutions during which children were left abandoned on the streets of Paris. The Histoire de France recounts how preachers on street corners rekindled the accusations of infanticide and cannibalism by pointing to these children as those the Protestants had intended to eat during their orgies:

Par lesquelles outre ce lon pouvoit aller sans passer à travers gens de pied & de Cheval armez à blanc qui tracassoit ça & la menans prisonniers hommes & femmes petits enfans & autres gens de toutes quallitez laissant les pouvres petits enfans sur le carreau crians à la fain sans qu'aucun osast les retirer sinon qu'il voulust tomber au mesme danger. Aussi en faisoit on moins de conte que de chiens tant ceste doctrine estoit odieuse aux Parisiens. Pour lesquels d'avantage aigrir, il y avoit gens aux coins des rues pour les persuader que ces heretiques s'assembloient pour manger ces petits enfans & paillarder de nuit à chandelles esteintes apres avoir mangé le cochon au lieu d'un aigneau Paschal & commis ensemble une infinité dincestes & ordures infames: ce qu'il croioient comme chose assurée.⁵⁸

Although de Mouchy had carefully avoided accusing the Protestants of infanticide and cannibalism in the Responce a quelque Apologie, Catholic preachers were emboldened to do so by the scale of the persecutions. Later accounts of the affair of the rue St Jacques, such as Antoine du Val's Mirouer des Calvinistes (1562), were not as careful as de Mouchy and reproduced the story in its totality. The affair of the rue St Jacques allowed the Catholic polemicists to use the medieval story of the orgy with a certain degree of success. The persecutions which followed provided them with further opportunities to add credibility to these stories. But the most decisive argument that Catholics could produce was that of accusing Protestants of a

⁵⁸ Du Voisin de la Popelinière, L'Histoire de France, I. fol. 148^v.

plot to take over the kingdom. Even if the accusations of lechery, infanticide and cannibalism could be turned to the Protestants' advantage, accusations of a conspiracy against the King were more difficult to dispel.

The first author to use the idea of a conspiracy was Jean de la Vacquerie writing shortly after the assembly of the Pré-aux-Clercs in May 1558 where 4000 Protestants had assembled defiantly in the open to sing psalms. Jean de la Vacquerie used the coincidence of the affair of the rue St Jacques with the defeat of the King at the hands of the imperial army at St Quentin to make a causal link between the two:

Vous avez apperceu Sire, vous avez apperceu, (& ne pouvez le nier, ou dissimuler) combien apportent d'empeschemens à une republicque les conspirations des heretiques: car l'an passé, quand choses urgentes à ce vous mouvans, vous faisiez faire monstre & reveues des mestiers de vostre ville de Paris en armes, pour d'iceulx vous aider, si besoing estoit, à repoulses vos ennemis des limites de la Picardie: esquelles ilz s'estoyent espanduz: ces meschans, la nuict precedente des monstres, s'assemblerent en gros nombre, en la maison de mauvais conseil: pour laquelle chose faire, voz juges & assesseurs le cognoissent mais à ce que puis entendre, leur principale intention estoit, apres avoir faict leur tintamarre & follies, jurer & conspirer contre vostre couronne & la republicque Françoisse: car de ces choses ont semé placars & libelles pleins de menasses, jusques à vostre palais. Et ceste année de lan mil cinq cens cinquante-huyt, au mesmes temps que les armées s'apprestoyent d'une part & d'autre pour combattre, ont faict nouvelle assemblée à Paris, non dedans les maisons, ny par nuict en cachette (comme au paravant) mais en pleine campagne, & en plein jour, & (affin que nul signe de inimitié ne fut obmis) avec compagnée armée, & autorité de grans & puissans seigneurs. Qui eust esté assuré? bataille se preparoit aux champs, tout en la ville trembloit de craincte, l'ennemy nous pressoit, courant & pillant le pays: Et en la ville princesse du royaume, un plus mauvais ennemy se pourmenoit, navrant & infestant la republicque, par ses

conjurations: tellement qu'il n'estoit facile en telle perplexité, ny à vous, ny à vostre conseil, discerner si deviez courir suz à voz adversaires, ou estendre & applicquer vostre puissance à dompter & punir les heretiques & conspirateurs. Maintenant (si j'ay bien entendu) apres qu'ilz ont cogneu vostre majesté royalle estre offensée de telles insolences, se sont retirez es cavernes, forestz, & lieux couvers, ou ilz font leurs sabats, & cence diabolique, revocans des enfers les superstitions des idolatres anciens: seront finablement brigans & guetteurs des chemins, volleurs & meurdriers des Catholicques & bons marchans. Car mettant les gens de bien à mort, iceulx se reputent faire chose agreable à Dieu, qui entre eulx pensent qu'il y ayt un Dieu.⁵⁹

By all accounts the defeat of St Quentin did play a role in the affair of the rue St Jacques, a fact that is acknowledged by the Histoire Ecclésiastique:

Ils ajoutèrent à cela un grand cri, pour avoir secours de toutes parts, criant pour mieux émouvoir ce peuple, que c'étaient voleurs, brigands & conjurateurs contre le Royaume qui s'étaient là assemblés. A ce bruit les plus proches s'éveillant, donnèrent le même signal aux plus lointains, comme il ce fait en un danger commun, tellement qu'en peu de temps tout le quartier fut en armes. Car déjà depuis la prise de St Quentin le peuple était en continuelles frayeurs & alarmes, & avait été commandé de faire provision d'armes & de se tenir prêt. Un chacun donc prend ses armes, on accourt de tous côtés là où le bruit s'entend, & entendant que ce n'étaient voleurs, mais Luthériens (ils les appelaient encore ainsi) entrent en une rage extrême & ne demandent que sang, occupent les détroits des rues, allument des feux en divers lieux, afin que personnes ne puissent échapper par l'obscurité de la nuit.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Vacquerie, Catholique remontrance, sigs D2^v-D4^r.

⁶⁰ Baum and Cunitz, Histoire Ecclésiastique, I. pp. 143-4.

The defeat of St Quentin would have indeed contributed to the paranoia surrounding the affair of the rue St Jacques, as discussed by Barbara Diefendorf:

The emotional climate for the affair of the rue Saint-Jacques was engendered by the disastrous defeat of the French forces under the Constable Montmorency outside Saint-Quentin on 10 August 1557 and the subsequent taking of that town by the Spanish on 27 August.⁶¹

But Jean de la Vacquerie was the first Catholic author to blame the Protestants for the defeat of St Quentin retrospectively and specifically to mention the affair of the rue St Jacques. Antoine de Mouchy had vaguely mentioned the threat of allowing armed men and women to assemble but he never discussed the defeat of St Quentin:

Peult on trouver plus mauvaises & pernicieuses assemblées, que des heretiques entre les vrais Chrestiens en la ville capitale de France? Qui sera celuy qui voudra defendre qu'il est loisible aux heretiques de s'assembler en armes la nuict en certaine maison à Paris? Peult on nier que le cinqiesme de Septembre cest année plus de cinq cens, tant hommes que femmes, se sont assemblez la nuict en une maison toute notoire en la rue S. Jaques: pour là ouïr la leçon d'un heretique, & apres faire je ne sçay quelle Cene?⁶²

Jean de la Vacquerie also accused the Protestants assembled at the rue St Jacques of wanting to set fire to the library of the Sorbonne:

Lan passé, au mois de Septembre, se fait une assemblée de Satan, en la maison du mal-conseil.... En ceste assemblée mal-heureuse, apres la cene execrable, fut conclud de brusler la librairie du college de Sorbonne, qui estoit tout prochaine à leur Synagogue, & de mettre le feu en divers lieux de la ville.

⁶¹ Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, p. 50.

⁶² Mouchy, *Responce a quelque apologie*, sig. E8^v.

De la Vacquerie goes even further back in time to enlarge this accusation of arson to the Protestant congregations of the 1540s who are accused of having attempted to set fire to all the churches on Christmas Eve:

Car dix-huict ans ya ou environ, qu'en la ville celebre de Paris, ces gens desbornez & devoyez de toute bonne voye, avoyent conjuré ensemble de mettre le feu la veille de Noël aux eglises, (lors que le peuple à accoustumé se trouver à mynuict aux matines, & joncher le pavé des eglises de paille, pour le soulas du peuple) & par ce moyen suffoquer & estaindre de feu & fumée le pauvre peuple, faisant priere à Dieu, & gardant la veille accoustumée de long temps en l'eglise.⁶³

Jean de la Vacquerie, also describes a full-fledged plot to take over the kingdom by appointing Protestant magistrates, judges and city officials, by which means, he argues, Swiss and German cities had been won to the Reformation:

Les femmes mariées à la mort de leurs marys, & toute l'assemblée faict ligue pour s'armer alencontre du salut & de l'honesteté de la republique: Prennent conseil & machinent entre-eulx comme ils pourront avoir la fin, ou faire priver de leurs offices, les magistrats qui leurs sont contraires: affin d'en mettre en leurs places, aucuns de leurs faction: & par ce moyen tiennent les cordeaux du gouvernement de la republique, apres avoir osté les bons recteurs, & gouverneurs des villes.

Qui sçait s'ils ne se taillent & cottisent pour achapter les offices, & introduire leurs compagnons & confreres es judicatures & sieges presidiaux? affin d'espandre leurs venimeuse doctrine, avec plus grande liberté, & quand ilz sont apprehendez, qu'ilz trouvent des patrons & deffenseurs, en lieu de juges, qui les punissent: ainsi ils ont gagné Genesve, Lauzanne, & plusieurs autres villes de Suisse,

⁶³ Vacquerie, Catholique remonstrance, sigs E4^{r-v}.

& Allemagne. Ce qu'ils s'efforcent faire aussi en nostre pays de Gaule, si on n'y prouvoit avec prudence, & si on ne reprime leurs audace effrontée, & effrené.⁶⁴

By way of response, an anonymous Remonstrance a la royne mere du Roy probably by Augustin Marlorat (1506-1562) was dedicated to Catherine de Médicis in an attempt to dispel such accusations.⁶⁵ It was answered directly by both René Benoist and Nicolas Durand, the infamous chevalier de Villegagnon who had once been a Protestant himself and turned into one of the most anti-Protestant authors of the 1560s. This polemical exchange contributed to the further elaboration of the conspiracy theory and René Benoist (1521-1608) uses the denial of the Remonstrance to renew the accusations of conspiracy:

Quant à ce que l'auteur de la remonstrance parle de ce que est fait en leurs assemblées & qu'ilz n'ont point iniques desseins & fin contre la noblesse & superiorté pour mettre tout en commun, je m'en rapporte à sa conscience, priant Dieu qu'ainsi soit.⁶⁶

Nicolas Durand goes even further in accusing the Protestants of wanting to abolish religion altogether, aristocracy and ultimately the Crown:

Quant a moy y ayant longtems estudie, je nen ay sceu apprendre autre chose, sinon quil se mocque de la Chrestiente, & soubz pretexte de Religion nous veult tendre Atheistes, & dissiper le saint estat de ce Royaume, fonde sur nostre Religion, esteindre la

⁶⁴ Vacquerie, Catholique remonstrance, sigs F1^{r-v}.

⁶⁵ [Augustin Marlorat] Remonstrance a la royne mere du Roy, par ceux qui sont persecutez pour la parole de DIEU. En laquelle ils rendent raison des principaux articles de la Religion, & qui sont aujourd'hui en dispute [Paris], (1561).

⁶⁶ René Benoist, Brieve Response a quelque remonstrance faite a la roine mere du Roy, par ceux qui se disent persecutez pour la parolle de Dieu (Paris, Guillaume Guillard and Amaulry Warencore, 1561), sig. A6^v.

succession legitime de noz Roys pour nous reduire en confusion destat populaire, abroguer noz loix confirmatives de lestat & corone de nosdictz Princes, consequemment toutes les seigneuries & puissances de ce Royaume, comme diabolicques.... Mais sil nause comparoistre pour crainte que la seulle congnoissance de la qualite desroge a la foy & opinion de luy & de ses escriptz affin que le peuple ne sendorme en la lecture diceuz: lon y respondra point pour point, par ou vous congnoistrez ma Dame: que ces gens tendent soubz pretexte de Religion a la subversion de ceste police & consequemment de la couronne de Vostre filz.⁶⁷

We can see that the anti-Protestant polemic follows a pattern which is dictated by topical events like the affair of the rue St Jacques and the meeting of the Pré-aux-Clercs. Between 1557 and 1560, Catholic authors use the discovery of a large clandestine meeting of Protestants in the heart of the capital to renew accusations of orgies and ritual murder which had been used against Jews and heretics throughout the Middle Ages. After the conspiracy of Amboise, these accusations take on a much more political edge and the accusations of orgies and ritual murder are gradually phased out in favour of the emergence of a Protestant conspiracy to take over the kingdom. The affair of the rue St Jacques was re-interpreted retrospectively as being part of this conspiracy by Jean de la Vacquerie and others who argued that the Protestants had been conspiring since the beginning.

It is clear that the portrayal of Protestantism by Catholic authors on the eve of the French wars of religion was largely inspired by medieval precedents which were used against heretics, Jews and lepers. The topos of ritual murder, orgy and conspiracy are articulated around key events, the affair of the rue St Jacques and the conspiracy of Amboise, which served as points of reference to accuse the Protestants. Although the accusations of conspiracy might be justified to a certain extent by the politicization of the conflict after the outbreak of the Wars of Religion, it is clear that the accusations first appeared in a different context. Between 1557 and 1560,

⁶⁷ Durand, *Lettres du Chevallier de Villegaignon*, sigs B1^r, B3^v.

Catholic authors attempted to dehumanize their enemies by comparing them with Jews, heretics and lepers who had been the victim of persecutions throughout the Middle Ages. The depiction of Protestants as abominable monsters was intended to provoke a total dissociation of the Catholic readership from their Protestant neighbours. This estrangement, beyond the immediate political aims that they were facilitating, may be considered as one of the factors explaining the violence of the French Wars of Religion.

Chapter 3: Huguenots and Albigensians, polemical use of the Albigensian Crusade.#

In the Sorbonne's formal condemnation of Luther's theses, Noël Beda accused Luther of unearthing old heresies which had long been forgotten.¹ One that is mentioned in particular is that of the Albigensians or Cathars, who had lived in Languedoc in the twelfth and thirteenth century. Of all other medieval and patristic heresies, Albigensianism alone had been the object of an organised crusade. One of the proclaimed aims of the Albigensian Crusade, apart from defeating the heretics, was to erase all signs that the heresy had ever existed. Not only were the heretics themselves burned, but so were the houses in which they had lived, and their families were forbidden to remember their dead.² The inquisitors would probably have succeeded in erasing the Albigensians from all human memory if they had not been so careful to commit the Albigensians' heresies to paper. Ironically, it was not the Protestants who rescued the Albigensians from oblivion, but the successors of those who had worked so hard to obliterate them.

The persecution of Albigensianism had coincided with the cultural and political annexation of Languedoc by the French Crown. It was the political dimension of the Albigensian Crusade which made it relevant to contemporary events, especially in the build up to the French Wars of Religion. The comparison between the emerging Calvinist Church and the Albigensian heresy became commonplace as ultra-Catholic authors attempted to influence policy at Court. At the same time, the Protestant demand for identity and legitimacy was being answered in the shape of martyrologies and histories of the true Church. Protestant martyrologists gradually came to terms with the Catholic comparison with medieval heresy and turned it to their advantage. The chronology of the polemical use of the Albigensian Crusade is

A shorter version of this chapter, 'The Polemical use of the Albigensian Crusade during the French Wars of Religion', is forthcoming in FH.

¹ Marie-Humbert Vicaire, 'Les Albigeois Ancêtres des Protestants: Assimilations Catholiques', CF, 14 (1979), 23-46, p. 28.

² B. Hamilton, The Albigensian Crusade (London, 1974), p. 24.

crucial to the understanding of its relevance to the confessional debate of this period.

* * *

The Albigensian heresy was undoubtedly the most formidable threat to orthodoxy that France had known before the outset of the Reformation. Unlike any other medieval heresy it was highly organised and had been openly adopted by the political élite of the Languedoc, led by the Comte Raymond de Toulouse. The organisation of the Albigensian Church mirrored that of the Catholic Church, with bishops, archbishops and allegedly, a Pope.³ Between the sending of the first papal envoys in 1215 to the last burning at the stake in 1329, it had taken more than a century to extinguish all traces of heresy.⁴ As a consequence of the policy of eradication mentioned above, very little was known about the Albigensians and their doctrine apart from what the Inquisition had reported. Consequently, the Cathar heritage of the Midi where Protestantism flourished suggested to many authors, on both sides of the confessional divide, an historical connection between the two movements.

The geographical similarity gave some historians pause, notably Janine Garrisson and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, although neither of them suggest a formal link between the Catharism and the Reformation.⁵ It nonetheless led Michel Jas, a minister and historian of the Midi, to argue that there was a continuous heterodox tradition between the end of the Albigensian Crusade and the beginning of evangelism in Languedoc.⁶ This view is in direct line with the Protestant doctrine of

³ René Nelli, La philosophie du catharisme: le dualisme radical au XIIIe siècle (Paris, 1975), p. 9.

⁴ E. Le Roy Ladurie, Montaillou: Village Occitan (Paris, 1982), p. 563.

⁵ E. Le Roy Ladurie, Histoire du Languedoc (Toulouse, 1967), p. 318; J. Garrisson-Estèbe, Les Protestants du Midi: 1559-1598 (Toulouse, 1980), p. 56.

⁶ Michel Jas, Braies Cathares: Filiation secrète à l'heure de la réforme (Loubatières, 1992), p. 196.

the true Church which argued for the parallel existence of two churches from apostolic times to the beginning of the Reformation. The adoption by the Protestant Church of the Vaudois, who were thought to descend from the twelfth-century Waldensians, was motivated in part by the need to find historical evidence for this doctrine.⁷ The Albigensians, on the other hand, were ignored by the French martyrologists until much later, when they were associated with the Waldensians, and the two groups became indistinguishable in their eyes.

The parallel between Protestantism and the Albigensian heresy first appeared in Catholic polemic of the eve of the French Wars of Religion. Between 1555 and 1562 Calvinism emerged from relative anonymity to become the trigger for French society to fall into civil war. At this time, members of the Sorbonne, self-appointed champions of orthodoxy, rose to the challenge with unprecedented vigour. Although religious polemic in the vernacular predates 1555, it rose to prominence when the Genevan presses started flooding France with Protestant books in French.⁸ This was also the time when the French Catholics became increasingly aware of the presence of clandestine Protestant communities in their midst. Symptomatic of this awareness is the affair of the rue St Jacques in September 1557 when three to four hundred Protestants were found conducting Reformed worship a few hundred yards from the Sorbonne.⁹ In the ten years between the outbreak of the first War of Religion in 1562 and St Bartholomew's Day massacre in 1572, the themes which had surfaced in Catholic polemic would be used recurrently.

Doctors of the Sorbonne looked into Church history for arguments against heresy, particularly in patristic times and during the central Middle Ages when orthodoxy had been challenged. The lengthy arguments which had been used against

⁷ Euan Cameron, The Reformation of the Heretics: the Waldenses of the Alps 1480-1580 (Oxford, 1984), pp. 244-5.

⁸ Robert Kingdon, Geneva and the coming of the Wars of Religion in France, 1555-1563 (Geneva, 1956), p. 93.

⁹ Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 50.

a variety of heretical groups, ranging from Donatists and Arians to Waldensians and Patarines, were taken out of context and applied indiscriminately to Protestants. The Reformed doctrine was grossly misrepresented and compared to earlier heresies which had already been refuted in the great Councils of the Church, notably the Council of Nicea in 325 and the fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Although Albigensianism was mentioned in this context, it was but one of many heresies used for the purpose of defaming Protestantism. The reason the Albigensians received special attention from Catholic polemicists laid with the political specificity of the Albigensian Crusade rather than their alleged beliefs.

The context in which the comparison between Protestantism and Albigensianism emerged is inextricably linked with the political events which precipitated the French Wars of Religion. The comparison between contemporary events and the times of the Albigensian Crusade was not only drawn for the benefit of the Protestants, but it was equally intended for the Catholics. The comparison was intended as an inspiration for the young successors of Henri II, François II and Charles IX. The political circumstances of the 1560s conjured a comparison with the early thirteenth century when political divisions and the spread of the Cathar heresy had gone hand in hand. Both had been quashed by Louis IX, St Louis, powerful symbol of the French monarchy, who after having defeated heresy in Languedoc, annexed the region to the Crown of France. By conjuring up this symbol, the Crown's supporters were resuscitating the moribund crusading spirit in the hope that it would rid France of the new heresy and unite Christendom once more.

The death of Henri II in 1559 led to the succession of two young kings, the 15 year old François II and after his death in 1560, the ten-year-old Charles IX. This coincided with the origin of factionalism at Court between the three leading families, Montmorency, Guise and Bourbon, barely kept under check by the Regent Catherine de Médicis. This is also a time of uncertainty for the Protestants, torn between patient suffering and active rebellion, which is mirrored in the dilemma of their leader, John Calvin. Calvin disapproved of active rebellion but he nonetheless pleaded with the house of Bourbon-Condé to take the lead of the Protestant cause.¹⁰ Antoine de

¹⁰ Jules Bonnet ed., Letters of Calvin (4 vols, New York, 1972), IV. pp. 67, 69, 91-2,

Navarre's lack of resolve meant that this would not happen until the outbreak of the Wars of Religion when his brother the Prince de Condé took Orléans in April 1562.

The death of Henri II and the succession of his young son François triggered a controversy between Protestants and Catholics regarding the age of majority of kings. Protestants who were trying to rid François II of the influence of the Guise argued that he was not old enough to choose his own advisers. On those grounds, they asked for the assembly of the Estates General in order to appoint a Council where they would have been represented. Denis Pallier has argued that the death of Henri II provoked a transformation of the printing industry. Lack of strong leadership led to the appearance of short works, or plaquettes, characteristically in octavo and written in the vernacular, which dealt with affairs of state and religion. Pallier has noted the appearance of relatively new 'occasional' pieces, designed for purposes of propaganda rather than information, which closely followed the events of the French Wars of Religion.¹¹ This phenomenon has been noted by Sawyer who remarks that during the 1614-7 period, pamphlet production closely followed specific political events.¹² This phenomenon began on the eve of the French Wars of Religion, although in a much more ad hoc way. This genre is represented here with the material which appeared in the wake of the Tumult of Amboise in March 1560 which purported, on both sides, to sway public opinion in favour of one or the other party.

A notorious piece by François Hotman, the Histoire du Tumulte d'Amboise, pitched the relative merits of the medieval predecessors of the Prince de Condé and his nemesis the Duc de Guise. The Bourbon had been dismissed from government because of their Protestant sympathies but Hotman argued that their pedigree gave them as much rights as the Guise for representation at Court. The lineage of the house of Lorraine was allegedly connected to Charlemagne whereas the Bourbon could claim ancestry from Hugue Capet, founder of the Capetian dynasty. Hotman

104, 107.

¹¹ Pallier, 'Les réponses catholiques', pp. 338-9.

¹² Sawyer, Printed Poison, p. 38.

also accused Guise of wanting to usurp the throne on the grounds of his Carolingian lineage, an argument which was turned against the Bourbon who were dubbed 'Huguenots': 'Le temps est il venu... que la Couronne soit transferee de ceux que la maison de Guyse appelle Huguenots: comme estans descendus de la race de Hugue Capet, pour estre remise & restituee (comme ils disent) à ceux qui se renomment de Charlemagne?'.¹³ This is the context in which the secretary of the Parlement of Paris, Jean du Tillet, first used the legend of Louis IX in order to defend the legitimate King in the face of these dangerous claims. Jean du Tillet, member of the royal college of notaries and secretaries, clerk of the Parlement of Paris, had been in the employ of the Valois since the reign of François I. His access to the royal charters combined with his long service to the Crown made him a perfect advocate for the King. Elizabeth Brown also suggests that his allegiance was swayed by Charles de Lorraine (future Cardinal) in 1546, at the very beginning of Henri II's reign. In exchange for his re-appointment as Clerk of the Parlement, he would have put his knowledge of the charters at the service of the Guise.¹⁴ Moreover, du Tillet had an ulterior motive in writing against the conspiracy of Amboise, since its leader, La Renaudie, had been a personal enemy.¹⁵ Du Tillet was aware, as an historian and archivist, that only the unrivalled prestige of St Louis could beat the claims of both

¹³ An., Complainte au peuple Francois, in [François Hotman], L'Histoire du tumulte d'Amboise advenu au moys de Mars, M. D. LX. (1560), sig. D2^r.

¹⁴ Elizabeth A. R. Brown ed., 'Jean Du Tillet and the French Wars of Religion: Five Tracts, 1562-1569', MRTS, 108 (1994), pp. 6, 11; Sylvie Le Clech-Charton, 'Le sentiment religieux chez les notaires et secrétaires du roi sous François Ier: un groupe sous influence?', edited by the Festival d'histoire de Montbrison, Renaissance européenne et phénomènes religieux 1450-1650 (Montbrison, 1991), 219-234, p. 229.

¹⁵ Kelley, Donald R., The Beginning of Ideology: Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation (Cambridge, 1981), p. 268; Donald R. Kelley, François Hotman: A Revolutionary's Ordeal (Princeton, 1973), pp. 108-9, 117.

houses of Bourbon and Lorraine.¹⁶ Faced with the rising danger of factionalism, François II was in a particularly weak position, which might have motivated du Tillet to find for him an alter ego more powerful than either Hugue Capet or Charlemagne.¹⁷

A Protestant response to du Tillet's book objected that although St Louis had succeeded his father very young, he had remained under the wing of his mother, Blanche de Castille, until he was 21: 'Et qu'ainsi soit, nous avons desja montré que le Roys louys 9 appellé S. Louys, ne sortit du gouvernement de la Royne Blanche sa mere, sinon environ le vinteunieme an de son aage, & ce par l'avis & deliberation de son conseil'.¹⁸

At the death of Louis VIII in 1226, Blanche de Castille was left with a 13 year old heir to the throne and had become Regent. The obvious comparison with Catherine de Médicis and Blanche de Castille reflected the hope, on the part of the Protestants, that she would be more favourably disposed to their cause than Guise. Their hopes were fulfilled in December 1560, when the death of François II put the ten year old Charles IX on the throne, and du Tillet's efforts to lower the age of majority were rendered ineffectual.

Catherine de Médicis assumed the regency, the Estates General were summoned, and Antoine de Bourbon, who had been sent away by the Guise, was reinstated at Court. Catherine de Médicis appointed Michel de L'Hôpital as

¹⁶ Nicole Cazauran, 'Le roi exemplaire dans quelques pamphlets réformés 1560-1585', *TLL*, 22 (1984), no. 2, 185-200; R. E. Asher, 'Rois légendaires et nationalisme dans la poésie du XVI^e siècle français', in F. Simone (ed.), *Culture et politique en France à l'époque de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance* (Turin, 1974), 235-248.

¹⁷ [Jean du Tillet], *Pour l'entiere majorite du Roy Treschrestien, Contre le Legitime conseil malicieusement inventé par les rebelles* (Paris, Guillaume Morel, 1560).

¹⁸ An., *Responce au livre inscript, Pour la Majorité du Roy François second* (Amboise, 1560), sig. B6^r.

Chancellor and applied conciliatory measures towards Protestantism. The comparison between St Louis and François II was transposed to Charles IX with an added edge of urgency. Several factors encouraged the comparison between Charles IX and St Louis: both came to power at approximately the same age, creating unrest among the nobility, which was left to the Regent, in each case their mother, to deal with. With the outbreak of the Wars of Religion, the analogy between the reigns of the two kings took on a new significance. St Louis had continued his father's work and had put an end to the Albigensian Crusade, and as the war wore on, the hope that Charles IX would go on a crusade against the Huguenots gradually emerged.¹⁹

The first author to mention the Albigensian Crusade in this context was Nicole Grenier, in the Bouclier de la Foy (1547), and frequently reprinted later in the century. Nicole Grenier was remarkable in that he was one of the first Catholic authors to write against Protestantism in the vernacular, recognising the need to fight fire with fire, since Protestant authors were notorious for using French instead of Latin.²⁰ Even in this early work, published in a very different religious context, St Louis was held up as an example to be followed by the Valois monarchs:

Le Roy Loys septiesme, pere de S. Loys, eut en son temps une grosse guerre contre les heretiques Albigeois, & les fait retourner à l'union de la foy & de l'eglise: duquel le fils saint Loys & ses successeurs Roys ont tousjours esté grands imitateurs comme vrais zelateurs de l'honneur de Dieu, de la foy, & de la Reformation des abus survenans de l'Eglise.²¹

This theme was taken up in 1558 by Antoine de Mouchy, in his Responce a

¹⁹ Norman Housley, The Later Crusades: from Lyons to Alcazar 1274-1580 (Oxford, 1992), pp. 234-266.

²⁰ R. E. Hallmark, 'Defenders of the faith: the case of Nicole Grenier', RS 11 (1997), no. 2, 123-140.

²¹ Nicole Grenier, Le bouclier de la foy (Paris, Nicolas Bonfons, 1577), sig. *4^r. The 1547 edition is the first edition listed in Higman, Piety and the People, p. 235.

quelque apologie published in the wake of the affair of the rue St Jacques. De Mouchy was the Syndic of the Sorbonne and had been appointed 'Inquisiteur de la Foy' by the Cardinal de Lorraine.²² The affair of the rue St Jacques was the first instance where Protestants were 'caught in the act', and was at the origin of a flurry of polemic on both sides of the confessional divide: 'Par le commandement aussi dudict Philippe, les François feirent la guerre aux Albigeois heretiques, à l'instigation du Pape Innocent troisesme, l'an 1210. Et fut reiterée du tens de son fils Loys, pere de monsieu S. Loys l'an 1216. tant qu'ils furent exterminéz'.²³

Although these authors praised the efforts of the medieval monarchs to eradicate heresy, they refrained from making a direct comparison between Protestantism and Albigensianism. The first author to do so was Jean Gay, a member of the Parlement of Toulouse, who spelled out plainly the links between the Cathar heresy and Protestantism in his Histoire des scismes et heresies des Albigeois. The renewed interest in the Albigensian Crusade predictably came from the Parlement of Toulouse for whose members it had particular relevance. There was no doubt that the Protestant nobility, and the Bourbon in particular, were the intended target of Gay's Histoire des scismes et heresies des Albigeois: 'Les heretiques Albigeois favoriz, & entretenuz dedans les terres du conte Raymond de Tholoze, & du viconte de Beziers son neveu: Ensemble du conte de Foix leur confederé, se disoient estre Evangelistes, comme font les heretiques modernes'.²⁴

The counts of Toulouse had been the temporal patrons that had allowed the Albigensian heresy to grow from the status of popular heresy to that of quasi-national Church in Languedoc. The book, however, earned immediate notoriety by making a direct allusion to the numerous wives of Henry VIII, and making multiple marriages a telling sign of heresy:

Quant aux heretiques... il vous plaira renommer la vie d'un prince

²² Feret, La Faculté de Théologie, II. pp. 51-5.

²³ Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie, sig. C3^v.

²⁴ Gay, Histoire des scismes, p. 1.

estranquier... qui chacun jour changeoit de femme, & chaque jour faisoit nouvelles noces, ayant espousé ou ravy jusques au nombre de sept femmes: et de semblables trouverez vous avoir esté fait trois cent & quarant cinq ans auparavant par ledict conte Raymond... que par une même libertinerie il espousa & afronta quatre femmes.²⁵

This particular passage was the origin of a diplomatic incident with Elizabeth I, and the English Ambassador, Throckmorton, formally complained at Court and demanded that the book be banned:

Lately a lewd book came to his hands, printed at Paris, wherein the author speaks slanderously of Kings Henry VIII. and Edward VI. It is dedicated to the Constable, to whom he addressed his complaint to have Reformation of the matter, who procured order to be addressed to his son, Marshal Montmorency, to have all the books suppressed, and the author is likely enough to be punished.²⁶

As a result, the Connétable de Montmorency, published an order forbidding printing without the authorisation of the King or his Council, despite the fact that the book had been approved by the Sorbonne and had been granted a privilège by the Parlement:

L'occasion pour laquelle avoient esté expediées lesdites lettres a son advis estoit pour quelques livres scandaleux et seditieux que aucuns imprimeurs, tant de ladite ville de Paris que de Lyon, avoient nagueres imprimé, comme il est porté par icelles, au grand scandale d'un chacun et se trouvoient les privileges et permissions d'imprimer aucuns livres d'iceux passez en ladite cour et mesmes d'imprimer le livre appelé l'Histoire des Albigeois duquel est

²⁵ Gay, Histoire des scismes, p. 5.

²⁶ Joseph Stevenson ed., Calendar of State Papers, Foreign series, of the reign of Elizabeth, 1561-1562 (London, 1866), IV. p. 503.

advenu plus de scandale que de doctrine.²⁷

The controversy which surrounded the publication of this book illustrates the divergence of interests between the Court, who sought to censor the book, and the Parlement and the Sorbonne who had authorised its publication. The Parlement and the Sorbonne had worked hand in hand with the government during the ascendancy of the Guise, but were notoriously opposed to the conciliatory measures of Michel de L'Hôpital. The Parlement refused to register the Edict of Pacification of January 1562, and on this occasion, the secretary du Tillet addressed a remonstrance to the King, in which he made a reference to St Louis and the Albigensians:

le Roy saint Loys, aagé seulement de quatorze ans, par la saige conduite de la Royne Blanche sa mere, eut cest heur d'extirper l'heresie des Albigeois, renga si bien le dernier Raymond conte de Tholoze, que par traicté faict en Avri mil deux cens vingt-huict il le feist obliger a purger sa terre de ladicte heresie.²⁸

It is clear that du Tillet agreed with Jean Gay in making an implicit reference to the Protestant nobles who defended the new religion. This stance proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy after the open rebellion of the Prince de Condé in April 1562.

As if he had been waiting for his cue, Jean du Tillet presented a manuscript history of the Albigensian Crusade to Catherine de Médicis on 1 April 1562. Du Tillet could not have timed it better, since Tours had been seized by the Protestants on 30 March and Orleans fell to the Prince de Condé the next day, 2 April 1562. This book contained an implicit comparison between the Prince de Condé and the comte Raymond de Toulouse and echoed the text of the Parlement's remonstrance: 'En fin les honneurs & profit furent par le Createur reservez au Roy saint Louys, eagé

²⁷ Guilleminot-Chrétiens, 'Le contrôle de l'édition en France', pp. 382-3; Eugénie Droz ed., Chemins de l'Hérésie (4 vols, Geneva, 1970-76), I. p. 375.

²⁸ [Jean du Tillet], Remonstrances faictes au roy par messieurs de la court de Parlement de Paris, sur la publication de l'Edict du mois de Janvier (Cambrai, Nicolas Lombard, 1561) in Droz (ed.), Chemins de l'Hérésie, III, 420-432, p. 431.

seulement de quatorze ans trois jours, moyennant la sage conduite de la tres vertueuse Royne Blanche sa mere'.²⁹ Repeating what he had done with François II in 1560 after the tumult of Amboise, du Tillet emphasised the comparison between Louis IX and Charles IX who was close to celebrating his twelfth birthday at that time. This analogy was as much intended for Catherine de Médicis, since during the minority of Louis IX (1226-1230), Blanche de Castille had faced the rebellion of the counts of Bretagne, Champagne and la Marche.³⁰ Du Tillet pressed the point that the Catholic Church and the Crown had been in a symbiotic relationship for so long that challenging the one necessarily implied armed rebellion against the other. Furthermore, he observed that the rebellion of the nobles had been encouraged by the young age of the King during the regency of Blanche de Castille:

Ledit Roy saint Loys son fils aîné, & aagé seulement de premier Decembre 1226. (qu'il fut couronné & sacré) de unze ans sept mois six jours, soubz la regence de la Royne Blanche sa mere, le Comte de Tholoze, mesprisant la jeunesse du Roy & la domination de la Royne, leur commença la guerre.³¹

The whole book could be conceived as a warning to the Protestant nobility, and the Prince de Condé in particular, using the fate of comte Raymond de Toulouse as a deterrent against rebellion: 'La lecture des piteuses cheutes de grandes maisons, autres calamitez & miseres de plus puissans qu'eux possibles les retiendra'.³² In this statement we find the repetition of part of Jean Gay's title: 'plusieurs grands princes,

²⁹ Jean du Tillet, Sommaire de l'histoire de la guerre faicte contre les heretiques Albigeois, extraicte du Tresor des Chartres du Roy par feu Jehan du Tillet Prothenotaire & Secretaire de la maison & Couronne de France, Greffier du Parlement de Paris, sieur de la Bussiere (Paris, Robert Nivelles, 1590), sig. ã7^r.

³⁰ Polydori Vergilii, Urbinitis Anglicae historiae libri vigintifex (Basel, 1546), p. 297.

³¹ Du Tillet, Sommaire de l'histoire de la guerre, sig. D5^f.

³² Du Tillet, Sommaire de l'histoire de la guerre, sig. ã7^v.

& seigneurs sont tombez en extremes desolations & ruynes, pour avoir favorisé aux heretiques'.³³ Henceforth, the comparison with the Albigensian Crusade went from strength to strength, with implications for both Protestants and Catholics. For if the comparison with Albigensians was designed to hurt the Protestants, it also carried a clear political message to young King Charles IX to lead a crusade against them.

* * *

Charles IX reached his majority in August 1563 at the age of 13, in Rouen, as part of an initiative orchestrated by Catherine de Médicis, to have the Peace of Amboise registered by the reluctant Parlements.³⁴ The Edict of Amboise of March 1563 was greeted with as much resistance from the Parlement of Paris as the Edict of January 1562, and the regional Parlements followed suit. The declaration of the King's majority took the shape of a lit de justice, which was unprecedented outside Paris, forcing the reluctant Parlement of Rouen to register the Edict. Mack Holt argues that this event was designed to chastise the Parlement of Paris which had made the majority of the King a condition of its registering the edict.³⁵ On 15 February 1563, shortly before the controversy, Jean du Tillet signed the privilège enabling the publication of a Response aux blasphemateurs de la sainte messe which made a further call to the eradication of heresy. Its author, Esprit Rotier, was an inquisitor and Dean of the University of Toulouse, which had been founded by Pope Innocent III in the aftermath of the Albigensian Crusade. It reproduced the points that had been made regarding the King's majority, in evoking the forebears of Charles IX who had started their reign in their teens:

Et pouvons estimer que la divine providence a permis ces monstres
& perverses sectes entrer en vostre Royaume, afin que vous ayez le
los & gloire à tout jamais les avoir en ce vostre jeune aage chassez

³³ Gay, Histoire des scismes.

³⁴ Janine Garrisson, A History of Sixteenth-Century France, 1483-1598: Renaissance, Reformation and Rebellion (London, 1995), p. 263.

³⁵ M. P. Holt, The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 57-8.

& extirpez de tout vostre Royaume.... Ce qu'autres fois s'est
demonstré en aucuns Roys de France, qui en leur jeune aage,
aymerent Dieu & son Eglise de grand coeur, & administrerent leur
Royaume glorieusement, & victorieusement, comme feirent
Philippe Auguste, S. Loys, Charles huictiesme, qui en l'aage de
quatorze ans commencerent à regner.³⁶

It is clear from this passage that neither Rotier nor du Tillet had expected the coming of age of Charles IX to be used as a pretext to have the Edict of Amboise, which included further measures of toleration, ratified.

The period of peace which followed the Edict of Amboise provoked a corresponding lull of interest in the Albigensian Crusade, which ended with the Peace of Longjumeau in March 1568. By that time, Charles IX had reached the age of 18, and the fact that he had reached his majority was no longer disputed, but it soon became clear that Charles IX had failed to fulfil the hopes of those advocating a crusade against Protestants. The theme had lost none of its potency when Gabriel de Saconay published De la providence de dieu sur les roys de france (1568). This work reproduced the comparison between St Louis and Charles IX which had dominated his minority:

Et si comme il donna le pouvoir au Roy Philippes Auguste en
l'aage de quatorze ans, de chastier les persecuteurs des Eglises, &
au Roy saint Loys au mesme aage, de supprimer la rage & memoire
des Albigeois, & à ces deux Roys aussi & à plusieurs autres, la
force pour chastier les princes & seigneurs de leur Royaume qui
avoient conspiré contre leurs majestés: aussi a il pleu à sa bonté
divine donner la puissance quasi au mesme aage à nostre Roy
Treschrestien Charles IX. pour resister à si grandes entreprinses &
menees attentees contre la religion divine, & contre sa personne &

³⁶ Esprit Rotier, Response aux blasphemateurs de la sainte messe: Avec la confutation de la vaine & ridicule coene des Calvinistes (Paris, Jacques Kerver, 1566), sigs A7^{r-v}.

estat.³⁷

There was also a deliberate shift of emphasis towards Catherine de Médicis, who having proved a capable Regent, was compared once more to Blanche de Castille. After all, it was Blanche de Castille who had crushed the rebellion of the barons during the minority of Louis IX, despite being regarded as a foreigner in her own kingdom.³⁸ In 1565, the Bishop of Montpellier, Guillaume Pellicier, had offered the manuscript Histoire des prouesses et vaillantises de noble seigneur messire Simon, comte de Montfort to the Queen Mother who had it bound and marked with her coat of arms.³⁹ Catherine de Médicis acknowledged the comparison between herself and Blanche de Castille in a conversation with the Venetian ambassador, Giovanni Correr, who wrote in 1569: ‘en me racontant ces choses... elle les appliquait aux affaires actuelles’.⁴⁰ This clearly proves that the comparison with the Albigensian Crusade had the desired impact on the ruling élite and might have influenced the policies of the Regent. The Catholic authors who stressed this element of the comparison had probably realised who was in charge at Court and pressed the Regent, rather than the King, for a change in policy. Their efforts paid off, when after the failure of the Peace of Longjumeau, Catherine de Médicis dismissed Michel de

³⁷ Gabriel de Saconay, De la providence de dieu sur les roys de france treschrestiens, par laquelle sa sainte religion Catholique ne defaudra en leur Royaume. Et comme les Gotz Arriens, & les Albigeois en ont esté par icelle dechassés (Lyon, Michel Jove, 1568), sig. X4^v.

³⁸ Jean Richard, Saint Louis: roi d’une France féodale, soutien de la Terre sainte (Paris, 1983), pp. 40-6.

³⁹ Guillaume Pellicier, Histoire des prouesses et vaillantises de noble seigneur messire Simon, comte de Montfort, faites par luy pour la foy catholique et l’église de Dieu (1565), see Vicaire, ‘Les Albigeois Ancêtres des Protestants’, p. 36.

⁴⁰ Jean Carbonnier, ‘De l’idée que le protestantisme s’est fait de ses rapports avec le catharisme ou des adoptions d’ancêtres en histoire’, BSHPF, 101 (1955), 72-87, p. 83.

L'Hôpital along with his conciliatory policies.

After the outbreak of the second War of Religion, another element of the comparison also emerged in the Catholic histories of the Albigensian Crusade. If Louis IX had been compared to Charles IX, and Blanche de Castille to Catherine de Médicis, Simon de Montfort, who had led the Albigensian Crusade, had been largely ignored. Simon de Montfort had been commissioned by the Pope to lead the Crusade in exchange for the lands of comte Raymond de Toulouse as an incentive for victory. It was only after a lengthy and difficult process involving diplomacy and warfare that Louis IX was able to take Languedoc back from de Montfort. Simon de Montfort was the ideal figurehead for the ultra-Catholic party which emerged at this time, advocating the direct involvement of Spain and the Pope in the French Wars of Religion. Simon de Montfort was given back his place at the heart of the Albigensian Crusade and his name started to figure prominently in the histories.

This development coincided with the first stirrings of the Holy League which appeared in embryonic forms in confraternities and crusading movements in 1567 and 1568.⁴¹ Robert Harding has noted the similarities between the confraternity of the Holy Ghost in Mâcon and a similar movement that had appeared in Languedoc during the Albigensian Crusade: 'They resemble the military sodalities that formed against Albigensianism in thirteenth-century towns in Languedoc and Northern Italy, such as the White Confraternity of Toulouse, established in 1209, or the Militia of Jesus Christ, which joined many Languedoc towns and chateaux in confederation'.⁴²

This evolution can be traced in a second publication by Jean du Tillet, Advertissement a la noblesse (1568), where he described the Crusade as a confederacy of barons under the leadership of de Montfort:

Nous lisons en l'histoire des Albigeois, que pullulant leur erreur, &

⁴¹ Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. pp. 379-80, 383-97; Holt, The French Wars of Religion, pp. 67-75.

⁴² Robert H. Harding, 'The Mobilization of Confraternities Against the Reformation in France', SCJ, 11 (1980), no 2, 85-107, p. 86.

se couvrant de mesmes voiles que font noz conjurez, la Noblesse se croisa sous l'enseigne d'un Conte de Montfort, & leur feist & continua la guerre jusques à ce qu'ils furent tous deffaicts & exterminiez.⁴³

The strongest advocate for de Montfort's leadership was undoubtedly Arnaud Sorbin, chaplain of the future Henri III to whom he dedicated his Histoire des Albigeois, et gestes de noble Simon de Monfort. It is clear from the dedication, dated 15 October 1568, that Henri had replaced Charles IX as the focus of the hopes for a crusade against the heretics:

Tout cella, que commet la secte Genevoise,
L'Heretique Albigeois avoit plus tôt commis,
Soit murdre, soit larcin, soit trahison d'amis,
Dol, opiniatrise, impieté, & noise.
Le Comte de Montfort par l'armée Française
A été le domteur de l'Albigeois soubzmis:
Ton Henry de Valois moissonneur d'ennemis,
(O Sorbin) domtera l'Herésie Gauloise.
Ton livre lui apprend, que Montfort envoié
Chatia par le feu l'Albigeois devoié,
Et le rend un Montfort de l'Eglise Romaine.
Par les mêmes moiens, quel'Albigeois mutin
Finist, il punira le Calviniste, à fin
qu'un même vice soit puni de même peine.⁴⁴

With his victories at Jarnac and Moncontour in 1569, Henri had become a very popular figure of the ultra-Catholic party which saw him as a second Simon de

⁴³ Jean du Tillet, Advertissement a la noblesse, tant du party du Roy, que des Rebelles & Conjurez (Lyon, Michel Jove, 1568), sig. C1^r.

⁴⁴ Arnaud Sorbin, Histoire des albigeois, et gestes de noble simon de monfort (Toulouse, Arnaud and Jaques Colomies, 1568), sig. A4^r.

Montfort. But Simon de Montfort was also compared to the Duc de Guise, who also embodied the hopes of the ultra-Catholic party for a crusade against the Protestants. A 1569 Parisian edition of Arnaud Sorbin's Histoire des Albigeois includes a short companion work entitled Similitude des regnes du roy Loys IX... et de celuy du roy Charles where it is François de Lorraine who is compared to Simon de Montfort:

[Louis IX] fait combattre durant sa minorité à toute outrance les Heretiques Albigeois en Languedoc par Simon de Lycestre Comte de Mont fort: desquels il fut victorieux.... Le Roy [Charles IX] durant sa minorité a combattu les Heretiques rebelles, par ses Capitaines Messire François de Lorraine Duc de Guize, saint personnage: lequel les a plusieurs fois debellez.⁴⁵

Thus Arnaud Sorbin's Histoire des Albigeois and its companion work Similitude des regnes introduced an ambiguity which was later developed in the League. Both works recognised Simon de Montfort as the leader of the Crusade, but disagreed about who his contemporary incarnation should be (Anjou or Guise) thus heralding the rivalry which pitched the supporters of Henri III against those of Henri de Guise in the 1580s. After his coronation in 1574, Henri III was reminded by the League polemicists of his oath to rid the country of heresy and resort was made to the example of Philippe Auguste leading the Crusade against the Albigensian heretics.⁴⁶ But despite Henri's clever endorsement of the League in 1576, Henri III came to disappoint those who had seen him as the leader of a crusade against the Protestants, especially after the Parisian League in 1584. The Duc de Guise was seen

⁴⁵ I. D. S. A., Similitude des regnes du roy Loys IX. par nous nomme s. Loys, et de celuy du roy Charles à present regnant bound with Arnaud Sorbin, Histoire des albigeois, et gestes de noble simon de monfort. Descrite par F. Pierre des Vallées Sernay, Moine de l'Ordre de Cisteaux (Paris, Guillaume Chaudière, 1569), sigs AA2^v, AA3^v, AA4^r, AA5^f.

⁴⁶ Dalia Leonardo, 'In Pursuit of a Godly Kingdom: Kingship and Propaganda during the Reign of Henry III, 1584-89' (unpublished conference paper given at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, St Louis, 1996), 12 pages, p. 9.

as its leading figure and after his assassination in 1588, he became a martyr of the Holy League while Henri III became their primary target.

This later period saw the re-printing of the books on the Albigenian Crusade that had been written during the first three Wars of Religion. Arnaud Sorbin himself was a notorious 'ligueur' and his Histoire des albigeois was reprinted in 1569 and 1585 under the evocative title Histoire de la Ligue Sainte.⁴⁷ Furthermore the inflammatory Histoire des scismes et heresies des Albigeois by Jean Gay, which had been suppressed by Montmorency in 1562, was reprinted in Paris in 1589.⁴⁸ This is also the time when Helie du Tillet published his father's Sommaire de l'histoire de la guerre faicte contre les heretiques Albigeois, which he dedicated to the Cardinal Henri de Cajette on 24 March 1590:

Me souvenant que feu mon pere voyant ce royaume affligé mesmes troubles qu'il avoit esté il y a plus de trois cens ans, par l'heresie des Albigeois, comme zelateur du bien de ce Royaume, en l'an cinq cens soixante & deux, presenta a la Royne mere de nos Roys, un extrait par luy tiré du tresor des Chartres du Royaume de France, de l'histoire des heretiques Albigeois... il m'a semblé que les mesmes remedes qui furent lors appliquez à guerir la playe qui affligeoit ce Royaume (sinon en tout) au moins en la pluspart sont maintenant fort a propos, pour donner la guarison a la mesme maladie laquelle ce Royaume est a present tourmenté.⁴⁹

Probably the most durable consequence of the polemical use of the Albigenian

⁴⁷ Arnaud Sorbin, Histoire de la Ligue Sainte faicte il y a CCCLXXX ans à la conduite de Simon de Montfort contre les hérétiques albigeois (Paris, Guillaume Chaudière, 1585); M. Greengrass, France in the Age of Henri IV: The struggle for stability (London, 1995), p. 199; Vicaire, 'Les Albigeois ancêtres des Protestants', p. 37.

⁴⁸ Vicaire, 'Les Albigeois Ancêtres des Protestants', p. 34.

⁴⁹ Du Tillet, Sommaire de l'histoire de la guerre, sigs ã2^v-ã3^r.

Crusade was the influence it had, not on politics, but on the idea that the Albigensians were forerunner of the Reformation. All the histories of the Albigensians mentioned above portrayed Protestants as their offspring, and the tenets of the Reformed religion were amalgamated to the doctrinal beliefs of the Albigensians. Jean Gay wrote in 1562 that ‘Lutherans’ were the foster children of the Albigensians: ‘Mais encores leur extermination feust si grande qu’elle s’estendist jusques à leur posterité: de maniere que dedans peu de temps apres n’en y eust, & n’en y a aucunes reliques, sinon les seulz Lutheriens & leurs fauteurs, qui sont leurs enfans diaboliques adoptif’.⁵⁰

Jean du Tillet, in the same year, asserted that it was the seed of the Albigensian heresy that had been at the origin of the evangelical movement:

Depuis quarante cinq ans elle a esté resuscitée en plusieurs pays, remplie de nouvelletez adjoustees selon la coustume de toutes autres heresies, c’est aprochee & espendue en cedit Royaume, plus en seize mois qu’elle n’avoit faict en tout le temps precedent, par le mespris de la jeunesse du Roy, est necessaire y mettre remedde, avant que le mal soit incurable & apporte ruyne, que Dieu ne permette.⁵¹

Arnaud Sorbin, in 1569, was no less explicit, linking the beliefs of the Albigensians with those of Protestantism:

m’estant ces jours passez tombé en main un vieil livret escrit à la main contenant l’origine, progresz, & la fin de l’Heresie Albigeoise, & l’ayant trassé pour la plupart, y trouvant les varietez des opinions des Heretiques Albigeois, & leurs actes non gueres dissemblables de ceux de noz modernes deformez.⁵²

⁵⁰ Gay, Histoire des scismes, p. 22.

⁵¹ Du Tillet, Sommaire de l’histoire de la guerre, sig. F4^v.

⁵² Sorbin, Histoire des albigeois (Paris, 1569), sig. a4^v.

But the most radical pamphlet was the Similitude des regnes, which made a comparison between Théodore de Bèze and his Albigenian namesake: ‘C’est chose digne d’admiration, que celuy qui fut autheur de l’heresie des Albigeois ce nommoit Theodore: comme celuy qui est autheur de l’heresie des Huguenots: aussi l’heresie qui à present regne procede d’Allemagne & Boëme, comme celle des Albigeois. C’est Theodore de Beze’.⁵³

The association between Albigenianism and Protestantism also gave rise to new contenders for the origins of the word Huguenot. Gabriel de Saconay, on his part, linked it with the word gueux: ‘les soldatz Heretiques lesquelz lors on nommoit communement les Ribaux, nom à eux imposé, comme on les appelle maintenant Gueux ou Huguenotz’ which is a direct reference to the nickname given to the Dutch rebels (beggars).⁵⁴ Boulgres, a synonym of gueux, was also a name given to the Albigenians who were affiliated to the Bogomils, originating in Bulgaria.⁵⁵ The etymology of the word also indicates a connection with buggery which was one of the practices imputed to the Albigenians and the Bogomils. This was acknowledged by Nicolas Vignier in 1601: ‘mot qui me semble proceder des Bulgariens, desquels on disoit aussi que les Albigeois tenoient l’heresie, combien qu’on le voudroit prendre aujourd’huy en signification de Sodomite’.⁵⁶ This Bulgarian connection was exploited in the Similitude des regnes published in 1569: ‘C’est chose admirable, que l’heresie des Albigeois procedoit d’Allemagne, comme tesmoigne l’histoire de S.Denis: puis vint en France, & estoit appellée l’heresie des Bulgares’.⁵⁷ Of course,

⁵³ I. D. S. A., Similitude des regnes, sig. AA5^r.

⁵⁴ Saconay, De la providence de dieu, sigs G2^v, T4^r.

⁵⁵ Janet G. Gray, ‘The Origins of the Word Huguenot’, SCJ, 14 (1983), no. 3, 349-359, p. 356.

⁵⁶ Nicolas Vignier, Recueil de L’Histoire de l’Eglise, depuis le Baptême de nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ, jusques à ce temps (Leyden, Christoffle de Raphelengien, 1601), pp. 406, 408.

⁵⁷ I. D. S. A., Similitude des regnes, sig. AA3^v.

these associations by name reveal the unwillingness of the polemicists to go into any detail as to what Albigensians and Protestants might really have in common.

The most significant link is undoubtedly the geographical identity between erstwhile centres of Albigensianism and contemporary hotbeds of Protestant resistance in the Midi. This similarity was noted by Bosquet, a member of the ultra-Catholic Parlement of Toulouse, who made the connection in his account of the first War of Religion first published in 1572:

Un an cinq mois après [la fondation d'un collège Jésuite] la ville de Lavour surprise de nuit par Labarte ministre de la nouvelle secte.... Lesquels en feurent aussi quelque temps apres rejettez par le sieur Dambres gouverneur d'icelle... depuis entierement remise & maintenue en la foy catholique par la maison dambres proche d'icelle - quoy que Lavour aye esté entierement batue tenant l'erreur des Albigeois.⁵⁸

The Albigensian past of Lavour was also acknowledged by the Protestants, notably Jean Chassanion, minister of Montpellier, who wrote in 1595: 'Les chateaux qu'ils tenoyent, estoient Lavour, à quatre lieues de Carcassone, que leurs ennemis disoyent estre la fontaine d'heresie'.⁵⁹ Catholics institutions in Toulouse had been built on the ashes of the Albigensian heresy, by edict of Innocent III who had declared that he would make a 'holy city' out of a 'hearth of pestilence'.⁶⁰ It is not

⁵⁸ M. G. Bosquet, Sur les troubles advenus en la ville de Tolose l'an 1562 (Toulouse, Raymond Colomiez, 1595), p. 23.

⁵⁹ Jean Chassanion, Histoire des Albigeois: touchant leur doctrine & religion, contre les faux bruits qui ont esté semés d'eux, & les ecris dont on les a à tort diffamés : & de la cruelle & longue guerre qui leur a esté faite, pour ravir les terres & seigneuries d'autrui, sous couleur de vouloir extirpé l'hérésie [Geneva], (Pierre de Saintandré, 1595), p. 65.

⁶⁰ Robert A. Schneider, Public Life in Toulouse 1463-1789: From Municipal Republic to Cosmopolitan City (London, 1989), p. 15.

surprising to find that many Catholic authors who made the comparison were from Toulouse, like Bosquet, Jean Gay and Rotier who was the Dean of the University founded by Innocent III.⁶¹ The wave of iconoclasm and rioting which sprang up in Nîmes, Montpellier, Montauban, and Castres, culminating in the riot of Toulouse in May 1562, was undoubtedly what spurred their involvement. Jean Gay's Histoire des scismes et heresies des Albigeois was dedicated to Anne de Montmorency, Governor of Languedoc, and may have been intended as an encouragement to lead the struggle against heresy in this region.

The geographical basis for the comparison between Protestantism and Albigensianism was also noticed by Protestant authors, notably from Montauban rather than Toulouse. Jean Fornier (1530-1584) was born in Montauban and studied law in Toulouse before trying his hand at poetry in Paris where he was converted to Protestantism in the 1550s.⁶² In 1562, he published l'Histoire des guerres faictes en plusieurs lieux de la France probably based on the chronicles of Bernard Gui (1262-1331), who had been an inquisitor in Languedoc between 1307 and 1324.⁶³ Although there is no indication of his sympathy for the Reformed faith or the Albigensians, Fornier described the siege of Montauban by Simon of Montfort in 1211 in great detail. Haag indicated that Fornier would have suffered from persecution and witnessed the siege of Montauban by the Catholics in 1562 in the same year that his account of the Albigensian Crusade was published. One passage might denote irony when he described how the crusaders were absolved of their sins through the sacrament of the Eucharist and the handling of relics:

Donques apres que les souldatz de Jesu Christ eurent fait
confession de leurs pechez, & ouy l'office comme ilz avoient
acoustumé, & feurent repuz & confortez de la salutare viand du
saint Sacrement, ilz se mirent tous en armes, & en ordre, & ayant

⁶¹ Rotier, Response aux blasphemateurs, sigs A7^{r-v}.

⁶² Eugene Haag, La France Protestante (10 vols, Geneva, 1966), pp. 505-6.

⁶³ G. Mollat ed., Bernard Gui: Manuel de l'Inquisiteur (Paris, 1964), p. vi.

receu la benediction des Evesques, & adoré le bois de Vraye Croix entre les mains de l'Evesque de Tolose, ayant plaine indulgence de leurs pechez, sortirent hors du Chasteau.⁶⁴

The predominantly Catholic comparison with Albigensianism went unanswered by the Protestants until the 1580s when it could be argued that it was too late. The Protestant original response to the comparison was to embrace it and make the Albigensians forerunners of the Reformation and members of the true Church. Although French Protestants were aware of a connection with the Albigensians, the Reformed Church did not officially acknowledge it until 1572. As a result of decisions taken at national synods held in the south of France, the Albigensians were ultimately included in the Protestant martyrologies.

* * *

Unlike the Hussites, Lollards and Waldensians who were given ample attention from the Protestant martyrologists of the first and second generation, the Albigensians were largely ignored. Luther is famous for having claimed the Hussites and Lollards as precursors of the Reformation, and these connections were emphasised in both the Lutheran and Anglican Protestant traditions in the face of papal supremacy. The Waldensians, for their part, had survived medieval persecutions until the beginning of evangelism and were claimed by Swiss and

⁶⁴ Jean Fornier, l'Histoire des guerres faictes en plusieurs lieux de la France, tant en la Guienne & Languedoc contre les Heretiques, que ailleurs contre certains ennemis de la couronne: & de la conqueste de la terre sainte: Et de tout ce qui est advenu en France digne de memoire, depuis l'an de grace 1200. jusques à l'an Mil trois cens unze, au quel tous les Templiers furent destruietz (Toulouse, Jaques Colomies, 1562), sigs B3^v, C4^r. Note that the use of the word 'viande' to describe the host is not sufficient in itself to identify Fornier as a Protestant. The word was indeed used by René Benoist who describes the sacrament as 'la viande des anges' in his Claire Probation de la necessaire manducation de la substantielle & reale humanité de Jesus Christ, vray Dieu & vray homme, au S. Sacrement de l'autel (Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1561), sig. K2^r.

French Calvinists as their religious forebears.⁶⁵ On the other hand, Albigensians, although they presented a strong case of resistance to the rise of the papal monarchy in the thirteenth century, were originally given little attention by French martyrologists.⁶⁶

In a way the Albigensians served the same function for the French Reformation as John Hus and Wycliffe for the Lutheran and Anglican churches. They added a geographical and cultural identity to an otherwise nameless process of association with medieval heretics. It is merely their geographical location which suggested a parentage with the Protestants of the Midi in the same way that the Waldensians had been adopted by Geneva because of their geographical proximity. Neither groups had much in common with Protestantism doctrinally, and even the Vaudois of the sixteenth century were described by Euan Cameron as a far cry from the precursors of the Reformation they were made to be:

In their doctrines we have seen little evidence to place the Waldenses amongst the precursors of the reformers. In terms of their education and backgrounds, the ministers had more in common with priests (from whom many, for instance in Germany, were converted) than with popular heretics. Since the heretics had traditionally rejected the tutelage of priests and learned religious figures, we are forced to conclude that only their hostility to Rome made the Vaudois suitable subjects for conversion to Calvinism.⁶⁷

This is particularly true of the Albigensians whose radical dualism made them akin to Manichees, although this affiliation was blown out of all proportions by their Catholic opponents. Although there is some debate as to whether the Albigensians

⁶⁵ Cameron, The Reformation of the Heretics, p. 256.

⁶⁶ On the rise of the papal monarchy see Colin Morris, The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250 (Oxford, 1991), pp. 446-7, 453-77.

⁶⁷ Cameron, The Reformation of the Heretics, p. 256.

were moderate or radical dualists, the consensus is that they believed the Devil had created the world. Beyond the commonplace view that the Devil was the Prince of this world, the Cathars believed that the true God was a being of pure spirit which had nothing to do with the material world. What made them remotely akin to Protestantism was their Gospel which was translated into Occitan, especially the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas which they interpreted in a dualist light. In this respect they are similar to the Waldensians, Wycliffites, and Hussites although their interpretation of the Gospel was closer to that of the Gnostics of the third and fourth century than the latter groups.⁶⁸

It is clear that their inclusion in the Protestant martyrologies stemmed from a confusion which was made in the course of the sixteenth century between Albigensians and Waldensians. It seems that this confusion originated in their near contemporaneity which was deliberately exploited by both Catholics and Reformed, although not by the Lutherans. Sebastian Franck was probably the first author to deal with the Albigensians in his Chronica, zeytbuch und Geschychtbibel (1531) where he made a clear distinction between Albigensians and Waldensians. Franck had two distinct entries, one for Albigenses, and one for Waldenses: he described the first as Manichaeic and radical heretics, whereas the second entry, by far the most substantial, describes the Waldensians' beliefs as close to those of the Anabaptists.⁶⁹ The orthodox Lutheran contributor to the Magdeburg Centuries, Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520-1575), had stressed the evangelical elements of the doctrine of the Waldensians in his Catalogus Testium Veritatis (1556), but in this the Albigensians are hardly mentioned at all. When they are, it is not in such terms that would suggest parentage with Protestants: 'Anno Domini 1213. haeresis Albigensium dilatata, totam provinciam coepit maculare'.⁷⁰ This was the only entry for the Albigensians in

⁶⁸ Nelli, La philosophie du catharisme, pp. 15-27.

⁶⁹ Sebastian Franck, Chronica, zeytbuch und Geschychtbibel (Strasburg, 1531), pp. 344, 453, 483.

⁷⁰ Matthias Flacius Illyricus, Catalogus Testium Veritatis qui ante nostram aetatem reclamarunt papae (Basel, 1556), p. 599.

the Catalogus Testium Veritatis, which indicates that Flacius distinguished them from the Waldensians and did not consider them to be members of the true Church.

This affiliation was championed by the Catholics who, in parallel with the Protestant adoption of the Waldensians, described the Albigensians as precursors of the Reformation. Jean du Tillet asserted in 1562 that the Albigensians had branched off from the Waldensians and that they shared their doctrinal beliefs with the Protestants:

L'Herésie des Albigeois fut tirée de deux sectes précédentes & diverses, condamnées sous le Pape Lucie tiers, l'une & la pire avoit pris le nom d'humbles, l'autre le titre des pauvres de Lyon, parce qu'ils reprotoient la propriété des biens, & d'autant que Valdon Lyonnois fut aucteur de ceste-cy furent aussi de son nom appellees Vaudois. Les Albigeois encores qu'ils eussent autres erreurs en aucuns estoient conformes à ceux de nos jours, car ils condamnoient la pluspart de ce que l'Eglise Romaine observoit, & pour en retirer les Chrestiens l'appelloient congregation d'enfer, & le siege Romain la beste descrite en l'Apocalypse.... Par icelle herésie les sacremens estoient aneantis, les confirmation, extreme onction, confession auriculaire & imposition de penitence estimees choses frivoles, l'Hostie Sacree Dieu de pain, la Messe abomination, les croix & images des Eglises idolatrie.⁷¹

These articles of faith had been associated with the Waldensians by the Protestants in the evident aim to portray them as members of the true Church.⁷² Du Tillet made a reference to the third Lateran Council of 1179, when Pope Lucius III condemned the Waldensians for the first time. They were condemned again along with the Albigensians by Innocent III at the fourth Lateran Council of 1215. This

⁷¹ Du Tillet, Sommaire de l'histoire de la guerre, sigs A1^{r-v}-A2^f.

⁷² Cameron, The Reformation of the Heretics, p. 256.

may explain the confusion that emerged, in Protestant martyrologies and Catholic histories alike, between the Waldensians and the Albigensians. According to Flacius Illyricus, the Waldensians had been ascribed false doctrines by the Catholic Church with the sole purpose of defaming them. The Albigensians had received the same treatment as the Waldensians, which led Protestant authors to treat the Albigensians as Flacius had the Waldensians.

John Bale wrote about the Albigensians and Waldensians on equal terms in his Image of Both Churches (1545) where he described them as ‘men doubtless of a Godly zeal and spirit’.⁷³ This view was reiterated and elaborated upon in his Scriptorum Illustrium maioris Brytanniae... Catalogus (1557) where he argued that they had both been upholders of true doctrine in the face of the rise of the papal monarchy:

Hi nempe videbant se aliter, sub patribus Dominico & Francisco,
non posse sui regis Abadonis avaritias, pompas ac libidines,
daemoniorum doctrinis defendere, contra Vualdenses seu pauperes
de Lugduno, atq; Albigenses haeteticos, infensissimos hostes, nisi
sepultù vel extinctù fuisset praenominatum Evangelium: ex praefati
igitur Joachimi doctrinis ac Cyrilli visionibus, Evangelium novum,
fucatae sanctitati accommodum conflabant, & illud vocabant
Evangelium Spiritus sancti, Evangelium deinceps duraturum, atq;
Evangelium aeternum.⁷⁴

For John Bale the Albigensians and Waldensians were not interesting in themselves but they added bulk to his arguments against the Papacy and the Mendicant Orders. It was the Waldensians and Albigensians who had first

⁷³ Henry Christmas ed., ‘Select Works of John Bale’, Parker Society (Cambridge, 1849), p. 563. I owe thanks to Tom Freeman, at the Institute of Historical Research, for these references.

⁷⁴ John Bale, Scriptorum Illustrium maioris Brytanniae, quam nunc Angliam & Scotiam vocant: Catalogus (Basel, 1559), p. 308.

'discovered' that the Pope was the Antichrist of Revelation which had been a leitmotiv of the Protestant apocalyptic tradition since the beginning. This point had already been stressed by Flacius Illyricus in his articles on the Revelation of John in the Catalogus Testium Veritatis: 'Nam alioqui Waldenses iam annis 400. Papam esse Antichristum docuerunt'.⁷⁵ Bale and Flacius had argued that because the Waldensians had accused the Pope of being the Antichrist, they had been ascribed false doctrines and persecuted. Although this apocalyptic aspect was not stressed as much by the subsequent Protestant authors who dealt with the Albigensians and Waldensians, it resurfaced at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

John Bale was undoubtedly responsible for writing the article concerning the Albigensians which appeared in the first edition of John Foxe's Acts & Monuments. It was based largely on the medieval chronicles of Matthew Paris and Roger Wendover which, according to Thomas Freeman, were known only to Bale at the time of the publication of the 1563 edition.⁷⁶ Although Matthew Paris was a good source for the Acts & Monuments because of his anti-papal stance, his account of the Albigensians was less than flattering and Bale was faced with a dilemma. Bale decided to resolve the difficulty by dismissing Paris's view of the Albigensians as being biased by the calumnies spread by the Papacy against its enemies:

What these Albingensis wer, it cannot be wel gathered by the olde popish histories. if there were any that did holde, teache, or maintaine agaynst the Pope, or his Papall pride, or withstande & gainsay his beggarly traditions, rites, and relygious, &c. the histories of that tyme for the most part in wrytyng of them, doe so deprave them, and misreport them, suppressyng the truthe of theyr artycles, that they make them and paynt them foorth to bee worse then Turkes and infidels. And that as I suppose, caused Math. Parisiensis and other of that sorte to wryte so of them as they did.

⁷⁵ Flacius Illyricus, Catalogus Testium Veritatis (Basel, 1556), p. 930.

⁷⁶ Tom Freeman, 'John Bale's Book of Martyrs?: The Account of King John in Acts and Monuments', Reformation, 3 (1998), 175-223.

Otherwise it is to be thoughte, and so I fynde in some recordes, that the opinions of the sayde Albigenses were sounde ynoughe, holdyng and professyng nothyng els, but onely agaynst the wanton wealthe, pride, and tyrannye of the Prelates, denyinge the Popes authoritie to have grounde of the scryptures, neyther coulde they awaye with the ceremonies and traditions, as Images, pardons, purgatorye of the Romishe Churche, callyng them (as some say) blasphemous occupynges, &c.⁷⁷

The first edition of the Acts & Monuments was criticised by contemporary English Catholics writing from the continent, notably Thomas Stapleton, who attacked Bale's treatment of the Albigensians:

Now for the other secte of the Albanenses of Albigenses, springinge of the loynes of the holye brother Waldo, beside the common and usuall errorrs, of the Waldenses, they condemned matrimony, and lyved lyke brute beastes in most filthie and beastlie bytchery.... And yet are they precieuse martyrs with M.Foxe, thoughe him self confesse, that the chroniclers make them no better then Turkes and infidelles: and wold sayne (for the honesty of his new ghospell and hys new canonisation) that men shoulde thinke yt were no so, contrary to all the Chroniclers upon his owne bare woorde, as one that doth not, nor ever shalbe able to shewe any thinge worthy of any credite, to the contrarye.... Now let Mayster foxe make an accompte of hys holy martyrs, and see howe manie he canne fynde, that have not maynteyned the sayd errorrs, of these Albigenses, Paterans, or Waldenses: and he shall fynde his holie cataloge altogether voyde and emptied.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ John Foxe, Actes and Monuments (London, 1563), fol. 71^v. See below, p. 206.

⁷⁸ Thomas Stapleton, A Counterblast to M. Hornes Vayne Blaste Against M. Fekenham (Louvain, 1567), fols 317^v-319^f. Another English critic was Nicolas Harpsfield. I am grateful to Thomas Freeman for this information.

This direct challenge was answered, this time by Foxe, in the second edition of the Acts & Monuments in 1570, in a chapter entitled ‘The historie of the Waldenses or Albigenses’ which drew its material on the Albigensian Crusade from Matthew Paris.⁷⁹ It is surprising that he willingly reproduced the Catholic claim that Albigensians and Waldensians were synonymous terms to indicate the same heretical group in different areas of France. Euan Cameron has argued that it was in the interest of the Protestant martyrologists to treat medieval heresy as one evangelical block, and it is true that they gained little from drawing attention to the doctrinal differences between each individual group, since doing so would also point at the discrepancies between their own doctrine and those of their adopted forebears.⁸⁰ Moreover, the Catholic sources tended to treat each heresy with equal contempt and accused them of the same crimes.⁸¹

The thought mechanism which led to the inclusion of the Albigensians in the Acts & Monuments preceded the continental movement. Although, in Bale’s own words, Protestant authors relied on Catholic sources for factual evidence on the medieval martyrs of the true Church, everything that pertained to their beliefs and practices could safely be dismissed. The fact that Catholic authors writing against heretics tended to ascribe the same villainous crimes to all indiscriminately encouraged the Protestants to think so. It was of the first importance to show the continuity of the true Church from apostolic times to the present and medieval opponents of papal supremacy provided the martyrologists with the missing link. Any heretical group which had suffered persecution at the hand of the Roman Catholic Church did not qualify, but those who had denounced the papal Antichrist (like the Waldensians and the Albigensians) did. This ideology had emerged with Matthias Flacius Illyricus, and his Catalogus Testium Veritatis was nothing more than what it claimed to be: a catalogue of the adversaries of the Papacy. The deciding

⁷⁹ Foxe, Acts and Monuments (London, 1570), fol. 295^f.

⁸⁰ E. Cameron, ‘Medieval Heretics as Protestant Martyrs’, SCH, 30 (1993), 185-207.

⁸¹ For accusations against the Waldensians see Cameron, The Reformation of the Heretics, pp. 108-111.

factor was that the Albigensians had denounced the papal monarchy and had been persecuted by the Catholic Church which justified their inclusion in Protestant martyrologies.⁸²

As we have seen, the geographical location of the Albigensian movement meant that it had particular relevance in the south of France, for both Catholics and Protestants. Catholic and Protestant histories of the Albigensian Crusade had originated from Toulouse and Montauban.⁸³ They had faced each other as centres of orthodoxy and heterodoxy at the time of the Albigensian Crusade and during the French Wars of Religion. It seemed natural that the first Reformed attempt to embrace the Albigensians should stem from the first national synod to be held south of the Loire: in Nîmes in May 1572. This synod was presided over by Nicolas des Gallars, and Antoine de la Roche Chandieu and Théodore de Bèze had been sent from Geneva to attend.⁸⁴ The decision was taken to commission a Reformed history of the Albigensian Crusade for which task the ministers of Montauban were designated:

Monsieur Berauld, & ses Collegues dans l'Eglise de Montauban seront chargés de retirer de Monsieur Comerard de Thoulouse, l'Histoire des Albigois, écrite en leur Langue, & Monsieur d'Acier la traduira en François, ensuite il la communiquera au Colloque, suivant les Canons de nôtre Discipline, & la fera imprimer: pour cet effet cette Assemblée envoiera des Lettres audit Sieur de Comerard & d'Acier.⁸⁵

⁸² Cameron, 'Medieval Heretics as Protestant Martyrs', p. 198.

⁸³ Gay, Histoire des scismes, and Fornier, l'Histoire des guerres.

⁸⁴ Simon Goulard, Memoires de l'estat de France, sous Charles Neufiesme (Meidelbourg, Henrich Wolf, 1576), p. 296.

⁸⁵ J. Aymon ed., Tous les Synodes Nationaux des Eglises Reformées de France (2vols, La Haye, Charles Delo, 1710), I. p. 123.

Although nothing came from this decision, probably because of the ensuing chaos provoked by the season of massacres following St Bartholomew's Day in the summer of 1572, it showed willingness from the highest ranking in Geneva to address the question of the Albigensians. Although Jean Crespin had not dealt with medieval heretics in his Histoire des Martyrs during his lifetime, his work was taken over by Simon Goulard who bridged the gap between apostolic times to Wycliffe and Hus. The Histoire des Martyrs published in 1582 was the first of Goulard's four editions, and it was the first to deal with the Albigensians. It includes a section on the Albigensians and Waldensians, although it is much more cautious than Foxe's Acts & Monuments:

Il y en a aussi bon nombre, qui ont souffert la mort pour s'estre opposez aux traditions de cest Antechrist, comme les Vaudois ou Albigeois, diffamez de divers noms estranges, comme Turelupins, Francstaupins, Lollards, Chaignards, Vaudois, Albigeois, &c. discernez en plusieurs endroits de l'Europe... plusieurs furent bruslez en France, desquels on appelloit les uns Publicains, les autres Cathariens, les autres Pateriniens, & de quelques autres noms & blasmes qu'on leur impositoit.⁸⁶

The affiliation between Protestants, Albigensians and Waldensians had been much more strongly asserted a year before by Lancelot du Voisin de la Popelinière in his Histoire de France:

Donques apres plusieurs & legeres attaques que la Foy commune receut en France... elle n'a point esté si vivement assaillie que par les Vaudois & leurs successeurs en Guyenne & pays voisins, qu'on nomma Albigeois de la ville d'Alby capitale d'Albigeois enclave de Languedo contre Quercy. Lesquels malgré tous les Potentatz Chrestiens semerent environ l'an unze cens & tousjours depuis leur

⁸⁶ Jean Crespin, Histoire des Martyrs persecutez et mis a mort pour la verité de l'Evangile, depuis le temps des Apostres jusques à l'an 1574 (Geneva, Jean Crespin, 1582), fol. 25^v.

doctrine peu différente à celle des Protestans modernes: non seulement par toute la France, mais aussi presque en tous les quartiers de l'Europe.⁸⁷

It is unclear whence de la Popelinière got his material, although in other sections of the Histoire de France he copied word for word the Histoire Ecclésiastique which was published in 1580. The Histoire de France was condemned by the national synod held in La Rochelle in 1581 because the author had deliberately chosen to represent both Catholic and Protestant views impartially.⁸⁸ The same view was reproduced on the Catholic side with Gabriel du Preau's Histoire de l'estat et succes de l'église published in 1583:

L'heresie des Albigeois ou Albiens, commença à pulluler & se mettre fort en avant en ce temps, tellement qu'en peu d'heure ils infecterent la plus part de la Gaule Aquitanique & Lyonnoise... lesquels se retirèrent au Pape pour autoriser leur secte... hommes & femmes se tinsent ensemble allans par pays: voire, qui plus est, qu'ils ne faisoient conscience, souz couleur d'esprouver leur chasteté, de coucher ensemble.... De ceste integrité du Pape, nasquit le desdaing de ces freres, & pauvres, & de là le mespris de l'autorité de l'Eglise: tellement que des Pauvres de Lyon, & des Humiliez pleins d'orgueil, des Parfaicts, Fidelles, & Croyans, remplis de toute imperfection, infidelité, & mescreance, eurent leur source toutes les heresies qui pour lors eurent cours & vogue en France, & s'esleverent les Vaudois & Albigeois, renouvelans les resveries, blasphemes, & mensonges, jadis tenuës comme veritables par les Goths, qui avoient commandé sur le pays de Languedoc, & desquels l'erreur estoit demeuré comme de pere en

⁸⁷ Popelinière, L'Histoire de France, I. fol. 7^v; Guy Bédouelle, 'Les Albigeois, témoins du véritable évangile: l'historiographie protestante du XVIe et du début du XVIIe siècle', CF, 14 (1979), 47-70, p. 55.

⁸⁸ Aymon, Tous les Synodes Nationaux, I. p. 151.

fils en certaines familles. ⁸⁹

These views of the Albigensians seem nonetheless to have become Protestant orthodoxy, as they were reproduced by the Dutch Peter Wesenbec in his Oratio De Waldensibus et Albigensibus Christianis (1585). Wesenbec (1546-1603) argued for a historical continuity between the end of the Albigensian Crusade in the thirteenth century until the persecution of Mérindol & Cabrières in France in 1545: ‘Exinde doctrina sincerior ad posteros transmissa, & in Calabria, extrema Italiae parte, praecipue vero in aliquot Galliae Narbonensis Provinciae que (ea olim Gallia Brachata) vicis & oppidis, quorum praecipua nominantur Merindolum & Cabriera, ad nostra usq; tempora producta & conservata fuit’.⁹⁰

It is clear from the articles on the Albigensians quoted so far that very little was known about the Albigensians and that, when in doubt, they were treated as a branch of the Waldensians. Although Foxe had laid the grounds for using Catholic sources for the history of medieval heretics, and despite the plethora of French Catholic histories of the Albigensian Crusade, a Protestant history of the Albigensians failed to materialise. A second southern synod, held in Montauban in 1594, expressed its willingness to seek historical forerunners to the Reformed Church:

Sur la Proposition faite par nôtre Frere Monsieur de Serres touchant des Lettres écrites au present Synode, par lesquelles on demande que quelques doctes personnages soient deputés pour voir le Recueil des Livres des anciens Docteurs qu’il a commencé de faire, pour prouver que nôtre Religion est ancienne & Catholique, & celle du Papisme nouvelle & particuliere.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Gabriel du Preau, Histoire de l’estat et succes de l’église dresse en forme de chronique generale et universelle (Paris, Jaques Kerver, 1583), sigs PPpp1^v-PPpp2^r.

⁹⁰ Petri Wesenbecii, Oratio De Waldensibus et Albigensibus Christianis (Jena, Tobias Steinman, 1585), sigs B1^{r-v}.

⁹¹ Aymon, Tous les Synodes Nationaux, I. p. 186.

At last, a Protestant history of the Albigensian Crusade, Jean Chassanion's Histoire des Albigeois, was published in Geneva in 1595, shortly after this synod. Jean Chassanion (1531-1598) had organised the Church of Meaux in 1555, and preached in Montpellier and other parts of Languedoc before becoming a minister in Lyon in 1565.⁹² Unlike his predecessors, Chassanion did not write about the Albigensians as a branch of the Waldensians, but as completely distinct from them. This meant that the Albigensians had to stand on their own merit and not through affiliation with the Waldensians who had long been rehabilitated as 'proto-Protestants'. For this reason, Chassanion wrote his history in reaction to the Catholic authors of the 1560s, notably Arnaud Sorbin, who had not made the connection with the Waldensians. Jean Chassanion's chief argument against Sorbin relied on a source in Occitan which was probably the manuscript secured by the ministers of Montauban following the decision of the synod of Nîmes in 1572:

Neantmoins il est venu entre mes mains une copie d'un livre escrit à la main, au langage du Languedoc, contenant l'histoire de la guerre faite contre les Albigeois, laquelle leur peut servir de justification contre les mechans blames qu'on leur a fausement imposés, d'autant que l'auteur d'icele (qui ne se nomme point) qui estoit de ce tans la, ne fait mention d'autre chose que de l'heresie.... C'est l'histoire qui a esté divulguée par Arnaud Sorbin l'an 1569 laquelle il dit avoir traduite de latin en François. Je ne trouve point toutefois en mon original le 1er Chapitre de son histoire. Il farcit le second de plusieurs erreurs & blasphemes fausement attribués aux Albigeois, dont toutefois notre moine ne fait mention.⁹³

Although Chassanion's source was clearly a Catholic one, he used the argument that Bale had found to justify his use of Matthew Paris, namely that what had been said about the Albigensians by the Catholics was simply untrue:

⁹² Bèze, Histoire Ecclesiastique, I. p. 196; Haag, La France Protestante, pp. 76-9.

⁹³ Chassanion, Histoire des Albigeois, pp. 12, 15.

Les Albigeois ont esté faussement chargés de plusieurs damnables opinions. Je n'ignore pas ce qu'aucuns ont écrit des Albigeois, qu'ils nioient la resurrection des corps, tenoient la transmigracion pythagorique des ames, & qu'il i avoit deux principes l'un bon & l'autre mauvais, qui avoit esté l'erreur des Manichéens... On les a diffamés... qu'ils faisoient en secret choses vilaines & detestables... de s'accoupler entre eux homes & fames pesle mesle en leurs assemblées secretes... Ainsi il en est avvenu anciennement aux Chrestiens, lesquels on a faussement diffamés d'incestes & mesme d'infanticides... De semblable vitupere nos premieres assemblées secretes ont esté chargées iniquement, le bruit courant ça & la, que les chandelles esteintes on se mesloit sans aucune discretion & honnesteté.⁹⁴

The accusations of orgies, infanticide and incest had indeed been a common fixture of anti-Protestant polemic in France in the 1550s and 1560s, resorting to stereotypes which had been used in medieval and patristic times.⁹⁵ Like Bale, Chassanion dismissed what the Catholics had written about the Albigenians, but accepted the assertions that they were forebears of the Protestants:

Les Eglises réformées du Languedoc et autres païs circonvoisins sont comme la moisson de la semence jettée par les Albigeois. C'est cette Ste Semance laquelle en ces quartiers la du Languedoc, & autre lieux circonvoisins a germé, a poussé hors, & s'est epanouie & ejoye aux rayons du soleil de justice qu'il a pleu a Dieu j epandre largement en ces derniers tans.... Come on a veu par le grand nombre des Eglises reformées qui i ont esté dressées depuis le Rhone jusques en Gascogne, avant le massacre de Vassy, & la premiere guerre civile. Cela se voit encores a présent en celes qui subsistent par la grace de Dieu et qui sont tres belles et

⁹⁴ Chassanion, *Histoire des Albigeois*, pp. 51, 58.

⁹⁵ See Chapter 2.

florissantes, come a Castres d'Albigès, à Montauban (où j'ai servi quelques mois), a St Antonin et en plusieurs autres lieux; à Nîmes aussi, et à Montpellier où il a pleu a Dieu que j'aye travaillé des premiers avec sa bénédiction.⁹⁶

Apparently the publication of Chassanion's work in 1595 went unnoticed and made no contribution to a parallel movement for the inclusion of the Albigensians in Goulard's editions of the Histoire des Martyrs.⁹⁷

* * *

It seems that the renewed interest in a history of the Albigensians and Waldensians was inextricably linked with the Protestant doctrine of the Pope as Antichrist which had been challenged by Cardinal Bellarmine.⁹⁸ The first generation of martyrologists, notably John Bale and Flacius Illyricus, had argued in the 1550s that the persecutions of the Waldensians had marked the beginning of the reign of the papal Antichrist. This interpretation of Revelation was reproduced by François du Jon (1545-1602) in his commentaries on Revelation (1592) which were reprinted in the Geneva Bible of 1602.⁹⁹ These articles are remarkable since they contravened cautions against interpreting Revelation that had been printed in 1577 and 1588 editions of the Bible and were repeated at the national synod of 1596.¹⁰⁰ It is

⁹⁶ Chassanion, Histoire des Albigeois, pp. 250-1.

⁹⁷ Bédouelle, 'Les Albigeois, témoins du véritable évangile', pp. 59-60.

⁹⁸ Robert Bellarmine, Disputationes de controversiis Christianae fidei adversus hujus temporis haeticos (3 vols, Ingolstadt, 1586-93).

⁹⁹ Gerald T. Sheppard ed., The Geneva Bible (New York, 1989), fol. 129^v.

¹⁰⁰ Le Nouveau Testament c'est à dire, la nouvelle alliance de nostre seigneur Jesus Christ (Geneva, 1577), p. 682; La Bible qui toute la sainte escriture du vieil & du nouveau testament (Geneva, 1588), fol. 122^v; Aymon, Tous les Synodes Nationaux, I. p. 203.

unambiguous, however, that du Jon interpreted the reign of Antichrist as corresponding to the persecutions of the Waldensians:

il persecuta les gens de bien, les mit à mort, & anathematiza la memoire & les escrits d'iceux, comme desja aucuns de ses predecesseurs avoyent faict quelquesfois, depuis qu'ils eurent matiere de repaistre leurs meschancetez sous couleur des Vaudois ou povres de Lion, des fraticelles d'Italie, & autres semblables pastures de leur cruauté insatiable.¹⁰¹

Philippe de Marnix (1538-98) also attacked Bellarmine in his Tableau des Differens de la Religion (1599) where he made the Albigensians and the Waldensians 'the two olives or the two lamps, of which St John spoke, whose oil and light spread to the ends of the earth'.¹⁰² The notion of the Pope as Antichrist was adopted by the Reformed national synod of 1603 as an article of the Confession of Faith of the French Reformed Churches. This was confirmed at the synod of 1607: 'L'Article touchant l'Antechrist inseré au Synode de Gap, pour être le 31. de nôtre Confession de Foi... a été aprouvé... comme... conforme à ce qui a été predict dans l'Escriture'. It is clear that there was a conscious effort by the Reformed Church to counter the arguments of Cardinal Bellarmine regarding the Pope as Antichrist, in which the persecutions of the central Middle Ages played a crucial part. The national synod of 1607 issued a commission for the writing of a history of the Albigensian Crusade and another for a book on the Antichrist: 'Monsieur Perrin est exhorté de continuer son travail pour achever la veritable Histoire des Albigeois & des Vaudois.... Monsieur Vignier est prié de mettre la main à la plume pour traiter amplement la Matiere de l'Antechrist, & d'apporter, ou envoyer son Ouvrage au prochain Synode National'.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Fr. du Jon, Apocalypse ou Revelation de S. Jean Apostre Evangeliste de nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ [Geneva], (Pierre de Saint-André, 1592), p. 208.

¹⁰² Rev. 11.4; Cameron, Reformation of the Heretics, p. 249.

¹⁰³ Aymon, Tous les Synodes Nationaux, I. pp. 258, 303, 313, 316.

Nicolas Vignier, author of the Recueil de L'Histoire de l'Eglise (1601), was the son of Nicolas Vignier (1530-1596), surgeon of Henri IV who converted back to Catholicism in 1579.¹⁰⁴ Nicolas Vignier followed in the footsteps of his father and of those who had written about the Albigeans as a branch of the Waldensians:

Il n'y avoit pas grande difference de doctrine entre les Albigeois & les Waudois.... Tant y a cependant, qu'il ne semble pas qu'il y ait eu autre occasion des les faire declarer heretiques & schismatiques par l'Eglise Romaine, ne qu'on les ait aussi machurez d'opinions si prodigieuses, de crimes si horribles, & d'appellations hideuses & infames... à autre fin que pour les rendre plus odieux & detestables au Peuple... n'ayants jamais fait que reprendre les vices & abus des Prelats de l'Eglise Romaine.¹⁰⁵

Vignier was probably the author of a defence of the Reformed doctrine of the Antichrist against Cardinal Bellarmine which was published anonymously in 1606.¹⁰⁶ In 1608, Nicolas Vignier published a history of the Dominicans and Franciscans who were held to be emissaries of the papal Antichrist.¹⁰⁷ In 1609, the national synod of St Maixent acknowledged the progress of both Perrin and Vignier whose Theatre de l'Antechrist was sent to Saumur where it was printed in 1610.¹⁰⁸

In the face of the criticism of Bellarmine, Nicolas Vignier reproduced the view

¹⁰⁴ Bédouelle, 'Les Albigeois, témoins du véritable évangile', p. 55-6.

¹⁰⁵ Vignier, Recueil de L'Histoire de l'Eglise, p. 408.

¹⁰⁶ [Nicolas Vignier], L'Antechrist Romain, Opposé à l'Antechrist Juif du Cardinal de Bellarmin, du Sieur de Remond & autres (1606).

¹⁰⁷ Nicolas Vignier, Legende Doree ou Sommaire de l'histoire des freres Mendians de l'Ordre de Dominique, & de François (Leyden, 1608).

¹⁰⁸ Aymon, Tous les Synodes Nationaux, I. p. 361; Cameron, Reformation of the Heretics, p. 249.

of John Bale, that the Albigensian Crusade had been a sign of the beginning of the reign of the papal Antichrist. Vignier, like Bale, argued that the Mendicant Orders had been created by the papal Antichrist to defend itself against the Albigensians and Waldensians and that as many as a 100 000 were martyred during the Albigensian Crusade.¹⁰⁹ Unlike Bale, however, Vignier argued in L'Antechrist Romain that the persecution under the papal Antichrist had been worse than during patristic times which was repeated in the Legende Doree:

Mais il [Bellarmine] se trompoit, quand il disoit que les persecutions de la primitive Eglise avoyent esté plus grieves que celles qui s'opposoyent à la doctrine preschés par les Mendians: Car les persecutions en la primitive Eglise n'estoient que corporelles, ne touchoyent qu'au corps; mais... celles cy estoient & corporelles & spirituelles; celles là venans de dehors & de ceux qui estoient du tout estrangers de l'Eglise de Dieu; Celles-cy suscitées par ceux qui faisoient possession du Christianisme & vouloyent esre estimez les Colonnes d'iceluy.¹¹⁰

In the meantime, there emerged the view that there was an historical link between the medieval persecution of the Albigensians and the emergence of evangelism with Luther. This argument which had been applied to the Waldensians, was now used by Jacques Auguste de Thou about the Albigensians in his Historum sui temporis (1603):

nec multo post Ludovicus VIII Avenionenseis, quod Albigeis receptum darent, bello adoritur, & ijs victis moenia urbis solo aequavit, ampliusque ccc ciuium domos evertit, in Albienseis ipsos perrecturus, nisi repentino morbo correptus mox decessisset. cum

¹⁰⁹ Vignier, Recueil de L'Histoire de l'Eglise, p. 405; [Vignier], L'Antechrist Romain, p. 160; Vignier, Legende Doree, p. 66; Christmas ed., 'Select Works of John Bale', pp. 322, 563; Bale, Scriptorum Illustrum maioris Brytanniae, p. 234.

¹¹⁰ Vignier, Legende Doree, pp. 75-6. See below, p. 204.

huc illuc ab eo tempore dispersi ubique exagitarentur, tamen extitere semper per intervalla, qui eorum doctrinam intermortuam renovarent, Io. Viclevus in Anglia, in Boemia Io. Hussus & Hier. Pragensis: nostra vero aetate, postquam Lutheri doctrina obvio tam multorum favore accepta est, reliquiae illorum ubiq.¹¹¹

Around this time, Goulard supervised the Genevan edition of the Catalogus Testium Veritatis and was collecting material to add to the medieval section of the Histoire des Martyrs from apostolic times to Wycliffe and Hus.¹¹² In the third edition of 1608, Goulard complained about the lack of information on the Waldensians and Albigeans which indicates that he was unaware of Chassanion's Histoire des Albigeois:

Toutesfois les mensonges des moines & autres tels brouillons, ni l'espaisseur des tenebres d'ignorance, ni la fureur du monde n'a peu empescher que depuis que l'Evesque de Rome se fit declairer chef universel de l'Eglise, il ne se soit trouvé gens de tous estats en divers lieux qui on detesté en leur coeur premierement, puis de bouche, & mesmes par escrit la tyrannie corporelle & spirituelle des Papes. Tesmoins les Vaudois & Albigeois vilainement calomniez par les histoires, les demeurans desquels sont encores debout par la grace de Dieu, encores qu'on en eust fait mourir à milliers fort cruellemen en divers endroits de Languedoc, longtemps avant Wicief, en haine de ce qu'ils detestoient la papauté & ses idolatries. Leur histoire merite une diligente recherche, & livres à part, ayant esté ensevelie jusques à present, où pour le moins obscurément & trop briefvement descrite.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Jacques Auguste de Thou, Historia sui temporis libri (Paris, 1603), pp. 455-60.

¹¹² Goulard's two editions of the Catalogus Testium Veritatis correspond to his second and third edition of the Histoire des Martyrs, in 1597 and 1608.

¹¹³ Crespin, Histoire des Martyrs (Geneva, Jean Crespin, 1608), fol. 25^v.

It should be noted at this point that this apocalyptic tradition is mainly Anglican and Reformed and should be distinguished from the Lutheran tradition based on the prophecy of the four kingdoms of Daniel.¹¹⁴ The Chronica Carionis, which concentrates on the establishment of the chronology of the fourth monarchy, does not bring anything to the Reformed argument and even contradicts it:

En ce siecle là nasquirent en l'Eglise plusieurs ordres de moines, pestes publiques & destructeurs de la vraye religion, de la doctrine Chrestienne, & des sciences liberales. Deux de ces ordres, faisans profession de suivre la reigle de saint Bernard, furent neantmoins fort differens en loix, ceremonies & maniere de vivre. Les uns s'appelloyent pauvres de Lyon, les autres humbles d'Italie.... Les Papes condamnerent ces deux ordres: puis comme la superstition est fertile, & un erreur en engendre d'autres, survindrent nouveaux ordres... leurs principaux fondateurs furent François & Dominique.¹¹⁵

Goulard nonetheless reproduced this passage word for word in his 1608 edition of the Histoire des Martyrs, along with the articles favourable to the Waldensians which had appeared in his first edition.¹¹⁶ Perhaps this oversight is a symptom of the lack of material that Goulard deplored in the first passage, although he seemed to have been completely unaware of the contradiction between the two.

¹¹⁴ For a general discussion of the Protestant apocalyptic tradition see Glenn J. R. Parry, A Protestant Vision: William Harrison and the Reformation of Elizabethan England (Cambridge, 1987); and I. Backus, Les 7 Visions et la Fin des Temps: les commentaires Genevois de l'apocalypse entre 1539 et 1584 (Geneva, 1997).

¹¹⁵ Jean Carion & Philippe Melanchthon, Chronique et Histoire Universelle, contenant les choses memorables avenues es quatre souverains Empires, Royaumes, Republicues, & au gouvernement de l'Eglise, depuis le commencement du monde jusques à l'Empereur Charles cinquiesme (2 vols, Jean Berion, 1579-80), II. p. 854.

¹¹⁶ Crespin, Histoire des Martyrs (1608), fol. 23^r.

The progress of Jean-Paul Perrin, whose commission had been issued at the same time as Vignier, was recorded in the national synod of 1609 and 1612 when he was rewarded for his pains:

Le Sieur Perrin, aiant aussi presenté son Livre de l'Histoire des Albigeois, & Vaudois, son dit Ecrit a été mis entre les mains de Mrs. les Pasteurs... afin qu'ils en fassent leur Raport devant cette Compagnie, laquelle a donné pour les Fraix faits par ledit Sr. Perrin, la Somme de trois cent Livres.¹¹⁷

Jean Paul Perrin's Histoire des Vaudois, which included a history of the 'Vaudois appellés Albigeois' was published in Geneva in 1618, and was followed in 1619 by Goulard's fourth and definitive edition of the Histoire des Martyrs.¹¹⁸ Both these works bear the mark of the Bellarmine controversy regarding the Antichrist in their treatment of the Albigenians and the Waldensians, which had now become indistinguishable. Both the Histoire des Vaudois and Histoire des Martyrs reproduced word for word the interpretation of Philippe de Marnix of the Revelation of John: 'de façon que d'une part les Vaudois, & de l'autre les Albigeois estoient comme les deux olives, ou les deux lampes, desquelles parle S. Jean, Apocal.II.4. dont la graisse & la lumiere s'expandit par tous les bouts de la terre'.¹¹⁹

Goulard and Perrin clearly identified the Albigenians and the Waldensians as the two witnesses of Revelation but more significantly Goulard ascribed a precise duration to the reign of Antichrist. Bellarmine, in his efforts to prove that the Pope was not the Antichrist, had attacked this historical interpretation of the Revelation of

¹¹⁷ Aymon, Tous les Synodes Nationaux, I. pp. 361, 404.

¹¹⁸ Bédouelle, 'Les Albigeois, témoins du véritable évangile', p. 59; Jean-Paul Perrin, The History of the Old Waldenses and Albigenses; Those Two Glorious Witnesses to the Truth of Christianity: In Opposition to the AntiChristianism of Rome, In the several ages preceding the Reformation (London, Joseph Downing, 1711).

¹¹⁹ Crespin, Histoire des Martyrs (Geneva, Pierre Aubert, 1619), fol. 22^r; Jean-Paul Perrin, Histoire des Vaudois appelés Albigeois (Geneva, 1618), p. 64.

John arguing that the reign of Antichrist had not yet taken place. The duration of the reign of Antichrist was inferred from sibylline indications in Revelation to be '42 months', '1260 days', 'three and a half days', and 'a time, times, and half a time'.¹²⁰ Bellarmine had argued that this time was all one and that it corresponded to three and a half years which was far shorter than what the Protestants had argued, which was closer to 350 years.¹²¹

Goulard reproduced the now familiar idea that after the medieval persecutions, the witnesses of the true Church went into the wilderness and perpetuated true doctrine which was passed on to those of Mérimondol and Cabrières:

Ainsi furent-ils à la longue tellement harassés, matés & abatus, ayans esté leurs villes saccagées, leur pays détruit & ravagé: les hommes, femmes & enfans misérablement tuez par plusieurs milliers, qu'ils furent finalement contraints de se retirer aux deserts... où ils ont depuis leurs Eglises & predications en petites troupes, estans revestus de sacs, c'est à dire en tristesse & en deuil, jusques à nostre siècle: ainsi qu'il appert par les déclarations que ceux de Cabrières, de Merindol, & leurs associés firent à la Cour de Parlement en Provence, en vertu des lettres patentes du Roi: remonstrans que la doctrine, & manière de vivre qu'ils tenoyent, leur avoit esté enseignée de père en fils, depuis l'an mil deux cens.

But he held the time elapsed since then to be the duration of the reign of Antichrist, which had been announced in Revelation, in direct opposition to the arguments of Bellarmine:

jusques à ce que finalement ils furent contraints de se retirer es deserts, suivant la Prophetie de L'Apocalypse, ch. 12. disant que la femme enceinte, qui enfanta le fils mâle, & est la vraie Eglise de Dieu, seroit tellement persecutée par le dragon, (qui jetteroit de

¹²⁰ Rev. 11.2-3, 9, 11; 12.6, 14.

¹²¹ [Vignier], L'Antechrist Romain, pp. 199-211.

l'eau, comme un fleuve, de sa gueule apres elle, pour l'engloutir)
qu'elle seroit contrainte de s'enfuir au desert, où elle seroit nourrie
pour un temps, & par des temps, & par la moitié d'un temps, ou
bien par l'espace de 42. mois, ou de 1260. jours, qui est tout un
 mesme nombre, & en prenant un temps pour un an seculier, ou un
 siecle (c'est à dire pour un temps de l'aage d'un homme, qui est de
 100. ans) il revient à 350. ans... tellement que le susdit temps de
 350. ans a esté justement accompli, en comptant depuis qu'ils
 commencerent à estre persecutez, jusques à la restauration des
 Eglises, faite de nostre temps par la doctrine de l'Evangile.¹²²

Goulard was therefore in direct line with the Reformed apocalyptic tradition, according to which the reign of Antichrist had started with the rise of the papal monarchy. This tradition held that the true Church had existed continuously despite the persecutions of the papal Antichrist, coming out into the open with the advent of the Reformation to triumph over the Antichrist. The duration of the battle with Antichrist was not specified but it is clear that upholders of this tradition expected the victory over Antichrist, and the end of time, to be imminent. The obvious problems with this tradition, both historical and chronological, meant that it was soon abandoned to be replaced by a Reformed Millenarianism where the coming of Antichrist was expected to take place in the future: 'At the beginning of the century the ideas of the papal Antichrist and the past millennium had seemed mutually supporting; by the end of the century they had begun to undermine one another'.¹²³

The publication of these articles in Perrin's Histoire des Vaudois appelés Albigeois and the definitive edition of the Histoire des Martyrs ensured that the memory of the Albigensians would be passed on to posterity. Indeed Agrippa d'Aubigné used Perrin's work for his article on the Albigensians in his Histoire

¹²² Crespin, Histoire des Martyrs (1619), fol. 22^v (my emphasis).

¹²³ Howard Hotson, 'The Historiographical Origins of Calvinist Millenarianism', in B. Gordon ed., Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe (2 vols, Aldershot, 1996), II, 159-181, pp. 175-6.

Universelle: ‘Ces Vaudois, comme nous avons dit, entre les divers noms qu’on leur donne, eurent celui d’Albigois. Par ce mot ont esté designez ceux qui ayans fait leur premier amas en Albi, ont rendu plusieurs defenses, et par plus d’un siecle, en Languedoc et aux pays circonvoisins’.¹²⁴ The image of the witnesses of the true Church retiring in the desert, perpetuated through the numerous editions of the Histoire des Martyrs, was adopted wholeheartedly by the Camisards who escaped persecution in the hills of Vivarais after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The idea that the Albigensians were indistinguishable from the Waldensians would not be refuted until Bossuet wrote the Histoire abrégée des Albigois & des Vaudois. Que ce sont deux sectes tres-différentes (1691).¹²⁵

* * *

It is ironic that the inclusion of the Albigensians in the Histoire des Martyrs should follow from half a century of Catholic efforts to portray them as forerunners of the Reformation; especially since the Albigensian Crusade and the reign of Louis IX had originally been intended as an example to be followed by the Valois monarchs, at a time when the young kings François II and Charles IX came to the throne. If the comparison between Protestantism and the Albigensian heresy was later used as a weapon against the Reformed Church, it also carried a clear political message at Court. It is interesting to note how Protestant martyrologists turned the tables on the Catholics and acknowledged the connection with the Albigensians, as the Crusade fuelled their arguments against the Papacy. It is as if the Reformed had willingly adopted the language of the Catholics. For example, Jean du Tillet in 1562 and Jean Chassanion in 1595 used the same word to describe the relationship between the Albigensians and the Reformed: ‘l’observance desdites ordonnances nettoya entierement la France de ladite heresie, toutesfois aucune semence en fut portee au Royaume d’Angleterre’. ‘Les Eglises réformées du Languedoc et autres

¹²⁴ Agrippa d’Aubigné, Histoire Universelle (9 vols, Geneva, 1981-95), II. p. 178.

¹²⁵ Bédouelle, ‘Les Albigois, témoins du véritable évangile’, p. 65.

païs circonvoisins sont comme la moisson de la semence jettée par les Albigeois'.¹²⁶

Although du Tillet and Chassanion used it for quite different purposes, the word semence also had an apocalyptic edge, as Revelation echoed the prophecy of Genesis: 'Et je mettrai inimitié entre toi & la femme, entre ta semence & la semence de la femme: icelle semence te brisera la teste, & tu lui briseras le talon'.¹²⁷ These three occurrences of the word semence summarize admirably the evolution of the polemical use of the Albigensian Crusade around the French Wars of Religion.

¹²⁶ Du Tillet, Sommaire de l'histoire de la guerre, sig. F4^v; Chassanion, Histoire des Albigeois, pp. 250-1 (my emphasis).

¹²⁷ La Bible (1588), fol. 2^r (my emphasis).

Chapter 4: The ‘battle of the sexes’ and the ‘world turned upside down’.

This chapter ventures into the world of cultural history in exploring two salient features of anti-Protestant polemic: misogyny and inversion. The association between these two concepts warrants an explanation, for if they were closely intertwined in the early modern period, it is no longer the case. The increased role that Protestantism was thought to be giving women was obviously a great source of concern for Catholic theologians. Their reaction, which has been used as a gauge of the improvement of the condition of women by some historians, is indeed very strong. To allow women to take a greater part in the spiritual affairs of the community was akin, these theologians argued, to turning the world upside down. The topos of the ‘world turned upside down’ has universal appeal and is indeed still used today by reactionary politicians to curtail change.¹ Catholics were accusing the Protestants of wanting to turn the world upside down, and what they described as their pandering to women (referred to as *femmelettes*) was one of its many manifestations. I should like to argue that, rather than reflecting the changing condition of women, these topoi were nothing more than rhetorical conventions used by the Catholic theologians to denigrate Protestantism.

* * *

Recent historiography has established that two of the most salient aspects of the culture of pre-industrial Europe, both ‘popular’ and ‘learned’, are inversion (wisdom and folly, authority and subjection, male and female, and so on) and correspondence between different worlds (spiritual and physical, individual and communal). The latter is at the root of European culture and can be traced back to Plato’s ‘allegory of the cave’, where everything in the visible world has its counterpart in the invisible world.² As for inversion, the ‘world turned upside down’ needs no introduction, whether it is found in ‘popular’ culture or exponents of élite

¹ The expression ‘on marche sur la tête’ was used repeatedly by Philippe de Villiers, the royalist candidate for the presidential election in France in 1995.

² Platon, *Le Banquet* (Paris, 1989).

culture as in Rabelais, Erasmus, or Shakespeare.³ The role of inversion and misrule in popular culture was first brought to our attention by Mikhail Bakhtin in a pioneering book on François Rabelais.⁴ His work was applied by English-speaking historians who showed the relevance of popular culture to phenomena as varied as witchcraft (Stuart Clark), the reform of sexuality (Martin Ingram) and the English Civil War (Christopher Hill).⁵ Finally, Nathalie Davis has shown where popular 'rites of violence' were to be found in urban massacres of the French Wars of Religion.⁶ The pamphlets published during this period offer an opportunity to explore this world of contradiction and analogy a little further. Many aspects of contemporary culture were diverted for the use of religious polemic, and it remains to be shown how the 'world turned upside down' was used in the culture of contention of the French Wars of Religion.

Social anthropologists have been torn between two interpretations of the social impact of the 'world turned upside down'. On one hand it is argued that it served a regulatory purpose in pre-industrial societies, in what has been coined the 'pressure valve theory'. Order was temporarily and symbolically disturbed at times of revelry, such as Carnival, providing a 'pressure valve' for the tensions inherent in a class society, and thus became a tool of social control in the hands of the élite. The ambiguity of the symbols of inversion and misrule which are at the heart of 'popular

³ Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (London, 1994); Desiderius Erasmus, Praise of Folly (New York, 1989); François Rabelais, Gargantua and Pantagruel (London, 1955).

⁴ Mikhail Bakhtine, L'oeuvre de François Rabelais et la culture populaire au moyen age et sous la renaissance (Paris, 1970).

⁵ S. Clark, 'Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft', P&P, 87 (1980), 98-127; Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and Popular Culture'; Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution (London, 1972).

⁶ Davis, 'The Rites of Violence'.

culture', however, made them dangerous in periods of genuine social, political and religious turmoil. The ambivalent 'world turned upside down' became a vehicle for social protest and explains why characters out of popular culture, usually associated with religious festivals and feast days, feature in grain and enclosure riots in both England and France.⁷ Peter Burke stresses the ambivalence and ambiguity of the 'world turned upside down' which made it versatile and unpredictable:

What was the meaning of this series of images? There is no simple answer to the question. They were ambiguous, with different meanings for different people, and possibly ambivalent, with different meanings for the same person. It is most easy to document the attitude of the upper classes, for whom these images symbolised chaos, disorder, misrule.⁸

It is the versatility of these symbols which allowed them to be harnessed by Reformers and defenders of the Catholic Church alike throughout the Reformation. The polemical use of inversion in the German Reformation has been well studied by Robert Scribner, who provides numerous examples of satirical woodcuts depicting the overturning of the Papacy, the monastic orders and the ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁹ The idea of the 'world turned upside down', rather than being the vehicle of seasonal merriment, turned into a polemical weapon reflecting a genuine crisis. But unlike peasants' riots where these symbols were used in the context of a 'class war', they were used by an entire cross-section of society against another, by Protestants against Catholics and in turn by Catholics against Protestants.

Inversion was readily used by Catholic polemicists who turned the table on the first generation of Reformers and used the 'world turned upside down' to show that

⁷ C.S.L. Davies, 'Peasants revolt in England and France: a comparison', AHR, 21 (1973), 122-139.

⁸ Burke, Popular Culture, p. 188.

⁹ Robert W. Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation (Cambridge, 1981).

the Reformation was a manifestation that ‘time was out of joint’. To quote but one example, Antoine de Mouchy, who writes in the wake of the affair of the rue St Jacques in 1558 quotes the Scriptures which use the language of the ‘world upside down’: ‘Maledictions sur ceulx qui disent le mal estre bien: & le bien estre mal. Qui mettent tenebres pour lumiere, & lumiere pour tenebres: qui mettent chose amere pour douce, & chose douce pour amere’.¹⁰ The theme of topsy-turvydom used against Protestants was turned on one occasion against the Duc de Guise:

Le change est bon quand on change de mal en bien, ou de bien en mieux, Mais cestuy-ci a bien faict autrement: Car il a changé de Dieu avec Satan: de Christ avec Belial, de la paix a la guerre, de la faveur & misericorde de Dieu, a son ire, d’un legitime gouvernement, a une tyrannie plus que Catilinaire: d’un bon conseil & de gens de bien & craignans Dieu, à une troupe de maquereaux pusillanimes effeminez, & de sa femme legitime Royne naturelle de race, a des chambrieres & putains, villaines & execrables, O la meschante & malheureuse permutation!¹¹

This is reminiscent of the Shakespearean ‘fair is foul and foul is fair’ uttered by the witches in Macbeth, which like the Catholic polemic includes both elements of inversion and correspondence to show that ‘the time is out of joint’.¹² The inversion of order is usually expressed by an analogy between the spiritual, the political and the natural world. To quote another extract of Macbeth, the assassination of King Duncan is described as an ‘unnatural act’ which is accompanied by natural disasters: ‘The night has been unruly: where we lay, / Our chimneys were blown down / Tis unnatural, / Even like the deed that’s done. / On Tuesday last, / A falcon, towering in

¹⁰ Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie, sig. A4^v.

¹¹ An., Advertissement a la Royne Mere du Roy, Touchant les miseres du Royaume au temps present, & de la conspiration des ennemis de sa Majesté (Orleans), [Eloi Gibier], (1562), sig. b3^v.

¹² William Shakespeare, Macbeth (London, 1982), I.1.11.

her pride of place, / Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at, and kill'd'.¹³

Robert Ceneau, in his Response catholique contre les heretiques (1562), uses a similar analogy, arguing that it is the whole order of nature that the Protestants are turning upside down: 'Finablement toutes choses iront contre les loix de nature: & neantmoins les miserables Calvinistes osent bastir leurs assemblees de teles manieres de gens deshonestes & entachez de toute ordure: mais si l'Etiopie pouvoit changer sa peau, & le pard des taches diverses'.¹⁴

Similar imagery was used throughout the French Wars of Religion employing analogies which reflect social, political and religious order, starting with the anthropomorphic analogy between society and the human body known as the 'analogy of the body'. This analogy did not find political expression until Hobbes's Leviathan but nonetheless it pervaded early modern society where everything and everyone has its proper place in the 'great chain of being' from the humblest peasant to the king.¹⁵ John Knox provides us with a very eloquent description of the analogy in his First blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women:

Besides these, he hath set before our eyes, two other mirrors and glasses, in whiche he will, that we shulde behold the ordre, which he hath apointed and established in nature: the one is, the naturall bodie of man: the other is the politik or civile body of that common welth, in which God by his own word hath apointed an ordre. In the natural body of man God hath apointed an ordre, that the head shall occupie the uppermost place. And the head hath he joyned with the bodie, that frome it, doth life and motion flowe to the rest of the

¹³ Shakespeare, Macbeth, II.3.54; II.4.13.

¹⁴ Ceneau, Response catholique, sig. D8^v.

¹⁵ Paul Archambault, 'The Analogy of the "Body" in Renaissance Political Literature', BHR, 29 (1967), 21-53; E. M. Tillyard, The Elizabethan world picture (London, 1972); D. G. Hale, The body politic: a political metaphor in Renaissance English literature (The Hague, 1971).

membres. In it hath he placed the eye to see, the eare to hear, and the tonge to speake, which offices are apointed to none other membre of the bodie. The rest of the membres, have every one their own place and office apointed: but none may have nether the place nor office of the heade.¹⁶

It is mainly the biblical analogy which is found in 1 Corinthians 12 between the body of Christ and the community of all believers which found an expression in contemporary social life: ‘for Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are, together make up one body.... Now you are Christ’s body, and each of you a limb or organ of it’.¹⁷

This passage from Paul’s first Epistle to the Corinthians was used by the medieval Church to express in anthropomorphic language the cohesion of the community of believers. This conception of a well-ordered society was enacted in ritual processions where the social and spiritual hierarchy was duly represented, notably on Corpus Christi Day. The procession was led by the political and spiritual élite of the town and symbolised the unity of the community in the body of Christ. Barbara Diefendorf recently described Corpus Christi processions as symbolising the political as well as the social unity of medieval Christendom:

Religious processions thus served a didactic function, reinforcing the lessons of the Mass about the meaning and importance of the Eucharist.... They ritually enacted a vision in which civic, monarchical, and Catholic symbols merged; the body social, the body politic, and the body of Christ were so closely intertwined as to be inseparable.¹⁸

¹⁶ John Knox, The First blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women (Geneva, 1558), sig. D3^r.

¹⁷ 1 Cor. 12.12-27.

¹⁸ Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 48.

Corpus Christi was celebrated in Paris at the very beginning of the troubles to express the unity of the Catholic community in the face of the threat represented by the Reformation. Protestants, with their different set of practices, their refusal to partake of the host during Mass or to participate to Corpus Christi processions, set themselves apart from the rest of the community and were consequently branded as 'enemies of the community'. It is not surprising to find that Catholic polemic published in the 1560s describe Protestantism as a source of divisiveness and chaos, breaking-up the body social and the body politic into as many parts as a body has limbs.

This view is expressed in Hozius's Des sectes et heresies de nostre temps which follows the anthropomorphic symbolism expressed in Corpus Christi when describing Luther as 'tearing apart the body of Christ': 'La ou Luther en toute sa vie n'a jamais rien prouvé ny recherché de plus grande affection, que de faire que le corps de Jesus Christ, qui est demeuré entier (même entre les mains des bourreaux, & en l'arbre de la croix) cessat desormais de demeurer entier entre les mains des chrestiens mesmes'.¹⁹ Hozius writes an account of the Lutheran Reformation and insists on the diversity of sects it spurred in central Europe, in an attempt to discredit the whole movement with the excesses of the 'radical' Reformation. Hozius, who had been educated in the Erasmian circles of Cracow, stresses the revolutionary aspects of the Anabaptists and the Peasants' War, pitching the multiplicity of Protestant sects against a very Erasmian picture of 'universal Christendom':

Il y a quarante ans, que l'estat de la chretienté universelle estoit tel, que l'on pouvoit veritablement dire d'elle, ce qui est escrit en gènesé: 'La terre n'avoit qu'une levre, & usoit de mesme langage... la multitude des fideles n'avoit qu'un coeur & une ame. Et comme partout on n'adoroit qu'un Dieu, aussi ne tenoit on qu'une foy, & n'y avoit qu'une seule forme & maniere d'administrer les sacrements... & par tout une même sorte de ceremonies. Ils parloient tous un même langage, ils avoient tous un même

¹⁹ Hozius, Des sectes et hérésies de nostre temps, p. 32.

sentiment & un mesme jugement: tellement qu'il estoit facile à cognoistre que c'estoit la cité dont parle le psalmiste, là ou tout est commun.²⁰

Hozius draws attention to the names of the different Protestant sects as a sign of the divisiveness of the Reformation, in opposition to the simplicity and unity of Christendom in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. In the same year Jean Gay, a member of the conservative Parlement of Toulouse, describes Protestantism as a synonym for disunity and divisiveness:

Et pour aultre plus grand signe d'atheisme, contre eulx ne faut sinon noter le desordre & confusion qui journellement est entre eux par continuelles sedition, scismes et diversité d'opinions de toutes anciennes heresies, & inventions d'aultres nouvelles, les aucuns eux disans Anabaptistes, les aultres sacramentaires & autres especes de reprovées.²¹

The image of the Reformation divided against itself is fuelled by the diversity of Protestant 'sects' which is emphasised to strengthen the comparison with earlier heresies. The same argument was used by Georg Witzel, an early opponent of Luther, who compared the fragmentation of the Reformed movement to that of Arianism, in the fourth century: 'La secte d'Arrius estant devenue puissante, se partit en trois sectes: & de là sortirent Eunomius avec les siens, Aetius & Macedonius. Que la secte de Martin Luther ne soit principalement ce jourd'huy divisée en trois, personne n'en doute: Asçavoir, Lutheriens, Calvinistes & Anabaptistes.'²² This argument was also used in the early days of Christianity by its pagan critics, such as Celsus, in the same way as the diversity of heresies was used in the medieval era. The Pagans, too, painted a picture of Christianity divided against itself, which is very similar to the Catholic criticism of the Reformation: 'No ferocious beast is as

²⁰ Hozius, Des sectes et hérésies de nostre temps, pp. 4-5.

²¹ Gay, Histoire des scismes, p. 39.

²² Witzel, Discours des moeurs, p. 10.

hounding after men as most of the Christians among themselves (Julian the Apostate). The most savage animals are less to be feared by men than Christians by one another (Ammien Marcelin)²³

Hozius, like Witzel, insists on calling the different strands of Protestantism after their founder, Luther and Calvin, the same way that medieval and early Church heresies were called after theirs:

Jadis les Arriens avoient acoustumé appeller les Catholiques par les noms de leurs Evesques, en vengeance de ce qu'on les nommoient Arrians.... Ainsi presque tous les heretiques du jourd'huy, desdaignent nous appeller Catholiques & Ecclesiastiques. Ils nous baillent le nom de Papistes, comme si les Papes de Rome, estoient auteurs de nostre loy & doctrine, ainsi que Luther & Calvin sont les premiers de leur doctrine, & auteurs de nouvelle creance & persuasion.... Et si pour cela ils mesdisent de nous, nous leur demanderont pourquoy ils appellent Arrians, les sectateurs d'Arrius, & les disciples de Donatus, Donatistes. Sçavoir si de mesme droit il ne sera loisible aux Catholiques dire ces nouveaux de Luther & Calvin Lutheriens & Calvinistes.²⁴

The attribution of names was paramount in the thought of both Witzel and Hozius in differentiating Protestants from true (Catholic) Christians. The naming of heresies after their founders was a convenient way to separate the wheat from the chaff, especially since Protestants at this time frequently called themselves 'Chrétiens' or 'Catholiques'.²⁵ The appellation 'Lutheran' and 'Calvinist', as the word 'Huguenot', are a legacy of the Catholic polemic and it is doubtful that the Protestants used these terms among themselves. The use of different names was a particularly difficult problem for the Calvinists at a time when all hopes of a

²³ Rougier, Celse contre les chrétiens, p. 151.

²⁴ Hozius, Des sectes et hérésies de nostre temps, pp. 4-5.

²⁵ [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie.

reconciliation with Lutheranism were lost.²⁶ Calvin himself in 1557 deplored the fact that the Reformed were being called Sacramentarians by the Catholics, in association with the Lutherans. This distinction was exploited by Cardinal Hozius: ‘attendu que le mesme jugement que font les Lutheriens des sacramentaires, les sacramentaires le font aussi des lutheriens’²⁷, while Witzel derided the Protestant use of the word ‘Catholique’: ‘Comme Arrius appelloit ses sectateurs Catholiques, & les Catholiques heretiques, ainsi aussi sommes nous appelez par les Lutheriens & Calvinistes.’²⁸ This confusion of terms is set against the simplicity and unity which reigned before the Reformation where in ‘universal Christendom’ everybody was called ‘Christians’: ‘Et pour autant que tous avoient une même pensée, aussi ne vouloient ils qu’un seul & même nom, & ne se faisoient point appeller les uns gnostiques... les autres Apostoliques, les autres Evangeliques... ains s’appelloient tous Chrestiens’.

This opposition between order and chaos is only one aspect of the way Protestantism was seen to be turning the ‘world upside down’, according to the analogy of the body. The opposition of health and disease was another anthropomorphic metaphor for heresy which was used by the polemicists who likened heresy to a disease:

Et tout ainsi que au corps humain depuis que la mixtion & temperature des qualitez premieres (en laquelle consiste la santé, & qui le maintiennent en la force & vigueur) est une fois remuee hors de son naturel, maladies & indispositions les unes sur les autres ont accoutumé de s’en ensuyvre: aussi si la santé de l’entendement est une fois offensée, & nonbien establee & arrestée, elle va en empirant de jour en jour, & tombe continuellement de plus graves en plus graves maladies.

Cardinal Hozius belongs to a long line of authors who described heresy as a

²⁶ Bonnet ed., Letters of Calvin, III. p. 404.

²⁷ Hozius, Des sectes et hérésies de nostre temps, p. 175.

²⁸ Witzel, Discours des moeurs, p. 8.

disease, which found a strong expression in the medieval custom of defining heresy as spiritual leprosy, thereby justifying the segregation of heretics:

Un membre pourry se coupe de peur qu'il ne gaste le reste du corps: on separe les corps des hommes lepreux ou teigneux, de peur qu'ils n'infectent les sains de leur lepre, & male teigne: combien plus doit on mettre à part ceux qui font dedans leurs cueurs entachez de la lepre spirituelle, de peur qu'ils n'en infectent les brebis de Jesus Christ?²⁹

All these oppositions are linked with each other by analogy: Heresy/orthodoxy, health/disease, unity/disunity and apply equally to different domains. For example, if disease was caused by disharmony in the body, civil war was caused by disharmony in the body politic. Religious dissent was often compared to a disease that could only be cured by the King, consistently with his role as physician expressed in the French custom of 'touching for the King's Evil'. It is to the curative powers of the King, for example, that Jean du Tillet appeals in his Histoire de la guerre faicte contre les albigeois that was presented to Catherine de Médicis in 1562:

il m'a semblé que les mesmes remedes qui furent lors appliquez à guerir la playe qui affligeoit ce Royaume (sinon en tout) au moins en la pluspart sont maintenant fort a propos, pour donner la guarison a la mesme maladie laquelle ce Royaume est a present tourmenté.... Pour fin (Madame) par vos singulieres humanité & prudence avez cherché tous remedes pour nourrir les sujets en tranquillité, & eviter seditions attendant la majorité du Roy qui lors de son seul regard, pourra dissiper tout mal selon la sentence de Salomon.³⁰

This passage demonstrates Du Tillet's belief in the curative powers of the French monarch which were demonstrated in the custom of 'touching for the King's

²⁹ Hozius, Des sectes et heresies de nostre temps, pp. 20, 78.

³⁰ Du Tillet, Sommaire de l'histoire de la guerre, sigs ã3^r, ã8^r.

Evil', and it is only because the King was in his minority that he was unable to 'cure' the kingdom of the 'disease' of heresy.

* * *

So far, we have reviewed three forms of correspondence and inversion which were used by Catholic polemicists to describe heresy: unity/disunity, harmony/disharmony, health/disease. The strong polarity between the sexes which characterized early modern society is another vehicle for analogy and contrast, and the 'battle of the sexes' which figures prominently in the anti-Protestant polemic, should be interpreted in the light of other manifestations of the 'world turned upside down'.

An important aspect of the culture of the early modern period lies in the belief that the natural order of things was reflected in a hierarchy which set men above women. The association between women exercising authority over men and universal disharmony is one of the most common feature of popular culture. The popular institution of the 'Charivari', in publicly humiliating men who failed to control their wives, was a ritual enactment of the idea that strong women were a danger to society.³¹ This custom probably sprang from a pagan fertility rite which ensured the domination of female sexuality by men, but in practice it set the husband's authority over the household as the social norm and discouraged deviance. This is clearly a case where popular culture served the purpose of social control and upheld values which were shared by both the majority of the population and the élite. In such spontaneous popular manifestations, the husband was made to ride backwards upon a wooden beam or an ass through the village or town, accompanied by a cacophony produced by the banging of kitchen implements. If the symbolism of riding backwards is obvious, cacophony is also a manifestation of the 'world turned upside down', following the analogy between musical disharmony and chaos. Indeed, the analogy of music is also used by Hozius to describe Protestantism, where harmony corresponds to 'sound' doctrine and disharmony to heresy:

³¹ Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and Popular Culture'; Yves-Marie Bercé, *Fête et Révolte: Des mentalités populaires du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1994), p. 40.

ni plus ni moins qu'en la musique, depuis que vous estes une fois sorty hors de l'harmonie de l'accord, il n'y a plus que fausse consonance, & disaccord en tout le reste du chant: aussi depuis que l'harmonie de la doctrine en la religion est une fois troublee par quelque heresie, & opinion discordante d'avec la vérité, on se va toujours egarant de plus grande en plus grande confusion.³²

This fear of strong women or 'women on top' was shared by the learned élite which, according to Ingram, explains why this particular aspect of popular culture survived the 'reformation of manners'.³³ The figure of the shrew beating or dominating her husband became very popular and is found in many woodcuts of this period. It was harnessed for the purpose of a number of causes ranging from the Lutheran Reformation where it was used to ridicule the Catholics, by Knox against the Catholic 'Jezebels', and during the English Civil War by the Cavaliers who derided Parliament as the 'parliament of women'.³⁴ Catholics used this argument extensively to argue that the Reformation turned the 'world upside down', beginning with the natural authority of men over women. For example, Robert Ceneau explained the popularity of the Reformation through the 'natural' weakness of women:

Donques peut lon aisement comprendre laudace de lesprit feminin indontable, de ceste assemblee que nous avons dit avoit esté faite la nuit: laquele quant une fois à entrepris de servir à ses affections, de maniere que si la plume est mise au vent, on ne la peut jamais retirer de son entreprise. Combien que lon die la femme estre tousjours variable & sujete à mutation, elle est toutesfois

³² Hozius, Des sectes et hérésies de nostre temps, p. 20.

³³ Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and Popular Culture'.

³⁴ Robert W. Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation (Oxford, 1994), p. 165; Knox, The First blast; Hill, The World Turned Upside Down.

constante en son inconstance: mais en autres choses rien n'y à plus inconstant en tout le monde. Par ainsi la femme est constamment vacillante, & en vacillant perverse, comme incertaine de pensee, & ne peut durer en repos. Pour tant à ce propos lon dit vulgairement ce quatrain,

Qui est plus leger que la plume? cest laer.

Qui est plus que laer? le vent impetuex.

Plus que le vent? la femme a vray parler,

Rien plus leger, n'est ne moins vertueux.

On la congnoist tousjours a ce qu'elle est prompte suyure de nouveautés, prodique de soy, & qui appete l'autruy. Ce qui est evident a l'exemple de nostre premiere mere. Et pourtant que les nouveau tens engendrent tousjours noises, ainsi par experience la congnoist on quereleuse. Maintenant elle veut, elle ne veut, elle simule, elle dissimule: & le plus souvent se contredit & querelle soy mesme.³⁵

Ceneau was sure to find a ready audience for these arguments. They drew on a long tradition of misogyny, deeply rooted in the literary culture of the medieval period and the Renaissance. The 'battle of the sexes' had not always been a vehicle for propaganda, and it had been the subject of a controversy even before the advent of the Reformation.³⁶ Although the debate does not have any direct relevance to the polemic of the French Wars of Religion, nonetheless it informed its authors who derived arguments from it. The Catholic authors who used these arguments against

³⁵ Ceneau, Response catholique, sigs E4^{r-v}.

³⁶ Bakhtine, L'oeuvre de François Rabelais, p. 239; Delumeau, La Peur en Occident, p. 326; Emile Telle, L'oeuvre de Marguerite d'Angoulême Reine de Navarre et la Querelle des Femmes (Geneva, 1969).

Protestantism borrowed from an already existing tradition of denigrating women which goes back to the Middle Ages and beyond. The humanistic debate opposed followers of this tradition against partisans of ‘courtly love’ which evolved in parallel and in opposition to the ‘ascetic tradition’ and its treatment of women. Mikhail Bakhtine was the first to make this distinction when reviewing Rabelais’s treatment of the question of women in the Tiers Livre between the ‘ascetic’ and the ‘courtly love’ traditions.³⁷ The latter, represented by Rabelais, adopts elements of popular culture which provides an ambivalent picture of women associated with the bottom end of the body, which is abasing but also rejuvenating and a source of life. The former, which is borne out of the ascetic tradition, is on the contrary almost exclusively negative and would have developed to an unparalleled degree of intransigence between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries.³⁸ The ascetic tradition inspired the anti-Protestant authors, and although the two traditions are radically different, they are often confused because they share the same imagery. Bakhtine warns us against the dangers of misinterpreting the popular images which were used in this way: ‘when this image is used by the ascetic brand of Christianity or the abstract and moralising thought of the satirical authors of modern times, it loses its positive role and becomes purely negative’.³⁹ To give an example of how ‘Rabelaisian’ imagery could turn into a polemical weapon, Antoine de Mouchy demonstrates how the ambivalent image of the belly, celebrated in popular culture, was turned into a rhetorical weapon against Protestantism: ‘Car il n’y a nulle heresie qui ne soit construite pour la bouche & le ventre, à fin qu’ils seduisent les femmes chargées de pechez’.⁴⁰

The ascetic tradition identified by Delumeau and Bakhtine takes its roots in the renewal of the monastic ideals of the thirteenth century with the creation of the

³⁷ Bakhtine, L’oeuvre de François Rabelais, p. 240.

³⁸ Delumeau, La Peur en Occident, p. 309.

³⁹ Bakhtine, L’oeuvre de François Rabelais, p. 241.

⁴⁰ Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie, sig. J2^f.

Mendicant Orders, and it is the Franciscans who write the most vehemently against women.⁴¹ Among men who had chosen to live in celibacy, women were the embodiment of sin, and marriage was the lesser of two evils, when it was not the road to damnation. According to this view, women were associated with a number of negative characteristics such as weakness, stupidity, immorality, which men should strive to avoid. This tradition relied heavily on a selective reading of the Scriptures which described women as inferior and incapable of spiritual achievement, and which made women the subjects of men, as the body is to the soul, and flesh to the spirit. Chief among these is taken from Genesis which describes the betrayal of Eve which provoked the fall, and the Pauline Epistles, which prohibit women from teaching or speaking in churches.⁴²

Adam and Eve were the first of many couples to be used as edification in the ‘battle of the sexes’ as the legends of Phyllis riding Aristotle, Socrates and Xanthippe, or Solomon and the Queen of Sheba testify. The image of these grave men of wisdom being ridiculed by women illustrated the frailty of human wisdom in the face of the sexual desire represented by women, who by the same token became symbols of folly. To quote but one example, a pamphlet probably authored by Gabriel de Saconay makes a parallel between the success of heresy in France and Solomon’s renouncing the God of Israel for the love of femmelettes (little women):

Au moyen dequoy Moyse, en ses saintes & celestes Ordonnances, commande que lon mette à mort tout homme, qui osera inventer nouvelle façon de servir Dieu, comme chose pernicieuse à l’estat & conservation de la maison de Jacob & Royaume des Juifs. Ce que n’ayant esté soigneusement gardé par Salomon, alleché par ses plaisirs à suivre des songes & superstitions de femmelettes, & des docteurs de leur erreur, fut cause de sa ruine, & de l’espoventable

⁴¹ Delumeau, La Peur en Occident, p. 317.

⁴² Gen. 3.1-7; 1 Tim. 2.12.; 1 Cor. 14.24.

sedition de toute la nation des Hebreux.⁴³

Nowhere could the polemicists find a more potent symbol for rebellion than in women, who were the embodiment of all the negative traits that the Catholics wanted to associate with Protestantism. The phrase coined by Virgil ‘fickle and changeable always is woman’ was much exploited by the polemicists to reduce the popularity of Protestantism to a mere feminine ‘whim’.⁴⁴ Another negative trait of character which was associated with women was contentiousness, and the image of the quarrelsome woman appears in the literature of the Church Fathers as the archetypal woman inhabited by a familiar spirit:

Mulier enim litigiosa, vel omnis ad litteram mulier est, vel ipsa caro, vel vita muliebris, vel societas cum amatoribus mollis et muliebris vitae. Quodlibet enim istorum semper rixam movet viris spiritualibus. O quam convenienter Rixandis, ut dicitur, appellata est illa captiva muliercula, quae te captivum trahit? Ipsa enim est diabolus, qui dicitur Rixoaldus, qui semper rixam alit. Nam et hoc nomen legitur esse proprium cujusdam daemonis.⁴⁵

The use of feminine stereotypes to describe heresy became so commonplace that throughout the seventeenth century, heresy was portrayed allegorically as a woman. A woodcut published in 1618 pictured heresy as a dishevelled naked old woman, spitting fire from her mouth, and holding a book from which snakes are coming out.⁴⁶ All the negativity which was associated with the body, flesh, and sex

⁴³ [Gabriel de Saconay], Discours Catholique, sur les causes & remedes des Malheurs intentés au Roy, & escheus à son peuple par les rebelles Calvinistes (Lyon, Michel Jove, 1568), sig. A3^v.

⁴⁴ Virgil, Aeneid (London, 1956), IV. 1.569.

⁴⁵ Helinandus Frigidi Montis, extracted from the Patrologia Latina Database.

⁴⁶ C. Ripa, Iconologia (Padua, 1618), p. 244 (reproduced on p. 142); Bernard Dompnier, ‘Les Marques de l’hérésie dans l’iconographie du XVIIe siècle’, Siècle, 2

by men of the Church, was all summed up by the idea of woman. The archetype of the witch as a female agent of the Devil emerged at the end of the fifteenth century with treatises which emphasized that witches were women more often than men.⁴⁷ Using this stereotype, Robert Ceneau made an analogy between the Protestant use of the vernacular and old women turning the Gospel on its head: 'Mais au rebours entre ces pourceaux du troupeau d'Epicure... la femme criarde, la vieille babillarde... chacun comme il luy plaist s'efforce de deguiser l'escriture, & la renverser plus-tost que bien la declarer'.⁴⁸ The image of the shrew and the old hag recall immediately the archetypal image of the witch who was also said to turn the Scriptures 'upside down' or back to front, always a sure sign of Satanism.

The theme of the 'battle of the sexes' figures prominently in the religious polemic, and if Protestantism did not improve women's condition (a question much debated by historians) Catholics seemed to think it did.⁴⁹ Whether the Reformation

(1995), 77-96, p. 81; a very similar illustration feature on the title page of a Lutheran anti-Calvinist tract reproduced in Bodo Nischan, Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg (Philadelphia, 1994), p. 53.

⁴⁷ For a sample of these treatises see Peter Maxwell-Stuart ed., The Occult in Early Modern Europe: A Documentary History (London, 1999), pp. 171-186.

⁴⁸ Ceneau, Response catholique, sigs D4^v-D5^r.

⁴⁹ For conflicting views on Protestantism and Feminism see I. Backus, 'Marie Dentièrre: un cas de féminisme théologique à l'époque de la Réforme', BSHPF, 137 (1991), 177-95; Keith Moxey, 'The Battle of the Sexes and the World Upside Down', in L. Coon and K. Haldane et al. (eds), That Gentle Strength: historical perspectives on women in Christianity (London, 1990), 134-148; Peter Matheson, 'Breaking the Silence: Women, Censorship, and the Reformation', SCJ, 27 (1996), 97-109.



C. Ripa, *Iconologia* (Padua, 1618), p. 244.

had an emancipating effect on women, or whether it merely replaced old shackles with new ones, the inversion of gender roles remained a manifestation of the 'world upside down', whatever its interpretation. The fact that the Catholic polemicists resorted to this theme does not reflect the real impact of the Reformation on women: they were merely using the inversion of gender roles as propaganda to denigrate their enemies.

The anti-Protestant authors drew extensively from the 'battle of the sexes' arguing that Protestantism encouraged women to teach and speak in Churches allowing them to read the Scriptures in the vernacular. According to this tradition, women are ignorant and if they are seduced by the new faith it is because they are attracted by novelty rather than by the potency of its message. From the very beginning of the Reformation, one of the main criticisms of the Lutheran efforts to publish bibles in the vernacular was that it placed the word of God in the hands of people who were unfit to receive it. The Reformation's effort to render the word of God more accessible, was ascribed in John Eck's commonplaces against Luther to a proselytising effort targeted at the simple and vulgar people: 'Il appert derechef des hereticques lutheriens, qui simulent cauteleusement disputation: car ilz cherchent de disputer, non pas devant les doctes, & lettrérés exercés en theologie: mais devant les indoctes laics vulgaires, la capacité desquelz ne s'estend nullement à juger telz secretz de la foy'.⁵⁰ This was echoed by Robert Ceneau in his Response catholique: 'ce qu'ils n'osent on ne peuvent en latin, ils le depravent en langue vulgaire, à fin que l'ignorant entende plus aisement l'ignorant'.⁵¹

* * *

If this criticism concerned unlearned men in general, it concerned women particularly since fewer women knew Latin than men. Bosquet, a Catholic commentator of the first religious war in Toulouse tells us that when a minister from

⁵⁰ John Eck, Les lieux communs de jean Ekius, contre Luther (Lyon, Jean Marnax, 1551), sig. D7^r.

⁵¹ Ceneau, Response catholique, sigs D4^v-D5^f.

Lavour was challenged by a deacon of Toulouse, he refused to conduct the debate in Latin, but in French, so he could be heard by the femmelettes who had come to hear him: ‘L’après dinée un diacre de la nouvelle secte ayant aetapué un bon religieux... lequel acceptant la dispute en langue latine... contre son intention, voulant parler François pour estre entendu. comme il disoit des famelettes, qui leur assistoient desquelles plusieurs avoient la suivy leurs maris & adulteres’.⁵² Robert Ceneau also argues that the use of the vernacular by Protestant minister was aimed at women, not so much to convert but to seduce them: ‘Pourquoy ce dangereux apologastres à plutost declairé sa conception en langue vulgaire que latine, sinon qu’ils s’est proposé faire entendre son secret aux femmelettes, desquelles l’esprit est merueilleusement brouillé & enveloppé ou bien à quelques glorieux?’.⁵³

That women should remain untaught in the Scriptures had become the main argument for preventing religious debate from being conducted in the vernacular. In French polemic, femmelette had become synonymous with the ignoramus which featured in the polemic of Johannes Eck. Georg Witzel, another opponent of Luther, indeed associated womanhood with ignorance in his Discours des moeurs: ‘par telle nouveauté ils ont aisement gaigné les femmelettes peu sobres & avisées, & le peuple qui est sans science & sans joug.... Or que cela soit familier à Luther, est une chose cogneue aux idiots mesmes & aux femmelettes’.⁵⁴

Jean de la Vacquerie, another virulent anti-Protestant author, also uses the word femmelette in conjunction with the word ‘idiot’ which implies that the two words were synonymous: ‘Mais s’ilz apperçoivent quelque femmelette, ou simple idiot, qui ayt prins goust à leurs parolles, alors s’efforcent, avec grand soing les entretenir & nourrir en leurs doctrine’.⁵⁵ René Benoist also uses this image in his Brieve Response: ‘tousjours apprenant, & jamais ne pouvant venir à la cognoissance

⁵² Bosquet, Sur les troubles, p. 129.

⁵³ Ceneau, Response catholique, sig. D7^v.

⁵⁴ Witzel, Discours des moeurs, pp. 12, 56.

⁵⁵ Vacquerie, Catholique remonstrance, sig. C5^r.

de verité'⁵⁶; a turn of phrase also used by Gabriel du Preau: 'qui tousjours apprennent, & ne meritent de parvenir a cognoistre la verité'.⁵⁷ The universality of this image is demonstrated by its use by Protestant writings of the turn of the century against the Dominicans and Franciscans: 'D'estre de ceux qui apprenet tousjours & jamais ne peuvent parvenir à la connoissance de verité'.⁵⁸

The word femmelette is a literal translation of the Latin muliercula which features in texts ranging from late antiquity to the medieval period, with the same connotation of ignorance that is found in sixteenth-century polemic. This use of the word is found, for example, in the thirteenth-century controversy between St Bernard de Clairvaux and one of his critics about his De Diligendo Deo: 'Quapropter perpetuis tenebris digna est Apologia Berengarii, temerarii illius Abaelardi discipuli ac defensoris, qui Bernardo impudenter insultat ob editum ab eo tractatum de Diligendo Deo, cum "de hoc," inquit, "nemo dubitet," non quaevis muliercula, non quivis extremus idiota'.⁵⁹ The association was so common that it is used by an anonymous Protestant author who defended the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular:

Les livres des anciens doct. sont pleins d'exhortations à tous, voire jusques aux artisans & simples femmeletes, de lire l'écriture & s'assembler par voisinages pour ce faire. Cassian écrit que les filles & chambrières de son temps devisoyent coutumièrement de la parole de Dieu en filant leurs quenouilles, & devidant la laine.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Benoist, Brieve Response a quelque remonstrance, sig. a5^r.

⁵⁷ Gabriel du Preau, Consolation des catholiques, molestez par Sectaires & schismatiques (Paris, Jean de Roigny, 1560), sig. A7^r.

⁵⁸ Vignier, Legende Doree, p. 62.

⁵⁹ Bernard de Clairvaux, 'Admonitio in Opusculum VIII', extracted from the Patrologia Latina Database.

⁶⁰ An., Complainte apologique des eglises de France, au roy, royne-mere, roy de

Calling one's enemy 'unlearned' was the most grievous insult one could use among the educated élite. It peppered the medieval debates of the Scholastics, and it features extensively in those between the Reformers and their opponents. Stanislas Hozius and Georg Witzel accuse Protestants of pretending to be superior to the Catholics in learning, a charge which Hozius generalises to all heretics:

Tu as ici la phrase & façon de dire de Luther & Calvin, lesquels par belles affirmations appellent les Catholiques Acatechetes, c'est à dire, non enseignez.... Rien n'est plus commun aujourd'huy que ce vitupere: Les Papistes ne scavent rien, pas mesme leurs Alphabet: Ce sont asnes, testes d'asnes, queues d'asnes, & semblables injures.⁶¹

... car c'est un vice propre à tous hérétiques, qu'ils ne veulent jamais être corrigez & s'ils voient qu'on reprenne leurs fautes lesquelles eux admirent singulierement et adorent ni plus ni moins que leurs Idoles, qu'ils ont forgées de leurs propres mains.⁶²

The same criticism was made about the Calvinists by Jean Talpin in 1567:

S'ils nous impropèrent l'ignorance de plusieurs de noz ministres, nous leur en mettrons en front des leurs une infinité qui ne sçavent du tout rien ayans esté Cordonniers, Savetiers, Cousturiers, Bonnetiers & autres de semblables estoffe, ne sçachans autres science que de detracter & mal dire, des Ecclesiastiques & de toutes les ordonnances des Eglises. Et touchant les vices, quand ils n'en auroient que l'orgueil, par lequel ils s'eslevent par dessus tous les autres, condemnans les docteurs d'ignorances & les saintes gens d'hypocrisie s'il ne sont de leur opinion.... Ils sont seuls

Navarre, & autres du conseil, (Jaques des Hayes, 1561), sig. C1^r.

⁶¹ Witzel, Discours des moeurs, pp. 9, 14.

⁶² Hozius, Des sectes et hérésies de nostre temps, p. 48.

sçavans, seuls saints, seuls enfans de Dieu, & seuls sauvez.⁶³

By associating Protestantism with women, who were ‘by definition’ unlearned, and attributing the popularity of the new faith to their ignorance and gullibility, the Catholic polemicists turned the table on the Protestants who accused them of being ignorant. French is the only European language which, to my knowledge, translated literally the word muliercula from the Latin and kept all its semantic connotations. There is no equivalent of the word femmelette in contemporary Italian or German, for example.

The word evolved and gained other connotations, the diminutive ‘-ette’ implying a ‘small’ woman, denoting intellectual, but also physical and spiritual weakness. A modern French dictionary gives the following definition for femmelette: ‘Small woman. Weak man, lacking energy’. So in its modern connotation, femmelette is also used to denote weak, effeminate men whose behaviour does not conform to socially defined canons of ‘manhood’. Although the sixteenth-century use of the word does not denote an ambiguity in socially accepted gender roles, it nonetheless defended the idea of a strong differentiation between the sexes: ‘real’ men are strong and ‘real’ women are weak.

The Reformation was seen to disturb the rightful authority of men over women by allowing them access to Scripture, which put them on an equal footing with men although they lacked the intellect and the moral fibre to understand its teachings. A whole body of biblical quotations served to justify this notion of spiritual superiority of men over women, chief among them 1 Corinthians 14.34 which served throughout the Reformation: ‘Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church’.

In 1523 it was used by Johannes of Lanzhut, against Argula von Grumbach

⁶³ Jean Talpin, Remonstrance a tous chrestiens qui se sont separez de l’Eglise Romaine (Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1572), sig. M8^v.

when she challenged the whole university of Ingolstadt:

For you cannot prove from this text of Paul
 His instruction that women be silent is all;
 When he actually debars them from teaching
 And insists they honour their husband's leading,
 In disciplined obedience, shame and fear.
 Because it wasn't Adam, but Eve
 Who was the very first to sin.
 Just turn the page, it's written
 There is chapter five
 Near the middle, I think, that wives
 Should not dispute or duel
 But at home, and in their own house, rule,
 And in the Church be quiet and still.⁶⁴

The same passage was used over and over again by the French Catholics, notably by Thomas Beauxamis (1524-1589), a doctor of the Sorbonne and René Benoist (1521-1608), also a doctor of the Sorbonne and client of the Cardinal de Lorraine, in 1562 and 1565:

A sçavoir, en quel temps on a plus disputé & estrivé par parolles, & vaines questions de nostre foy, jusques à ce que mesmes gens illiterez, & mechaniques, ensemble femmes, contre la prohibition de Sainct Paul, ont usurpé toute liberté, d'agiter tous pointz de nostre religion, en l'Eglise, es maisons privees, aux repas, & temps indiscret: sinon depuis que vostre secte s'est monstree, estant vostre origine Luther.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Peter Matheson ed., Argula von Grumbach: A woman's voice in the Reformation (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 164.

⁶⁵ Thomas Beauxamis, Enqueste et griefz, sur le sac et pieces, et depositions des tesmoins productz par les favoriz de la nouvelle Eglise, contre le Pape, & autres

Vous deviez considerer, mes amyes, quel mal a apporté la legereté d'Eve, & comment pour l'infirmité qui est naturelle à vostre sexe, saint Paul vous defend entreprendre, determiner ou disputer des Mysteres de la Foy & religion Chrestienne, esquels les hommes qui sont appelez de Dieu au ministere Ecclesiastique, sont le plus souvent beaucoup empeschez.⁶⁶

An anonymous pamphlet published in Lyon in 1568 describes arrogant Protestant noblewomen who regarded prelates as of no more social consequence than their servants:

Le vulgaire de leurs disciples ne sont rien moins avantageux & eventez, voire les femmes, ne faisans point de conte des plus doctes & sçavans des nostres, qu'on leur sceut nommer, au pris de leurs valetz, & chambrieres, car nous sommes par elles tous condamnez pour ignorans, povres abusez, gens sans Dieu, & sans verité. bref, hors de nostre bon sens.⁶⁷

Antoine de Mouchy even accuses the Protestant women of usurping the ministry which had been the prerogative of males for centuries: 'Combien les femmes heretiques sont effrontées, on le cognoist, par ce qu'elles osent hardiment enseigner, disputer, faire des adjurations, promettre des guarisons, & paraventure osent baptiser'.⁶⁸ In England, Robert Parsons gives a similar account of his opinion of the Protestant martyr Ann Askew, calling her *juvencula* or little maiden, and her arrogance at challenging the King's Council:

Prelatz de l'Eglise Catholique (Paris, Jerome de Marnef, 1562), sig. A7^r.

⁶⁶ René Benoist, Remonstrance aux prestres, religieuses et moynes, qui sous le pretexte d'un licite mariage, ont commis abhominable inceste & sacrilege (Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1567), sig. Bb4^v.

⁶⁷ [Saconay], Discours Catholique, sig. E1^v.

⁶⁸ Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie, sig. H4^v.

By all which, and by the publike opinion and fame that was of her lightnesse and liberty in that behalfe, every man may guess what a juvencula she was, and how fitt for Bale his pen, and for Fox his Calendar. And the proud and presumptuous answers, quips, and nips, which she gave both in matter of religion, and otherwise, to the king's councell and bishops, when they examined her, and dealt with her seriously for her amendment, do well show her intollerable arrogancy.⁶⁹

The strength of the Catholic reaction suggests that Protestant women indeed took a more active part in the religious life of the community. But these passages should not be taken at face value, and the association between Protestantism and women is more a rhetorical artifice than a reflection of reality. Robert Ceneau, for example, points at the Protestant ministers as the real instigators of the women's audacity against Catholic prelates. The pamphlet denies any merit to the Protestant women who are described as the puppets of the ministers who are the real targets of these attacks:

Ne croiez toutefois que ces manieres de femmes, encores qu'elles soient mal oiseuses, nestre les premieres ou avoir preminence en ceste tragedie tant malheureuse. Encore sont pires, qui leur servent de secretaires, ou bien qui savent leur plus secret conseil. Elles n'assistent & ne sont seulement que presentes: quant à eux, ils president comme maistres.... Quant à ces femmeletes, dont nous avons parlé, sont fleustes d'Arabie, sonnantes toutesfois & hautaines, comme marotes de bateleurs: mais les entrepreneurs de la chose, sont ouvriers bien sonnans, vrais chantres & musiciens. Ils chantent aussi, mais la compagnée des femmes respond tout bas.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ J. Nichols ed., 'Narratives of the days of the Reformation', Camden Society, 77 (1859), p. 307. I am grateful to Dr. Chris Bradshaw for this reference.

⁷⁰ Ceneau, Response catholique, sigs E6^v-E7^r.

Women's contribution to congregational life is ridiculed, minimizing the impact of Protestantism as a whole, as if women's involvement in spiritual affairs was not significant in itself but a by-product of the Reformation. When the man does not keep a tight enough control over his household, it is he who is mocked in the custom of 'Charivari', not the woman for transgressing her husband's commands. As far as Protestant women are concerned, it is either the Catholic husband who fails to keep his wife in check, or the attraction of the ministers' sermons which seduces her, but in both cases they are not responsible for what they do.

Those warnings go hand in hand with reminders of how a good Catholic woman should behave, increasing the contrast between the two images, which is a time-honoured rhetorical tool 'just as the clash of opposites was the most effective form of verbal eloquence'.⁷¹ Other passages from Paul concerning modesty in clothing are also referred to constantly as going hand in hand with the humility that women should observe regarding religious matters:

That the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent.⁷²

Indeed, Robert Ceneau paraphrases it in his Response catholique:

Les femmes soient sujettes à leurs maris, desqueles la chevelure ne se monstre par dehors, ne parement d'or, ne habis sumptueux....
Que la femme apprenne en silence avec toute subjection.
Toutesfois je ne permets à la femme d'enseigner ne avoir

⁷¹ Clark, 'Inversion, Misrule and Witchcraft', p. 106.

⁷² 1 Tim. 2.12.

domination sur son mary, mais estre en silence.⁷³

This passage of the Scriptures was also honoured by the Protestants as is demonstrated by the following example from an anonymous piece published in 1561:

Maris, aimez vos femmes, enseignez-les, consolez-les, & les gouvernez & gardez soigneusement comme vaisseaux infirmes, leur gardant parfaite loyauté. Et vous femmes, soyez sujettes à vos maris en toute obeïssance, & ornez-vous de chasteté, humilité, & modestie, qui sont les ornemens devant Dieu plus precieux, que rubis, perles, & diamans. Vostre habit soit modeste, & sans dissolucion, vos paroles pleines d'honneur & de pudicité, & votre maniere de vivre sobre & simple: car cela est louable devant Dieu, & profitable pour le monde.⁷⁴

This suggests that Protestant authors were no less stereotypical than the Catholics, to quote but one famous example, John Knox's The First blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women. It argues that the authority of women over men is unnatural and contrary to God's will and, although it was written in the aftermath of Mary Tudor's reign, it outraged Elizabeth who took it personally. Knox's use of this theme shows the potency of this symbolism which transcends confessional differences. Knox reproduces all the passages of Paul mentioned above and in many ways his portrayal of women is not dissimilar from that of the French Catholic authors:

To promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion or empire above any realme, nation, or citie, is repugnant to nature, contumelie to God, a thing most contrarious to his reveled will and approved ordinance, and finalie it is the subversion of good order, of all equitie and justice.... Nature I say, doth paynt them furthe to be weake, fraile, impacient, feble and foolishe: and experience hath

⁷³ Ceneau, Response catholique, sig. E3^r.

⁷⁴ An., Exhortation d'un des Pasteurs de la France à son troupeau (1561), pp. 9-10.

declared them to be unconstant, variable, cruell and lacking the spirit of counsel and regiment.... So, I say, that in her greatest perfection woman was created to be subject to man.... But as for woman, it is no more possible, that she being set aloft in authoritie above man, shall resist the motions of pride, then it is able to be weake reed, or to the turning wethercocke, not to bowe or turne at the vehemencies of the unconstant wind.⁷⁵

The fact that both Catholics and Protestants honoured these Scriptural defences against the involvement of women in spiritual affairs shows that the actual role of women in Protestant services was not really what was at stake. The use of the same repository of language and stereotypes by Catholics and Protestants alike suggests that misogyny was a common cultural feature which transcended confessional differences. For example Nicolas Vignier used the word femmelette at the turn of the century to deride the Catholic's constant reference to the councils of the Church:

Mais ce sont les Papes & le Clergé de l'Eglise Romaine qui mesprisent les saints Conciles & leur determination, comme il est aisé de monstrier par plusieurs exemples.... Que ceux-là seuls leur semblent Conciles qui font à leur profit, & que quant aux autres, ils ne doivent estre non plus prisez que des assemblées de femmelettes chez le Tisseran ou aux Estuves.⁷⁶

Early modern conceptions of women could be described as doxa, defined by Bourdieu as 'catégories de pensée impensées qui délimitent le pensable et prédéterminent le pensé', and has therefore no bearing on the gender issues which has been the hallmark of recent historiography.⁷⁷ The theme of the 'battle of the sexes', however, was a particularly powerful weapon of propaganda. On the one

⁷⁵ Knox, The First blast, sigs B1^r, B2^r, B6^v, C2^v,

⁷⁶ Nicolas Vignier, Apologie Catholique de la doctrine des Eglises Reformees (Saumur, Thomas Portau, 1617), p. 28. See below, pp. 198, 203.

⁷⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, Leçon sur la Leçon (Paris, 1982), p. 10.

hand the Catholics are denigrating Reformed theology by ascribing Protestantism's popularity to feminine gullibility, while on the other they are arguing that the Protestant aims are to overturn all order by giving more power to women. The image of 'women on top' was synonymous with disorder and it was used by the Catholic polemicists to show that Protestantism was a harbinger of chaos and agent of the 'world turned upside down'.

* * *

In the world of analogies outlined above, the relationship between husbands and wives reflected harmony in all the other realms (physical, spiritual, political). The orderliness of the universe on the domestic scale was represented by the obedience of the wife to the husband, in the same way as the obedience of children to their parents, servants to their masters, and subjects to their ruler. According to Antoine du Val in his Mirouer des Calvinistes, the disagreement of a wife with her husband provokes a chain reaction which topples the whole hierarchy and jeopardizes the kingdom:

... il adviendroit que le mary seroit d'une opinion, & la femme d'une autre, les enfans & serviteurs pareillement d'une autre, de sorte, qu'on ne verroit que partialitez & mutineries, Finablement s'en ensuivroit, que le filz voudroit tuer le pere, le frere son frere.... Car l'heresie est d'une nature, que depuis qu'elle entre, & a le pied en une maison, cité ou Royaume, elle y met à la parfin telle division & discord, que le mary n'est d'accord avec sa propre femme, ny les domestiques & citoyens entreux, ny les subjectz avec leur seigneur.⁷⁸

This idea is also found in an anonymous pamphlet published in Lyon in 1568: 'Le peuple (dict il) sera desobeissant aux pasteurs, tellement que chacun voudra vivre à sa phantasie, les enfans s'esleveront contre leurs parens, la femme contre le mary,

⁷⁸ Du Val, Mirouer des Calvinistes, fol. 28^v.

les serviteurs contre le maistre'.⁷⁹ This image of topsy-turvydom is found in the Scriptures, Matthew 10.34-36, but it is Christ who is turning the 'world upside down' and if the Catholics understandably avoided this passage, it was called upon by the Protestants who used it to answer these accusations:

Et predict qu'il n'est pas venu en tel cas mettre la paix en la terre, mais le glaive, disant qu'il y aura division entre le pere & le fils, entre la fille & la mere, la belle fille & la belle-mere, & que l'homme aura ses domestiques pour adversaires.⁸⁰

... de laquelle Jesus Christ mesme a dit qu'elle engendreroit dissensions, & qu'il est venu mettre en dissention l'homme avec son pere, & la fille avec sa mere, & que pour icelle le frere livrera le frere à mort, & le pere l'enfant: & les enfans s'eleveront contre leurs peres & meres, & les feront mourir, & les domestiques de l'homme seront ses ennemys.⁸¹

The embracing of this biblical topsy-turvydom by the Protestants justified in part the Catholic accusations that their ultimate aim was to turn the world on its head. The Catholic rhetoric followed nonetheless a very specific logic which started with the alleged authority that Protestantism was said to be giving women. According to Bosquet, the interference of women in spiritual affairs, which had been the sole prerogative of males for centuries, introduced an element of rebellion against the authority of the husband:

Ayant permis contre l'intention d'icelle que leurs femmes allassent au ministre, & fissent tous autres exercices damnables, & apostatiques; & se formalisant contre les maris, qui prohiboit leurs femmes ne faire le semblable, ayans temerairement soustenu que ne

⁷⁹ [Saconay], Discours Catholique, sig. B3^v.

⁸⁰ La Maniere d'appaiser les troubles, sig. B2^v.

⁸¹ Complainte apologique des eglises de France, sig. C3^v.

devoit estre chastiées, ne contrains par leur mary de faire leur volonté; comme sil le mary n'étoit chef de la femme: & quelle estant mariée Catholique eut license se rendre heretique, outre son vouloir, & consentement. Sous qu'elle impudence & tyrannie, pourrions dire avec Caton d'utique, parlant des Romaines: que les hommes domineroient sur les femmes: nous sur les hommes: les femmes sur nous.⁸²

It is interesting to note that Bosquet quotes Cato to illustrate the idea that men who are not masters in their own home are unfit to have authority over other men, a claim which is also found in Knox's First blast: 'some have thoght that men subject to the counsel or empire of their wyves were unworthie of all publike office'.⁸³

There is of course a strong sexual connotation running throughout the Catholic material which resorts to the stereotype of the femmelette. Women are described as instruments of corruption, temptresses, and Bosquet argues that their vanity is a tool in the Reformers' hands:

l'esprit de midy... sous espece de Reformation... fit oublier à plusieurs femmes desireusent de nouveauté l'ancienne [religion] leurs faisant quiter avec les heures, & le chapelet... [pour] ces robes enflées, vasquines, & habits dissolus; danses, chansons mondaines, comme si elles eussent esté poussée du S. Esprit. Ce que nos predicateurs ne pouvoient obtenir des catholiques... causant la superbe indecence aux femmes vertueuses, de laquelle quasi les plus honnêtes damoiselles estoient saisies.⁸⁴

Although I have dealt with the accusations of sexual orgies and the imputed immorality of the Protestants in Chapter 2, it may be appropriate to bear these

⁸² Bosquet, Sur les troubles, p. 157.

⁸³ Knox, The First blast, sig. B2^r.

⁸⁴ Bosquet, Sur les troubles, p. 50.

accusations in mind. Women represented the domination of the physical and material bottom half of the body over the intellectual and spiritual 'higher self', a reversal of the masculine principle 'mind over matter'.⁸⁵ In this sense, a woman was a 'world turned upside down' in her own right, in opposition to the values of decency and sobriety upheld by men. Woman was temptress and, according to this world view, the Protestant conversions were provoked by the lust for women:

D'une mesme femme ils en font trois ou quatre... nos Calvinolâtres sont du tout adonnez a choses charnelles.... Ils sont devenus chevaux enragés de courir après les femmes, soudain qu'ils les voyent. Ils hennissent à l'entour'd'elles: ils se laissent aller à leurs passions.... Car il en y a d'entr'eux qui sont tellement addonnez à Venus & à son service, qu'ils se retirent aux medecins pour faire croistre leurs membres honteux, plus grands qu'ils ne les ont de nature.⁸⁶

It is the lust of the Reformers for women which explains their proselytising efforts towards them, according to Robert Ceneau who paints the picture of ministers who enter houses to trick widows out of their money or obtain sexual favours from married women:

Car il est trop plus aisé pour contenter lastuce de son insatiable desir, penetrer les maisons des veuves, avecq'esper de gaing, ou d'abuser le sexe feminin sous pretexte de friandise & de banquets, ceux aussi qui n'ont eage suffisant, à moitié doctes & à moitié ignorans: congnoissant que teles personnes n'ont le jugement entier & assure, ne aussi suffisans pour estre ouies à dire leur advis.⁸⁷

According to Thomas Beauxamis, widows were particularly vulnerable:

⁸⁵ Bakhtine, L'oeuvre de François Rabelais.

⁸⁶ Witzel, Discours des moeurs, pp. 19, 42, 45, 47.

⁸⁷ Ceneau, Response catholique, sig. D7^v.

Les heretiques se joignent souvent avec les jeunes veufves. Les imposteurs de la verité facilement s'estreignent à l'entour des femmes: car d'autant qu'elles ne sont assez fines, elles sont facilement deceües par leurs imposteures, & sont facilement enclines à aymer leur religion, veu qu'elles sont de coeur delicates. D'avantage toustefois ils demeurent avec les veufves, pour deux causes: Premièrement pource que la femme qui a mary n'est facilement deceüe, adce qu'elle a son mary qui la conseille. Et ne leur baille facilement de ses biens, veu qu'elle est en la puissance de son mary.⁸⁸

Gabriel du Preau (1511-1588), a doctor of theology, in his Consolation des catholiques, published in 1560 also draws on this strong image of a minister breaking into people's houses to seduce their wives: 'Donne toy garde d'eux: car de telle engeance sont ceulx, qui se fourrent es maisons, & arrestent en leurs retz je ne sçay quelles femmettes, des ja au paravant chargees de pechez, & menees de divers desirs'.⁸⁹ René Benoist also used this image: 'Ilz se lancent es maisons, & tiennent captives les femmelettes chargées de pechez, lesquelles sont menées par divers desirs'.⁹⁰ The same turn of phrase was used by Nicolas Vignier against the Dominicans and Franciscans: 'd'entre ceux-la sont ceux qui se fourrent es maisons, & qui rendent captives les femmelettes chargées de pechez transportées de diverses convoitises'.⁹¹

The accusation of sexual promiscuity is another way of discrediting the Protestants and should not be taken any more literally than any other use of female stereotypes. It should be interpreted in the light of a long line of similar arguments which were used throughout the Middle Ages against heretics.

⁸⁸ Beauxamis, Enquete et griefz, sig. B5^v.

⁸⁹ Du Preau, Consolation des catholiques, sig. A6^v.

⁹⁰ Benoist, Brieve Response a quelque remonstrance, sig. a5^f.

⁹¹ Vignier, Legende Doree, pp. 62, 64, 69. See below, p. 198.

The Catholic borrowed from this tradition an argument hinged on the institution of marriage which was not available to the Protestants. Drawing on the Scriptural description of the Church as the bride of Christ, Catholics were able to link heresy and infidelity by turning the analogy between marriage and orthodoxy upside down. The idea that heresy is similar to adultery is explained by an analogy found in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians 5.22-24, which opened John Eck's Les lieux communs against Luther:

Que les femmes soyent sujetes à leurs maris, comme au Seigneur:
car l'homme est le chef de la femme comme Christ est le chef de
l'Eglise, iceluy est le Sauveur de son corps, mais comme l'Eglise
est subjecte à Christ, semblablement que les femmes soyent
subjectes à leurs marys en toutes choses.

The implication of this analogy is that, by breaking away from the Church, the Protestants were committing an act akin to adultery. John Eck pursues the analogy by quoting the Song of Solomon, and argued that just as men should not have more than one wife, they could belong to only one Church:

L'Eglise est le corps de Jesus Christ & l'Epouse de Christ, le
Royaume des cieulx... l'Eglise est l'Epouse de Christ.... Christ n'a
pas eu deux femmes, l'eglise des Apostres & la nostre est une,
avant que Luther fust nay.... Celle a esté espouse de Christ... pource
que Christ ayme l'eglise son espouse.⁹²

This argument was reproduced years later by Jean Talpin in his Remonstrance a tous chrestiens (1567) arguing the analogy between fidelity in marriage and the unity of the Church very strongly:

Nous sçavons qu'en vray & legitime mariage, l'homme ne se
conjoint qu'à une seule espouse, laquelle estant bien instruite, se
conforme du tout à la volonté de son espoux, ne suyvant autre sens,
avis ou jugement que celui de sondit espoux, en tout accord,

⁹² Eck, Les lieux communs, sigs a8^f-b1^f.

consentement & union.

Et nous voyons, qu'en l'homme ainsi qu'il n'y a qu'un chef, aussi n'y a il qu'un corps, lequel se gouverne du tout par son chef en toutes ses actions naturelles, tous les membres ensemble se accordans en une & seule volonté, souz la conduite & jugement de leur chef naturel.

Avec ce, nous voyons fort bien qu'il n'y a en un corps qu'un Esprit, qui regit, meut & entretient tous ces membres en toute concorde. Entendez que toutes ces comparaisons de si grande conformité, parfaite communion & convenance des choses dessusdictes, nous declarent la conjunction estre indivise d'entre Jesus Christ & son Eglise.

Mais pensez que tout homme qui allegue l'Escriture contre la doctrine de l'eglise, est induit par cest esprit maling, à mettre erreur & schisme en l'eglise, laquelle ne peut jamais faillir. Et aussi Jesus Christ son vray espoux ne l'abandonne, mais est tousjours avec elle, la gouvernant & entretenant, comme un bon espoux faict son espouse.⁹³

The following analogy belongs to the ascetic tradition which demonized women, and is a good alternative to the list of analogies and contrasts that is given by Jean Delumeau in La Peur en Occident.⁹⁴

<u>spiritual</u>	=	<u>orthodoxy</u>	=	<u>marriage</u>	=	<u>good</u>
physical		heresy		adultery		evil

Drawing from this analogy, Gabriel du Preau argues that Catholics should not partake in the ceremonies of the Protestants, just as it is forbidden for children of God to marry the daughters of men:

à sçavoir, s'il est licite aux enfans de Dieu de hanter & frequenter

⁹³ Talpin, Remonstrance a tous chrestiens, sigs M2^v, N8^v.

⁹⁴ Delumeau, La Peur en Occident, p. 311.

avec les filles des hommes, encores quelles leur semblent belles, & de les prendre à femme (comme il es contenu en Genese) c'est à dire, s'il est licite aux fideles & Chrestiens Catholiques de converser avec les devoyez de la foy & heretiques, & communiquer avec eux en leurs assemblees, ceremonies, conversations, façons & manieres de faire, sans offenser Dieu: & quel moyen il y fault tenir.⁹⁵

The Dutch Calvinist Gui de Brès also uses the analogy against the Anabaptists, describing their Church as a whore which implies that the Protestant Church was, by contrast, a rightful housewife: 'Il en advient toujours ainsi, qu'une putain se vantera plus d'estre femme de bien & chaste, que ne fera pas une honnete matrone'.⁹⁶ George Witzel uses the same analogy to describe the Protestant Church as a young girl: 'nos Arrians nouveaux, Martinians & Calvinistes, qui preferent à nous autres leurs jeunes filles de dix ans, comme bien apprises par leur futile & inconstante institution'.⁹⁷ This analogy allowed the Catholic polemicists to make a comparison between heresy and adultery and use 2 Peter 2.14: 'Ils ont les yeulx pleins d'adulteres, & ne sçavent cesser de pecher, attirans les ames inconstantes, ayans le cueur usité en rapines, estans enfans de malediction, delaissans la voye droicte'.⁹⁸ Robert Ceneau asserted that 'Les femmes abandonnent leurs mariz, & les mariz leurs femmes pour courir à teles gens' which points directly at Protestantism as

⁹⁵ Gabriel du Preau, Des faux prophetes, seducteurs, & hypocrites, qui viennent à nous en habit de brebis: mais au dedans sont loups ravissans (Paris, Jaques Macé, 1563), sig. C1^v.

⁹⁶ Gui de Brès, La racine, source et fondement des Anabaptistes ou rebaptisez de nostre temps [Rouen], (Abel Clemence, 1565), p. 68.

⁹⁷ Witzel, Discours des moeurs, p. 9.

⁹⁸ Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie, sig. G5^v; also du Preau, Des faux prophetes, sig. C1^r.

responsible for breaking up marriages.⁹⁹ In England, the main criticism directed towards Ann Askewe was that of having abandoned her husband:

And for that Bale calleth Anne Askue juvencula, a young heffer or steere that abideth no yoke, he seemeth not to be farre amisse. For that she was a coy dame, and of very evil fame for wantoness: in that she left the company of her husband, mister Kyme, to gad up and downe the country a gospelling and gossiping where she might, and ought not.¹⁰⁰

In anti-Lutheran literature, the fact that Luther had been a monk and that he married a nun allowed Catholics to argue it was lust which had provoked them to renounce their vows. That lust was a motivation for breaking monastic vows was a common late medieval charge, but it was generalised to include all Protestants as a motivation for breaking with Rome. Men converted to Protestantism, it was argued, because the Reformation had flouted vows of fidelity, chastity or otherwise, and asked little of its followers. Originally this accusation was levelled at monks and ministers who had renounced their vows and married, but it was generalised to all Protestants. Breaking one's vows of fidelity to the Catholic Church was equated with breaking vows of fidelity to one's wife. Protestantism was described by the Catholics as an easy option, 'the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire', and according to de Mouchy and Bontemps Legier, lust is the source of all apostasy:

Qui faict apostasier & sortir les religieux depravez & religieuses des cloistres, & gecter le froc & voile aux ortyes, & aller a eux? Paillardise. Qui faict aller, je ne sçay quels gens d'eglise avec eux demeurer? Paillardise. N'est ce donc point le principal apast, la premiere amorse qu'ils presentent pour attirer à eux que paillardise?¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Ceneau, Response catholique, sig. B3^r.

¹⁰⁰ Nichols ed., 'Narratives of the days of the Reformation', p. 307.

¹⁰¹ Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie, sig. K3^v.

Mais toute leur tragedie, & ce grand bruit qu'ilz font de vouloir reformer l'Eglise, tombe à la fin en une risée & passe-temps, par ce qu'on void que toutes leurs menées ne tendent qu'à vivre en charnelle plaisance.¹⁰²

On the subject of married ministers, Robert Ceneau has much to say and generalizes the analogy which makes nuns the brides of Christ to include the ministers:

Maintenant la chose est bien pis. Car lors les vicieux de ce temps la n'osoient confesser leurs fornications: mais maintenant par tout librement & impudemment ils ne craignent de vouloir asseurer leurs adulteres & fornications, devoir estre receues pour vrais & legitimes mariages: laissant leurs propres femmes, pour prendre autant qu'ils trouvent de vierges religieuses, & converser ensemble comme bestes brutes, esquelles n'y a nulle raison ne entendement.

Furthermore, in defence of celibacy, Ceneau argues that any union with a minister is unlawful and no justification can be found for it:

Retournons à la compagnie des femmes. Il n'y a celuy d'entre eux qui s'en passe, je veux donc interroger chacun d'eux: Hau bon homme, qui est ceste femme, ou las-tu prise. Est elle ta femme? Non dit-il: cela ne convient à ma profession. Est ce donc ta fille? Non. Quoy? n'esse point ta seur, ta niece, ou si elle te touche aucunement ou non? Rien totalement. Et comment peut elle estre seurement avec toy, quelque chaste que tu sois? Certainement cela ne t'est loysible.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Bontemps Legier, Response aux objections et poincts principaux de ceux qui se disent aujourd'huy vouloir reformer l'Eglise, & s'appellent fideles & croyans à l'Evangile, (Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1562), sig. G2^v.

¹⁰³ Ceneau, Response catholique, sigs B3^v-B4^r.

The monastic tradition made nuns the brides of Christ, a relationship which was seen as legally binding as secular marriages, which explains why Catholics accused women who married after having renounced their vows as ‘adulteresses’. René Benoist wrote an entire book against marriage between men and women who had thrown off the cowl, and his use of words offers us further insights into the symbolic meaning of the accusations that were levelled at the Protestants: ‘cela peut estre dit a bon droict de quelques femmelettes chargées de peché, lesquelles nous voyons en ce temps malheureux, oser dire pur & saint mariage leur inceste & sacrilege’.¹⁰⁴ Along the same lines which made nuns the ‘brides of Christ’, members of a monastic order were brothers and sisters, and if a woman who had renounced her vows married a monk, she was not only an adulteress but also guilty of incest. This analogy is explained by the following contemporary translation of a Church Father who wrote against the Donatists: ‘Outre, ce Felix jadis mentionné... a seduit une fille, laquelle il avoit voilée lui-mesme, & consacré religieuse, & n’a douté malheureusement & meschamment l’incester, & en quittant tout honte & piété, honnir celle, qui n’agueres l’appelloit son père spirituel. Et comme si par tel incestueux péché’.¹⁰⁵ To this figurative form of incest was added literal accusations of incest, which were targeted by de Mouchy at Protestants who partook in secret conventicles: ‘Affin que je me taise des incestes & autres infinis abus qui s’y commettent: car en telles tenebres, en tel ardeur de lasciveté, en tant grande liberté & impunité de faire toutes choses, le pere peult avoir compagnie de sa fille, & la mere de son fils’.

The relationship which united monks to their order and priests to the Church was generalised to include all heretics and anyone who betrayed the Church was committing an act akin to adultery:

Voila qui pourra suffir pour exemple des anciens heretiques, il y a plus d’unze cens ans, comme en leurs assemblées ils paillardoient.
Or si nous voulons descrire les heretiques depuis quatre cens ans, &

¹⁰⁴ Benoist, Remonstrance aux prestres, sigs Aa2^{r-v}.

¹⁰⁵ Optat, Histoire du schisme, p. 98.

monstrer leurs paillardises, il faudroit avoir plus de vingt rames de papier. Qui est cestuy qui pourroit seulement reciter les paillardises des heretiques du temps present?¹⁰⁶

This generalization was summed up by des Gallars, who decoded it well:

Tu prens une maxime, que tous heretiques sont paillars: & le proeues en cette sorte: S'ils ne craignent point à souiller les ames par heresies, comment croira-on qu'ils craignent point à souiller leurs corps par pallairdise corporelle?... Parquoy ce que tu allegues les exemples des Nicolaites, des Gnostiques, Valentiniens, Adamites, Origeniens, Anomiens, Massaliens, Floriens & autres anciens heretiques, est non seulement superflu, mais du tout hors de porpos: & est bien en vain que tu y employes tant de papier.¹⁰⁷

The questioning of celibacy by the Reformers, 'it is better to marry than to burn', has deep symbolic implications for the Catholics for whom monks and nuns are brothers and sisters, and nuns brides of Christ. Legier Bontemps's Response aux objections is a good example of how this theme was exploited to make generalization about the morals of the Reformed:

Plusieurs autres choses semblables sont recitées des mariages entre les moines & les nonnains, entre lesquelz y en a qui ont repudié leurs femmes de mesme droict qu'ilz les avoyent espousées. Au reste, asçavoir mon s'il n'y a pas autant de paillardises & adulteres entre les supposts de cette secte, comme il en y a ailleurs, & beaucoup plus ?¹⁰⁸

The emphasis which has been placed on the breaking of marital bonds in the

¹⁰⁶ Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie, sigs E8^v, K1^{r-v}.

¹⁰⁷ [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie, sig. C8^v.

¹⁰⁸ Legier, Response aux objections, sigs G2^{r-v}.

anti-Protestant polemic, now takes a more profound meaning, since according to this analogy, it flows naturally from the break with Rome. And such accusations as those targeted at secret conventicles should perhaps not be taken literally but as a symbol of the Protestants' infidelity to the Catholic Church:

Depuis continuarent leursdites Assemblées en... les maisons desquels... leurs furent ouvertes pour y faire les premiers essais de leurs Predicantereaux, esquels s'assembloient de nuit à grandes troupes, gens de tous estats & de divers ages, de l'un & l'autre sexe: les maris avec leurs femmes, sur tout les plus belles, Dieu sçait avec quelle foy matrimoniale, & quel danger de leur pudicité.¹⁰⁹

The numerous references to all that is antinomous to the institution of marriage (adultery, bastardy, and rape) might be explained by the analogy drawn in Ephesians 5.22 between orthodoxy and fidelity and heterodoxy with adultery. The description of Protestants as being 'souillez de toute espece de fornication & adultere',¹¹⁰ accused of assembling in secret 'pour forger des bastardz, avec de pauvres, & bien-abusees femmelletes',¹¹¹ and 'ravir & violer les vierges à Dieu sacrées, distraire & desbaucher les femmes de leurs mariz',¹¹² flow directly from this analogy.

* * *

Catholic polemic is characterized by the use of inversion and analogy to depict Protestantism as a source of divisiveness, chaos and disorder. The Reformation is depicted as a disease infecting the body social and the body politic. The themes of the 'battle of the sexes', which was the occasion of a literary quarrel in the first half

¹⁰⁹ Bosquet, Sur les troubles, pp. 48-9.

¹¹⁰ Ceneau, Response catholique, sig. D8^r.

¹¹¹ [Saconay], Discours Catholique, sig. D7^r.

¹¹² Legier, Response aux objections, sig. C4^v.

of the century, and the 'world turned upside down', are particular strong features of the Catholic portrayal of Protestantism. The theme of the 'battle of the sexes' is turned to polemical uses to show that Protestantism is particularly attractive to women on one hand and that it aims at overturning the traditional gender roles on the other. The topos of 'women on top' as a manifestation of topsy-turvydom is illustrated by the custom of the Charivari which upheld the idea that men are superior to women and that women should be kept in their place. By arguing that Protestantism was giving more power to women, Catholic authors were trying to show that Protestantism was interested in the overturning of all order. It would seem that Catholic portrayal of Protestant women, characterized by the use of the word femmelette, did not reflect an increase in the involvement of women in spiritual affairs, but was a way to make a more general point about Protestantism. It cannot be used to gauge the effective role that individual women played in the French Reformed movement, since it corresponds to a pre-established stereotype borrowed from the Scriptures. The universality of these stereotypes is shown by the fact that Protestant writers also used these images against Catholicism, although much less effectively. All merit is denied Protestant women and it is clear that the real targets of the polemic were the Protestant ministers or Catholic husbands, in both cases men. The analogy between heresy and adultery extrapolated from Ephesians 5.22, making the Church the bride of Christ, explains why Catholic polemicists accuse Protestants of committing adultery and other acts of marital infidelity during their secret conventicles.

Chapter 5: The impact of Catholic polemic on Protestant culture and identity.

It is difficult to gauge how Catholic polemic, some aspects of which have been described in the previous chapters, was received by the Protestants themselves. Obviously the impact on the population at large is difficult to assess on both sides of the confessional divide. It is possible, however, to document how Protestant authors reacted to the Catholic's portrayal of them. Indeed, despite the dangerous situation that they often found themselves in, Protestant authors did not leave the Catholic attacks unanswered. The nature of censorship within France ensured that the bulk of Protestant writings, particularly the more serious theological material, was published in the relative safety of Geneva. But the class of literature generated by the new wave of Catholic attacks was significantly different and mostly came from within France, printed at great risk (and at great speed) on clandestine presses. Most of what often amounted to knee-jerk reactions nonetheless contributed to what would become, in the course of the Wars of Religion, a coherent Protestant response. This chapter will attempt to show how immediate responses to Catholic polemic contributed to the elaboration of a distinct Protestant culture and identity.

* * *

The Protestant response to Catholic polemic in France is marked by the contrast with Lutheran Germany. Robert Scribner remarked that the Catholic response was 'too meagre and too limited to have any large-scale or long-term impact', a view which is often found in the historiography.¹ With respect to France the situation is, if anything, reversed. Here it becomes apparent that Protestant printing was not in a position to compete quickly and effectively with Catholic printing within France. Geneva has been rightly identified by historians as the point of origin for the spread of the Calvinist message in print. On the other hand, it is clear that Calvin and the Conseil were unwilling to engage Catholic polemic on its own terms and it was left to clandestine printing centres within France to do this. Because of the tight censorship that was operated in both Paris and Geneva, the badly

¹ Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk (1994), p. 239.

needed Protestant response was limited in its scope and efficacy.

There were good political reasons why Calvin's Geneva was ill-equipped to answer the French challenge in the very sensitive period immediately preceding the French Wars of Religion. During most of the 1550s, Calvin was still busy fighting his own enemies within Geneva and establishing himself in the face of other Reformed centres. As Calvin gained control of the city of Geneva, there was a hardening of the Calvinist ecclesiology which is typified by the execution of Michel Servet. At the same time, Calvin was also struggling to distinguish his theology from other Protestant strands, Lutheran and Sacramentarian. As late as 1558, Calvin complained that 'in France they make no distinction of parties, but group under the name of Sacramentarians, all who do not approve of the sacrifice of their mass'.² As long as Calvin was concerned with domestic matters and the internal debate from within the Reformation, he could not turn his full attention to defending the Protestant cause in France.

If Calvin's attitude to rebellion has been well studied, almost nothing is known of his response to polemical debate at least after the bruising effects of the Nicodemite controversy and the debate with Westphal over the sacraments in the 1550s. Unfortunately, very little work has been done on Calvin's reception of Catholic polemic coming from France during the opening years of the French Wars of Religion, and it is very difficult to gauge what his response was. But it can be inferred from his response to doctrinal disputes with other Reformed centres that Calvin entered the debate reluctantly and only out of necessity, and preferred to leave the most virulent attacks unanswered.³ For example, the question of the sacraments was the source of much debate among Reformed theologians, and Calvin became involved only unwillingly in order to calm things down:

² Bonnet ed., *Letters of Calvin*, III. p. 404.

³ Jean-François Gilmont, *Jean Calvin et le Livre Imprimé* (Geneva, 1997), pp. 371-387. Gilmont includes a very helpful table of Calvin's publications which demonstrates that the focus of his writings shifted in the 1550s to biblical commentaries. I am grateful to Prof. Pettegree for pointing this out to me.

For my own part, I had endeavoured in all my writings with simplicity to aim at such moderation as might be calculated to satisfy all persons of plain good sense. But when I had striven to bring about a good understanding among all the parties, some wrong-headed polemics with their importunity have drawn me on by force to the contest.⁴

It is interesting to note that the internal debate within the Reformation, notably regarding the sacraments, played a divisive role and prevented Calvin from answering the attacks of the Catholic theologians effectively. Calvinism was still struggling to establish itself in the face of what Calvin called the ‘Sacramentarians’.⁵ The efforts of the Genevan Reformer were split between defending Calvinist theology against Catholicism and other branches of the Reformation as the correspondence of Calvin demonstrates. This apparent division within the Reformation was like an exposed flank to the Catholics who did not refrain from exploiting this weakness and arguing that the Reformation was nothing but division and dissension.

If Calvin was as reluctant to engage Catholic polemic as he was the Reformed, the Protestant response needs to be found elsewhere. Whatever Calvin’s personal position may have been, there was also a more political reason for discouraging polemic with the Catholics. Geneva was in an ambiguous position politically since it was easily identifiable as the source of Protestant works in the vernacular.⁶ Robert Kingdon wrote about a ‘flood tide’ when assessing the input of books from Geneva into France. In January 1561, Charles IX issued an official complaint to ask for the

⁴ Bonnet ed., Letters of Calvin, IV. p. 404. The context of this letter is undoubtedly the publication of Joachim Westphal, Apologia confessiones de coena contra corruptelas ed calumnias Ioannes Calvini (Oberursel, 1558). I owe thanks to Dr. Mark Taplin for this reference.

⁵ Bonnet ed., Letters of Calvin, III. p. 40.

⁶ Higman, Piety and the People, p. 22; Kingdon, Geneva and the coming of the Wars.

stemming of the flow of books which were sent into France from Geneva. The complaint included the remark that the books had encouraged sedition which may have been triggered by the recent conspiracy of Amboise.⁷ In a very carefully worded letter to the King, Calvin denied knowledge of the conspiracy and condemned any Genevan citizens or ministers who may have been involved.⁸ Throughout the period of the wars, Calvin discouraged armed rebellion as he was still hoping that the Reformation in France could gain political legitimacy and be accepted. In a recent paper, Philip Benedict has brought new light to the discrepancies which lay between Geneva's official upholding of royal authority and the involvement of Protestant ministers in acts of rebellion. He argues that the image of Protestantism (which has been reproduced largely in the historiography) as basically law-abiding is the result of careful engineering on the part of the Genevan consistory and Calvin himself.⁹ Calvin was therefore very careful that no books printed within Geneva carried any ambiguous messages of dissension, which would discredit both himself and the political credibility of the city of Geneva.

Censorship in Geneva was exercised by the Conseil assisted by the consistory, and after 1555, Calvin's influence could be felt until his death in 1564, when his work was carried on by Théodore de Bèze. In the more inflammatory material, the name of the printer or the place of publication was omitted from the title page. This has been interpreted as means to avoid the Parisian ban on books coming from Geneva, but it could also be an indication that the work had not been approved by the Conseil. The work of Pierre Viret, which could be construed as encouraging iconoclasm, was camouflaged under the title of earlier works which had already been

⁷ Kingdon, Geneva and the coming of the Wars, pp. 34, 93.

⁸ Bonnet ed., Letters of Calvin, IV. p. 167.

⁹ Philip Benedict, 'The Dynamics of Protestant Militancy: France, 1555-1563', forthcoming in P. Benedict, G. Marnef et al. (eds), Reformation, Revolt, and Civil War in France and the Netherlands, 1555-1585 (Amsterdam, 1999).

approved.¹⁰ Conrad Badius had run into trouble with the Conseil in 1559 because of the inflammatory nature of his work, and for publishing it without prior consent of the Conseil.¹¹ Even Jean Crespin had problems with the Conseil when he published the first edition of the Livre des Martyrs in 1554 and had to change the title to Recueil de plusieurs personnes qui ont constamment enduré la mort pour le nom du seigneur. The Conseil did not want the words ‘saint’ and ‘martyr’ to figure in the book. Crespin, however, went back to the original title in the 1564 folio edition, Actes des Martyres.¹²

Despite Calvin’s own reluctance to engage in polemic, other Protestant authors did not refrain from responding to Catholic attacks. Although Calvin showed concern for the persecution in France from his safe position in Geneva, Protestant ministers within France were much more at risk and consequently unwilling to suffer in silence. Antoine de la Roche Chandieu and Nicolas des Gallars, who were ministers in Paris during the persecutions, responded directly to Catholic polemic.¹³ Also of note is Pierre Viret, who was involved in the take-over of Lyon in 1562, whose polemical pieces against idols and priests have been well documented.¹⁴ François Hotman and Augustin Marlorat wrote extensively in defence of the Protestant cause after the failure of the conspiracy of Amboise, responding directly to Catholic

¹⁰ I owe this insight to Stuart Foster, St Andrews Reformation Studies Institute.

¹¹ H. A. Shaw ed., Conrad Badius and the Comedie du Pape Malade (Philadelphia, 1934), pp. 42-3; see below p. 189.

¹² J.-F. Gilmont, Bibliographie des éditions de Jean Crespin 1550-1572 (Verviers, 1981), pp. 47-8.

¹³ Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions; [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie.

¹⁴ Christin, Une revolution symbolique; Pierre Viret, De la vraie et fausse religion, touchant les voeus et les sermens licites et illicites: et notamment touchant les voeus de perpetuelle continence, et les voeus d’anatheme et d’execration, et les sacrifices d’hosties humaines, et de l’excommunication en toutes religions [Geneva], (Jean Rivery, 1560).

pamphlets. All these men were in the entourage of Calvin and had been sent into France by the Genevan Company of Pastors, which indicates that Calvin's influence did not extend beyond Geneva.

Catholic attacks were answered point by point, in short pieces responding to specific works, as was the case for more 'serious' polemic surrounding theological debate.¹⁵ The polemic which was produced on both sides of the confessional divide followed key events, like the affair of the rue St Jacques, the conjuration of Amboise or the massacre of Vassy. For this reason the polemic had to be produced quickly, which meant that it had to be produced locally, within France, rather than in Geneva. The bulk of anti-Catholic propaganda produced around the tumult of Amboise, for example, probably originated in Paris. The repeated dedication to Catherine de Médicis suggests that the pamphlets were intended, at least, to have an impact at Court.

The danger of printing and disseminating these tracts can easily be imagined. For example, Hotman's Epistre envoyée au Tigre de la France created such outrage that a scapegoat was designated and hanged. Chroniclers relate how a bookseller and printer, Martin Lhommet, was found in possession of a copy and tortured to reveal the identity of its author. When he was about to be executed, not having confessed to anything, a merchant from Rouen attempted to moderate the fervour of the crowd of onlookers. The crowd turned on the unfortunate merchant who was saved by the city watch only to be thrown in prison and to be executed in turn on the same spot where Lhommet had died.¹⁶

Calvin's own detachment from polemic and the censorship which was applied

¹⁵ Notably Antoine du Val, Les contrarietez & contredictz, qui se trouvent en la doctrine de Jean Calvin, de Luther & autres nouveaux evangelistes de nostre temps (Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1561), sig. A1^r. Du Val refers to two editions of Calvin's Institutes, one published in Geneva in 1545 and a clandestine French one dated 1557. See below, p. 212.

¹⁶ Charles Read ed., François Hotman: Le Tigre de 1560 (Geneva, 1970), pp. 9-12.

on the most inflammatory pieces meant that the core of the Protestant response had to come from France. This partly explains the personal tone of a lot of the Protestant pieces, written as they were by those who had personally suffered persecution in France. The Protestant response to Catholic polemic is marked by its anonymity and clandestine nature. The authors and printers, to avoid detection and arrest, often remained unnamed and their pieces were usually short and badly printed. This situation changed somewhat after the beginning of the war which provided the Protestants with cities and 'places de sûreté'. Lyon, which was in Protestant hands between 1562 and 1563, and Orléans, the place of origin of the Condé political tracts gathered in the Mémoires de Condé, are the two best known examples. The precariousness of the Protestant holdings within France, which changed hands several times in the course of the wars, curtailed any attempts to compete with what Paris or Geneva could produce. The political tracts of the Prince de Condé, for their part, served the very specific purpose of legitimizing the rebellion of the Protestant nobility. Statistics show that the Orléans production followed the ebb and flow of the wars and suggest that it addressed only part of the Catholic attacks on Protestantism.¹⁷ French Reformed polemic outside Geneva is therefore much more difficult to document than its Lutheran counterpart. This might explain why the bulk of research has concentrated on Genevan and Condéan productions while largely ignoring the efforts of Protestant authors within France.

These authors (often involved in the events themselves) wrote from within France and reacted almost instantaneously without the authorization or patronage of the Genevan authorities. Nicolas des Gallars wrote in defence of the Paris Protestant community shortly after the affair of the rue St Jacques, and since he was in Paris at the time it is likely that he was directly implicated if not an eye witness. This is also the case of Antoine de la Roche Chandieu who was able to write his history of the persecution of Paris from first hand experience, since he was a minister in Paris between 1555 and 1572.¹⁸ François Hotman was driven by what seems to be a

¹⁷ I am grateful to Prof. Pettegree, director of the FRB, for this insight.

¹⁸ Haag, La France Protestante.

personal hatred of the Guise family and was implicated directly in the conspiracy of Amboise which he defended vigorously after its failure. All this points to a culture of rebellion and polemic which ran parallel to Calvin's official line of co-operation with the authorities and refusal to be implicated in open polemic with the Catholic authors. This means that, as in the case of the conspiracy of Amboise, these authors could not rely on the official support of Geneva and had to find help from elsewhere. The polemical tracts of François Hotman were printed on illegal printing presses which operated clandestinely from within France, carefully omitting the place of publication or printer on the title page.¹⁹ It is significant that Antoine de la Roche Chandieu's history of the persecution of the Church of Paris should be printed in Lyon after the take-over of this city by the Protestants during the first War of Religion.²⁰ Nicolas des Gallars's tracts were probably printed in Geneva by Jean Crespin, but anonymously without acknowledgement of the place of publication or the printer.²¹

* * *

The affair of the rue St Jacques in September 1557 was the origin of a lengthy polemical exchange between members of the Sorbonne and ministers who had been eye-witnesses of the persecutions in Paris. Probably the most important exchange was between Antoine de Mouchy, Syndic of the Sorbonne, and Nicolas des Gallars, who was a minister in Paris at the time of the affair. Nicolas des Gallars was a member of Geneva's Company of Pastors between 1544 and 1554 and set out voluntarily for Paris where he acted as minister between July and September 1557.²² Following the imprisonment of numerous Protestants, the Apologie ou deffence des bons Chrestiens was published anonymously. Although it has not survived, Antoine

¹⁹ [Hotman], L'Histoire du tumulte d'Amboise; Read ed., Le Tigre de 1560.

²⁰ Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions.

²¹ [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie.

²² William G. Naphy, Calvin and the consolidation of the Genevan Reformation (Manchester, 1994), pp. 58, 73; Bonnet ed., Letters of Calvin, III. p. 362.

de la Roche Chandieu reproduces it in his Histoire des persecutions and recounted the reaction it provoked at the Sorbonne:

Ce petit livret fut d'un fruit inestimable: & osta à beaucoup de gens la mauvaise opinion qu'ilz avoient de noz assemblées: & incita mesmes les autres à faire plus diligentes enquestes de nostre doctrine. Aucuns Docteurs de Sorbonne s'efforcerent d'y faire response: mais les pauvres bestes, comme en toutes autres choses, ne firent en cela que découvrir leur ignorance. L'un nommé Mouchi, se fondant sur une resolution Doctorale que nous sommes heretiques, sans en faire aucune preuve, emploie tout son livre à discourir sur la punition des heretiques: & monstre qu'ilz doibvent estre bruslez: & là dessus crie au feu, & aux glaives.²³

Antoine de Mouchy published a response to this first tract in 1558, in which he accused Protestants of conducting orgies and committing crimes of infanticide during their secret assemblies.²⁴ Nicolas des Gallars, who was probably the author of the first tract, answered de Mouchy directly in a second tract entitled Seconde apologie ou defense des vrais chrestiens.²⁵ In this early tract, des Gallars sets the tone for the Protestant response to accusations of orgies and infanticide which remained consistent throughout the period. Des Gallars drew a comparison between these accusations and those levelled at the early Christians during the persecutions by the Romans. This comparison became commonplace and allowed the Reformers to argue for continuity in the true Church, on the one hand, and for the martyrdom of French Protestants on the other.

The argument of the Apologie ou deffence des bons Chrestiens which is reproduced in Chandieu's Histoire des Persecutions became the official Genevan

²³ Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions, sigs d1^v-d2^r.

²⁴ Mouchy, Responce a quelque apologie.

²⁵ [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie.

attitude to persecution and martyrdom.²⁶ In the text reproduced by Chandieu, entire passages of the Apology of Tertullian (155-220) were used and probably served as inspiration for the title of the first and second Apologie.²⁷ Tertullian's Apology is a key text for the Christian persecutions under the Roman Empire and was used consistently by the Reformed Church from that point onwards:

We are called abominable from the sacrament of infanticide and the feeding thereon, as well as the incestuous intercourse, following the banquet, because the dogs, that overturn the lamp, (our pimps forsooth of the darkness) bring about the shamelessness engendered by our impious lusts.

Believe it for the moment....

You have need of a little child, still soft, with no knowledge of death, who will smile under your knife; also bread, in which to gather the blood sauce; further, candlesticks and lamps and some dogs and little morsels of meat, to make them strain and overturn the lamps; above all you will have to come with your mother and sister.

Come, plunge the sword into an infant who is no one's enemy, guilty of no crime, the child of all: or if such bloodshed is another's duty, do you merely stand by a human being dying before he has really lived; wait for the flight of the new life; catch the scarce-formed blood; with it soak your bread, and enjoy your meal.

Meantime, as you recline, count the places and mark where your mother, where your sister is; make a careful note, so that when the dogs have put out the lights, you may not make a mistake. For you

²⁶ Crespin's Histoire des Martyrs was first published in 1554 but it is clear that Chandieu's account of the persecutions of Paris strengthened Crespin's views. Arthur Piaget and Gabrielle Berthoud, Notes sur le Livre des Martyrs de Jean Crespin (Neuchâtel, 1930), pp. 17-9.

²⁷ Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions, sigs b3^v-b7^v.

will be guilty of sin if you fail to commit incest. Thus initiated and sealed, you live for ever.²⁸

The fact that Antoine de Mouchy used the same story, down to the most minute detail, against the Protestants allowed des Gallars to strengthen the comparison with the persecution of the early Church. Martyrdom was a difficult question for Protestants who were always cautious not to open themselves to accusations of venerating the memory of their martyrs as saints. Before that date, Crespin was prevented from using the word 'martyr' and used the ambiguous Tesmoins de la verité de l'Evangile which is undoubtedly borrowed from Flacius Illyricus's Catalogus Testium Veritatis.²⁹ The material that authors like des Gallars and Chandieu brought to Crespin was essential to the elaboration of a consistent comparison with the martyrdom of the early Church.

The fact that early Christians and medieval heretics had been accused of the same crimes strengthened the Protestant claim that they were members of the true Church which had always been persecuted. Probably the first author to draw a parallel between the persecution of Protestantism in France and the persecution of the early Church is Guido de Brès who writes in 1555 that true Christians had been persecuted at all times:

Et au contraire il faut appliquer le nom de faction, a ceux qui conspirent en haine des gens de bien, qui crient contre le sang des innocens, soubz le pretexte de leur unité, & pour deffence de leur hayne, d'autant qu'ilz estiment que les chrestiens sont cause de toutes pertes, & deffaictes publicques. Si le Tibre monte sur les murailles. Si le Nil ne descend sur les champs. Si le Ciel s'arreste.

²⁸ Mayor ed., Apologeticus, pp. 7, 25, 29, 31; Betty Radice ed., The Letters of the Younger Pliny (London, 1969), p. 294.

²⁹ David Watson, 'The Martyrology of Jean Crespin and the Early French Evangelical Movement, 1523-1555' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, St Andrews, 1997), p. 173, Piaget and Berthoud, Notes sur le Livre des Martyrs, pp. 17-9.

Si la terre tremble. S'il y a famine ou peste: incontinent on crye apres les chrestiens, pour les mener aux Lyons. S'il advient quelque mal au monde, les mondains disent que c'est a cause des fideles.³⁰

This argument was used by des Gallars with an added edge after the affair of the rue St Jacques, and remained a leitmotiv of the Protestant response:

On criera à gorge desployée contre nous, que nous sommes cause des guerres, des pertes & desconvitures, des famines des maladies & pestillences: & quoy que nous ayons remonstré en l'Apologie precedente que le semblable se disoit anciennement contre les Chrestiens, & quand telles adversitez advenoyent aux Payens, ils recherchoyent ces pauvres gens pour en faire sacrifice à leurs dieux, pensant par ce moyen les appaiser.³¹

This argument was used consistently by the later Protestant authors, although des Gallars's personal attacks against de Mouchy were dropped. The same argument was used by Antoine de la Roche Chandieu in 1563:

Tu dis que plusieurs se plaignans, estiment que les guerres, qui s'esmeuvent souvent, les pestes, les famines, les longues pluyes adviennent à cause de nous, & que tous les maux, dont le monde est troublé, nous doivent estre imputez, d'autant que nous ne servons point à leurs Dieux. Or qu'ils sachent au contraire que c'est pour autant que Dieu n'est point servi par eux.³²

³⁰ [Gui de Brès], Le Baston de la foy chrestienne, Livre tresutile a tous Chrestiens, pour s'armer contre les ennemys de l'Evangile: & pour aussi cognoistre l'ancienneté de nostre sainte foy, & de la vraye Eglise (Lyon), [Christophe Plantin, Antwerp], (1555), sigs Z4^{r-v}.

³¹ [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie, sig. E6^f.

³² Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions, sig. b8^v.

According to this interpretation of events, Protestants like the early Christians, were the scapegoats of a society which blamed them for natural disasters, war, famine and disease. This is what the Protestant Jean de Serres concluded in 1595 about the persecutions which followed the affair of the rue St Jacques: 'En quelques autres endroits, il y en eut aussi de prins & executez à mort, le peuple leur imputant la cause des desolations de la France'.³³ It was very much in the interest of the Protestant authors to draw a parallel with the early Church, and hence portray the Protestants as martyrs of the true Church.

* * *

There is a noticeable shift in the polemic following the death of Henri II, which marked the beginning of a passionate effort by the Protestants to counter the increasing influence of the Duc de Guise. A shared atmosphere of political conspiracies and plots settled on both sides of the confessional divide as both Protestant and Catholic factions vied for control at Court. The outpouring of polemic which followed the tumult of Amboise argued that one side or the other wanted to usurp the throne and is an indication of the marked politicisation of the conflict. Instead of vague accusations of sexual impropriety and orgies, specific accusations of political conspiracy began to emerge. There was an attempt to counter these accusations by the Protestant authors who rose to the challenge of defending their cause after the demise of the tumult of Amboise:

Car sçachant qu'il y avoit en l'entreprise grand nombre de ceux que l'on appelle Lutheriens ou Evangelistes, il delibere de rejeter le tout sur l'Evangile. Et fait publier par tout, que ceux qui se sont élevez en France sont Lutheriens: que leur but à esté de tuer le Roy, la Royne, Messieurs ses freres, & tous les Princes: de mettre en avant leur Religion à coups d'espee; d'abattre la Monarchie de France, & la reduire en forme de Republique.³⁴

³³ Jean de Serres, Recueil des choses memorables avenues en France (1595), sig. D1^r.

³⁴ [Hotman], L'Histoire du tumulte d'Amboyse, sig. C1^v.

Although these accusations are a far cry from the intended aim of the conspirators at Amboise, they are not as implausible as the accusations of incest and infanticide. An anonymous Protestant pamphlet acknowledged the transition from accusations of orgy to those of plotting against the Crown and printing inflammatory pamphlets:

Lon disoit en ce temps-là, que es assemblees qui se faisoient
tousjours avecques les armes, lon y commettoit actes meschans &
abominables: au moins le croyoit-on ainsi, & que lon y faisoit des
libelles diffamatoires, lon y tenoit des propos scandaleux &
calomnieux, contre le Roy & la Roine sa mere. De tout cecy est
faite mention es Edicts, qui sur ce furent publiez.³⁵

The conspiracy of Amboise had irremediably damaged the credibility of the Protestant cause as a whole. After that date, the Protestant response was much more on the defensive than before. After the death of François II, the Protestant tracts were increasingly addressed to Catherine de Médicis. With the appointment of Michel de L'Hôpital the hopes of a reconciliation were renewed and culminated with the Colloquy of Poissy. It was imperative for the Reformed to clear themselves of the suspicion of a conspiracy after the political domination of the Guise had been tempered. After all, the removal of Guise from the political scene had been the alleged aim of the conspiracy of Amboise. Now that their goal had been achieved, by accident rather than skill, the Reformed had to clear themselves of any suspicion of rebellion. If the Reformed were innocent of the accusations of orgies and infanticide, it was much more difficult to convince Catherine de Médicis of their innocence after Amboise. Augustin Marlorat, in his Remonstrance a la royne mere du Roy, attempted to dismiss the accusation of a Protestant conspiracy along with the accusations of infanticide:

Ce que noz adversaires ne veulent endurer, & empeschent que la
verité de nostre cause ne soit entendue & examinee: donnent

³⁵ An., Apologie contre certaines Calomnies mises sus, à la desfaveur & desavantage de l'Estat des affaires de ce Roiaume (Paris, Pierre Leber, 1562), sigs D4^v-D5^r.

entendre au Roy & à vous, que noz assemblees ne tendent qu'a une dissolue liberte de paillarder, & en parlent aussi asseurement, que s'ils s'y estoient trouvez pour avoir part au butin. Mais voyant que c'est une menterie, qui ne peut estre soustenue, attendu qu'il y a une infinité de maris qui y amainent leurs femmes, & se garderoient bien d'y revenir s'ils y recevoient une telle injure. Ils en controuvent une autre, qui est plus volontiers & plus facilement receüe, c'est que nous consultons entre nous de tuer le Roy & la Noblesse, pour mettre toutes choses en commun: & sont bien marris, qu'au proces de tant de personnes qu'ils font mourir cruellement, il ne se trouve quelque tesmoignage qui puisse confirmer leur menterie.³⁶

Catholics had indeed changed their story after Amboise and had commuted orgies into political plots, to the point where they retrospectively included the affair of the rue St Jacques into their conspiracy theory. This made it much more difficult for the Protestants to respond as the Catholics shifted the debate away from accusations of sexual deviance which had provided the Protestants with their chief argument (their ability to compare themselves with the early Church martyrs). The Protestant response after Amboise was increasingly defensive, often reacting to accusations by turning them around and resorting to personal attacks.

For example an anonymous pamphlet addressed to Catherine de Médicis, La Maniere d'Appaiser les Troubles, pointed at the Guise as the source of the accusations of conspiracy:

Parlons maintenant de l'autre poinct, qui est du tumulte d'Amboise: Voicy dont les adversaires de la Reformation pensent bien faire leurs choux gras. Car ils crient que ce sont les fruicts de noz Conventicules, de nous elever contre le Roy. De fait, le Cardinal de Lorraine en a fait courir ses edicts & remonstrances sous le nom du Roy, duquel il abuse coustumierement pour

³⁶ [Marlorat] Remonstrance a la royne mere du Roy, sigs B5^v-B6^v.

divulger ses menteries & desloyautez, donnant entendre que tout cecy est procedé d'aucuns Predicans envoyez de Geneve, qui de longue main avoyent fait leurs preparatives, pour attirer à leur parti ceux qu'ils cognoissoyent les plus propres à leur menée, & n'a point honte de dire, qu'on s'estoit armé contre le Roy.³⁷

Indeed, the fact that the affair of the rue St Jacques coincided with the defeat of St Quentin led Catholic authors to accuse the Protestants retrospectively of having plotted against the kingdom. The same pamphlet also attributed the defeat of St Quentin and the death of Henri II to divine providence:

Outre ce qu'on considere la perte de la journée saint Laurens, & de saint Quentin: en quel temps est-ce qu'elle fut receue? Ne fust-ce pas quand on avoit conspiré & resolu de destruire & foudroyer autant de fideles qu'on en eust peu trouver? Dieu ne monstra-il pas bien par ce moyen non attendu, qu'il savoit bien rompre le conseil de ses adversaires? Apres, quand le Roy Henri, enflammé par le Cardinal de Lorraine, & par une putain dont la France a eu honte, faisoit emprisonner les Conseilliers de la Cour, pour avoir dit en conscience leur avis touchant d'appaiser les matieres contentieuses de la religion, c'est assavoir qu'on assemblast un franc & libre Concile, surseant ce pendant la punition de ceux qu'on nomme Lutheriens, & que le Roy eut juré qu'il verroit brusler de ses yeux le Conseillier du bourg, homme de bien & savant: ne fust-il pas en ses plus grandes joyes & triomphes frappé si evidemment de la main de Dieu qu'il en perdit les yeux, & peu de temps apres la vie?³⁸

The Maniere d'appaiser les troubles is exactly the kind of material that the Cardinal de Lorraine used to convince Catherine de Médicis of a Protestant plot and

³⁷ La Maniere d'appaiser les troubles, sig. C1^v.

³⁸ La Maniere d'appaiser les troubles, sig. B2^f.

justify the persecutions which followed the death of Henri II:

La clameur des affligés parvenue à la Cour, la Royne mere envoya savoir que c'estoit, à laquelle on renvoya certains escrits en rime François, trouvés chez le Viscomte, faisans mention de la mort advenue au Roy Henry par le juste jugement de Dieu, esquels aussi ladite Dame estoit taxee de trop deferer au Cardinal.... La Royne ayant entendu le dire du Cardinal, & veu les tesmoins, qui par leur silence & visage assuré sembloient le confermer, fut merueilleusement aigrie & estonnee: joint qu'on y mesloit des choses qui touchoyent son autorité, ensemble l'honneur de feu Roy son mary.³⁹

The death of François II, which momentarily rid the Court of the influence of the Guise, had indeed been welcomed by Calvin himself: 'has the death of a king ever been more providential?'.⁴⁰ This rhetoric was hardly an adequate response and moreover, it provided Catholics with arguments for a Protestant plot. Another anonymous work, Complainte apologique des eglises de France, even blamed the Duc de Guise for the defeat of St Quentin in a reversal of the Catholic accusation:

C'est luy qui a mys dans Saint Quentin vostre ennemy, ostant, souz couleur de protection, les forces de vostre Royaume: pensant, comme il est vray semblable, vous faire la proye de l'Espagnol. Monseigneur de Guise, Lieutenant General de vostre pere en ce voyage, conneut leurs ruses & mensonges, lors qu'il se trouva en telle agonie, ayant le Duc d'Albe en teste deux fois plus fort que luy: De sorte qu'ils desesperoyent qu'un seul de tous les Soldats qu'il avoit menez, revinsent jamais en vostre France. C'est sa

³⁹ Bèze, Histoire Ecclesiastique, I. pp. 234, 236; a similar account is given in Popelinière, L'Histoire de France, fol. 148^v.

⁴⁰ A. Duke, G. Lewis et al., Calvinism in Europe 1540-1610: A Collection of documents (Manchester, 1992), p. 80.

trahison qui contraignit feu de bonne memoire vostre pere Henry second, quitter en un jour, ce que vostre ayeul & luy, avoyent conquis a grands frais en quarante ans. Ne voyez vous que ces harpies ne tachent que de apauvrir les Princes: à fin qu'ils demeurent tousjours les plus grans?⁴¹

The fact that the defeat of St Quentin was retrospectively blamed on the Protestants is indicative of a change of mood in the Catholic polemic after the conspiracy of Amboise. The fact that after that date, the Protestant response was much more defensive is demonstrated by the attempt by these anonymous authors to turn the accusation against the Guise. Antoine de la Roche Chandieu even argued that the battle of St Quentin was the cause of the persecution of the rue St Jacques:

La premiere persecution fut celle qu'on a tousjours nommée depuis, La prise de la rue S. Jacques. Et fut au temps que Dieu (comme d'estant armé contre la France, pour venger un si long mespris de son Evangile) avoit mis le Roy Philippes des Espaignes, avec une armée victorieuse bien avant dedans le país: & par la deffaicte de l'armée des François la vigile S.Laurens, & la perte de S. Quentin, menaçoit tout le Royaume d'une ruine extreme. Ce qui donnoit esperance au milieu du dueil commun a toutes gens de bien, qu'il en pourroit sortir quelque temps plus doux pour l'Eglise agitée desja par tant d'années: veu que c'estoit assez pour forcer les plus ignorans, & penser à eux & aux causes de l'ire de Dieu si grande. Mais ce n'est pas la nature de l'endurcissement de ploier dessoubz la main de Dieu, quand elle frappe, & sentir les coups pour s'amender. Car au contraire les adversaires en feurent beaucoup plus enragez que jamais: remettans les causes de toutes ces miseres dessus les Chrestiens, comme il est tousjours advenu.⁴²

⁴¹ Complainte apologique des eglises de France, sig. E1^v.

⁴² Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions, sig. a1^v.

This contrasts markedly with the Protestant response before the conspiracy of Amboise. The shift in the Protestant response is a reflection of the shift of emphasis on the Catholics' part from orgy to conspiracy. Whereas the use of accusations of orgy benefited the Protestants, enabling them to draw a parallel with the Christian persecutions, the shift towards a Protestant conspiracy was much more difficult to address. From this point onwards, the Protestant response within France was characterised by its defensive nature. The accusations were turned round on the accusers and personal attacks on the character of the Catholic authors were frequently made. The registers of insults and stereotypes as well as the language used by the Catholics were adopted by the Protestants who simply inverted them.

* * *

Although some elements of this adversarial Protestant polemic were adopted by Geneva, less palatable aspects were frowned upon. Des Gallars's Seconde Apologie, for example, did not bear the printer's mark although it was clearly printed in Geneva by Crespin. The tone of Nicolas des Gallars's response to de Mouchy's Responce a quelque apologie is extremely violent and personal. Since de Mouchy was responsible for the arrest of a number of Protestants during this period, des Gallars might also have had ulterior motives for writing against him.⁴³ De Mouchy was a prominent figure of the Sorbonne, who made a virtue of seeking out heterodoxy within the university, its client book sellers and binders, and also among school teachers.⁴⁴ He was instrumental in the trial of Anne du Bourg and the subsequent purge of the Parlement of Paris. It made him a perfect target for Protestants' jibes and a symbol for the authority of the Sorbonne. Des Gallars's Apologie reads like a personal attack on de Mouchy, with several puns based on his name derived from mouche (a fly), to blow one's nose, moucher, and a snitch, mouchard.⁴⁵ In this context, de Mouchy is personally attacked in an attempt to

⁴³ Bèze, Histoire Ecclesiastique, I. pp. 228-239.

⁴⁴ Feret, La Faculté de Théologie, II. pp. 51-5.

⁴⁵ Alain Tallon even suggests that the modern French word mouchard comes from

belittle the impact of his ideas:

Il semble puis apres à ce vaillant champion de l'Antechrist, qu'il a tiré de beaux coups, & a puissamment combatu, quand il s'est esmouché l'autorité des anciens Docteurs, lesquels monstrent qu'il ne suffit point d'estre persecuté, ou souffrir martyre pour approuver quelque doctrine, s'il n'y a certain fondement de la Parole.⁴⁶

The play on the word mouche meaning a snitch is used regularly throughout des Gallars's Apologie, as in the following passage where des Gallars relates how Catholics sought to defame the evangelical message from the start:

Je pourroye reciter plusieurs exemples de ce qu'ils ont machiné par leurs calomnies & fausses inventions, depuis qu'on a commencé à publier l'Evangile: mais j'en reciteray un seulement, par lequel on pourra juger du reste de leurs belles entreprises, c'est de l'an Mille cinq cens trente trois: lors que plusieurs prescheurs avec quelque liberté descouvroyent les abus & manifestoyent au peuple le vray moyen de salut, vous eussiez veu moynes trotter aux escoutes, mouches voler, espies se contrefaire, bons supposts rapporter, & nos Maistres consulter: puis semer faux bruits, & abbreuver le monde de bourdes & mensonges.⁴⁷

The attacks against de Mouchy were continued by a number of authors, notably Antoine de la Roche Chandieu and Conrad Badius along with a number of anonymous authors. The same use of the word mouche is found in Antoine de la

his name: 'Antoine de Mouchy, dit Démocharès, en fait tant contre les hérétiques que la légende veut que le mot "mouchard" vienne de son nom.'; Alain Tallon, La France et le Concile de Trente, 1518-1563 (Rome, 1997), p. 660.

⁴⁶ [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie, sig. B1^v (my emphasis).

⁴⁷ [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie, sig. D7^r (my emphasis).

Roche Chandieu's Histoire des persecutions: 'Joint que les Commissaires avoient leur mousches ordinaires (ilz appellent ainsi leurs espions) deça & delà pour descouvrir'.⁴⁸ Through de Mouchy, the Protestant polemicists were attacking the Sorbonne which they held directly responsible for the slander and abuse to which they were subjected: 'Qu'eust faict Sorbonne aussi? ô Democcare ardent, Qui sur tes puissans reins tiens l'espoir resident De ceste foy chrestienne'.⁴⁹ These personal attacks were continued to a certain extent in the Comédie du Pape Malade by Conrad Badius where Antoine de Mouchy is easily identifiable in the character of the Zelateur (a compound word meaning something between a zealot and snitch):

Pour un espion de Sorbonne
 Vostre raison est sainte et bonne...
 ... Domine, parlez par moyen,
 nescis, je suis le Doyen
 De Sorbonne, ou je preten l'estre
 Et on me nomme nostre maistre,
 Nostre maistre Demochares,
 Celuy qui dicte les arrests
 Des Huguenauz qu'on met au feu.
 C'est moy qui les mets tous en jeu,
 Et qui par tout les va faschans,
 Et leurs estudes recherchans
 Où quand livres y sont trouvez
 Par la Sorbonne reprouvez,
 C'est moy qui soudain les fay prendre,
 Et de leur foy bon conte rendre.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions, sigs x7^r-x8^r.

⁴⁹ Pierre Richer, La Refutation des folles resveries, execrables blasphemés, erreurs & mensonges de Nicolas Durand, qui se nomme Villegaignon (1561), sig. A2^v.

⁵⁰ Shaw ed., Comedie du Pape Malade, pp. 145, 149-50.

But as we have seen, Conrad Badius ran into trouble with the Conseil de Genève and published it without its authorization.⁵¹

Just as des Gallars had attacked de Mouchy whom he saw as responsible for the persecutions following the affair of the rue St Jacques, the author of the Histoire du Tumulte d'Amboise attacked the Duc de Guise. It was the Duc de Guise who had stopped the conspiracy of Amboise in its tracks and had been responsible for the death of the conspirators who were summarily executed. The anonymous author was probably François Hotman who had attacked the Duc de Guise elsewhere in his Lettre adressee au Tigre de la France and had accused him of taking advantage of the weakness of François II:

Tigre enragé! Vipère venimeuse! Sepulcre d'abomination!
Spectacle de malheur! Jusques à quand sera-ce que tu abuseras de
la jeunesse de nostre Roy? ne mettras-tu jamais fin à ton ambition
démessurée, à tes impostures, à tes larcins? Ne vois-tu pas que tout
le monde les sçait, les entend, les connoist? Qui penses-tu qui
ignore ton détestable dessein, et qui ne lise en ton visage le malheur
de tous nos jours, la ruine de ce Royaume, et la mort de nostre
Roy?⁵²

François Hotman was Calvin's man in Strasbourg until he left for the Court of the King of Navarre in the wake of the conspiracy of Amboise without knowledge or authorization of the city magistrates.⁵³ Hotman could well have been the representative that the Company of Pastors had sent to Nantes a few months before, where the conspirators had met.⁵⁴ Like des Gallars with respect to the rue St Jacques, Hotman would have had a personal stake in the conspiracy of Amboise and its

⁵¹ Shaw ed., Comedie du Pape Malade, pp. 42-3. See above, p. 172.

⁵² Read ed., Le Tigre de 1560, pp. 37-8.

⁵³ Bonnet ed., Letters of Calvin, IV. p. 147.

⁵⁴ Kingdon, Geneva and the coming of the Wars, pp. 68-9.

destruction at the hands of the Duc de Guise would have left him with an axe to grind. The same way that the defeat of St Quentin was blamed on the Duc de Guise, the Histoire du Tumulte d'Amboise turns the accusation of conspiracy round:

L'entreprise est decouverte: la conspiration est conneue: les machinations de la maison de Guyse sont revelees. Voicy les estrangers à nos portes, qu'ils ont fait venir aux despens du Roy, pour estre ministres & instrumens de leur méchante entreprise.... A cette cause font ils maintenant descendre huit mille Italiens pour mettre le povre peuple François en proye & pillage.⁵⁵

The Protestant response to these two key events set the tone for the whole period of the wars during which the Sorbonne and the Guise were consistently attacked.⁵⁶ The personal nature of these attacks show that the Protestants held specific individuals responsible for the persecutions rather than the royal policy at Court. This enabled them to attack these individuals on the one hand while appealing to the clemency of the Crown on the other. By blaming the Sorbonne and the Guise for the policy of persecutions, Protestants allowed for the possibility of a change in policy. This is reflected in the Histoire Ecclésiastique (1580) where Antoine de Mouchy and the Cardinal de Lorraine are described as the chief instigators of the persecutions of 1559.⁵⁷

The Guise were consistently attacked throughout the Wars of Religion in short satirical songs and poems which escaped the censorship of both Paris and Geneva. The first attacks against the Guise brothers were published around the failed conspiracy of Amboise:

Ces deux tyrans le Cardinal & son frere, qui se servent du Roy

⁵⁵ Complainte au peuple François, sigs D1^r, D2^r.

⁵⁶ Numerous examples can be found in Shaw ed., Comedie du Pape Malade; and H. L. Bordier ed., Le Chansonnier Huguenot du XVIe siècle (Geneva, 1969).

⁵⁷ Bèze, Histoire Ecclesiastique, I. pp. 228-239. See above, p. 64 and below, p. 198.

comme d'un personnage sur un eschafaut, lui faisant faire, dire, & ordonner tout ce que bon leur semble. Or rien ne leur semble bon, sinon ce qui revient à leur ambition & provfit particulier, comme tresbien l'ont remontré par escrit n'a gueres les Estats de France. Ce Cardinal Epicurien, homme qui ne croit autre Dieu que soyemesme, se laissant bailler par ses flateurs escrivains tous les tiltres d'honneur qu'on sauroit bailler à Dieu... tient en France place de Pape, & son frere place de Roy, à fin que tous ceux qui nous persecutent, entendent, qu'à proprement parler, ce n'est pas au Roy qu'ils obeissent en ce faisant, ains servent de bourreaux au susdit Epicurien Cardinal, & à tous ceux de sa secte,... & à son frere le grand tyran. Car entre les mains de ces deux tyrans sont mis les deux glaives de France, le Spirituel es mains du Cardinal: & le Materiel, es mains de son frere.⁵⁸

The accusation that the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine were trying to wield the two swords of temporal and spiritual power were reiterated several times in anonymous poems and songs.⁵⁹ The attacks increased in intensity after the massacre of Vassy up to the point of his assassination in 1563 at which point the Duc de Guise became a martyr of the Catholic cause. A particularly resourceful one is reproduced below, if read from left to right, it is a panegyric of the Guise brothers, but if the first column is read top to bottom, it is a satire:

⁵⁸ An., Juste Complainte des fideles de France. contre leurs adversaires Papistes, & autres. sur l'affliction & faux crimes, dont on les charge à grand tort. Ensemble les inconveniens, qui en pourroyent finalement avenir à ceux, qui leur font la guerre (Avignon, Trophime des Rives, 1560), sigs D1^{r-v}.

⁵⁹ P. Tarbé ed., Recueil de Poésies Calvinistes, 1550-1566 (Geneva, 1968), pp. 8, 11-2, 14, 20, 22-3, 33, 40, 65; Bordier ed., Chansonnier Huguenot, pp. 234, 253, 257; F. Charbonnier ed., La Poésie Française et les Guerres de Religion, 1560-1574 (Geneva, 1970), pp. 127, 176.

Par l'alliance Et amour éternelle
 Du cardinal, Faictes avec le roy,
 On void tout mal Ne trouver plus de quoy
 Battre la France, Et sa fleur immortelle.
 Qui Dieu desprise, [?] Il sent sa main cruelle.
 Luy jusqu'au bout [.] Ayme et soutient la foy.
 Qui pille tout [?] Et veult vivre sans loy,
 Son frère Guise [.] Afflige de bon zèle.
 Ces deux fort bien Ayant un coeur uny,
 Gardent que rien, Demeurant impuny
 Ne leur eschappe. O très heureuse France!
 Car l'un de soy Cognoissant combien craint
 Veult estre roy, Sa justice il advance,
 Et l'autre pape Imite, tant est saint.⁶⁰

* * *

Augustin Marlorat's Remonstrance a la Royne Mère du Roy was attacked from all corners by a number of Catholic authors, notably by Pierre Ronsard and Nicolas de Villegagnon. The personal attacks directed against them from the Reformed were formidable and the fact that laymen took up the defence of the Catholic Church allowed them to deride the Sorbonne. As we will see, Conrad Badius and especially Théodore de Bèze may have had ulterior motives for attacking Ronsard with whom they had a separate quarrel.⁶¹ Indeed, Bèze saw himself as the successor of Clément Marot, whose work he completed with the immensely successful Pseumes de David.

⁶⁰ Tarbé ed., Recueil de Poésies Calvinistes, pp. 49-50, 103-5.

⁶¹ It should be noted that although de Bèze and Ronsard were on opposite sides confessionally they agreed on the need to reform French spelling. Nina Catach, L'Orthographe française à l'époque de la Renaissance (Geneva, 1968), p. 114: 'Adversaires sur le plan des luttes politiques, Ronsard, catholique, se trouve dans le camp des réformateurs de l'orthographe, R. Estienne, Th. de Bèze, liés l'un et l'autre, en sympathie et en actes, à la religion réformée, dans l'autre camp'.

Marot had been a court poet at the time of the reign of François I and had built his literary reputation on defending biblical rather than secular inspiration for French poetry. Ronsard, on the other hand, stood in opposition to this school and became the chief proponent of love poetry, inspired by the Italian poets, notably Petrarch.⁶²

Pierre Ronsard was not an established member of the clergy, although he had been tonsured in 1543. Ronsard, like du Bellay, was a member of the Pléiade, a group of poets who were placed under the protection of the Crown. Between 1560 and 1564, there were no fewer than 20 pamphlets exchanged between the Reformers and Ronsard alone.⁶³ In 1564, Ronsard was ordered by the Court to end this exchange by not answering the latest pamphlets that had been written against him. He ended his part in this pamphleteering war with a prose preface to a collection of his poetry, which summarizes the whole exchange:

Vous donc quiconque soyez qui avez fait un temple contre moy, un discours de ma vie, une seconde response, une apologie, un traité de ma noblesse, un prelude, une faulse palinodie en mon nom, une autre tierce response, un commentaire sur ma response, mille odes, mille sonnets et mille autres fatras qui avortent en naissant, je vous conseille, si vous n'en estes saouls, d'en escrire davantage.... Ce m'est un fort grand plaisir de voir ces petits gallans agitez et debordez contre moy.... Toutesfois, sans le commandement des plus grands qui ont expressement defendu les libelles, je les eusse vivement grattez où il leur demange... mais d'oresnavant je me tairay pour obeyr à ceux qui ont puissance sur ma main et sur ma volonté.⁶⁴

⁶² Malcolm C. Smith, Ronsard & Du Bellay versus Beze: Allusiveness in Renaissance Literary Texts (Geneva, 1995), pp. 7-9.

⁶³ Charbonnier ed., La Poésie Française, pp. 31, 41, 60, 72, 75, 94, 98.

⁶⁴ P. de Ronsard, Epistre au Lecteur, par laquelle succinctement l'auteur respond à ses calomniateurs, in Charbonnier ed., La Poésie Française, pp. 106, 109.

Like Ronsard, Villegagnon was attacked personally for taking up the Catholic cause when, in the thought of the Protestant pamphleteers, it was none of his business. On one occasion, they were both included in the same polemical poem:

C'est a bon droit, Ronsard, que ce tant docte esprit
 Emeu non de fureur mais de saint & bon Zele
 A par ces divins vers confondu ton escrit,
 Infaillible tesmoing de ta folle cervelle:
 Sur quoy ne fonderas une guerre mortelle
 Par injures mentant, l'apellant au combat,
 Car un moindre que luy vuidera ce debat.
 Lequel pour toy sera trop gentil compagnon
 Et te declarera, seulement par ebat,
 Plus sot, fol & resueur que n'est Villegagnon.⁶⁵

The personal attacks against Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon were just as fierce as against Ronsard, but for different reasons. Villegagnon had led a French colony in Brazil which had been established by Coligny in 1555 and had asked Calvin in 1557 for the supply of Protestant colonists to add to his numbers. Among the 14 sent from Geneva were three pastors, Pierre Richer, Guillaume Chartier and Jean de Léry, who came into conflict with Villegagnon over the sacraments. Villegagnon defended the doctrine of the real presence against the newcomers amongst whom a former doctor of the Sorbonne, Jean Cointa, was also having second thoughts. One of the pastors, Chartier, took the first ship back to the Old World to ask guidance from Calvin, whereas the other Genevans revolted and were thrown out of the colony. After five of the rebels went back to Villegagnon abandoning the leaking ship that was taking the others to sea, he forced two of them to return to the Catholic faith and had the other three drowned. Jean Cointa, who had first betrayed the Genevans, changed sides at least twice and contributed to the ultimate demise of the French colony by defecting to the Portuguese who brought an end to the adventure in 1560. Frank Lestringant

⁶⁵ An., Remonstrance a la Roine Mere du Roy sur le discours de Pierre de Ronsard des miseres de ce temps (Lyon, Francoys le Clerc, 1563), sig. A2^r.

argues that Cointa would have defended the Confession of Augsburg and in this sense would have complicated the controversy between the Genevans and the Catholic-relapse Villegagnon.⁶⁶

On his return from Brazil, Villegagnon took up the fight against the Reformation, partly to clear his name of the suspicion of Protestantism, partly out of spite against the Genevans whom he blamed for the failure of his expedition. He responded directly to Marlorat's Remonstrance in his Lettres du Chevallier de Villegaignon (1561) where he reiterates the accusations of rebellion and describes the Calvinist doctrine of the last supper as Manichaeian.⁶⁷ The unprecedented response that Villegagnon provoked among the Reformed (among whom Augustin Marlorat) testify to the personal nature of the controversy.⁶⁸ Pierre Richer, who had been one of Villegagnon's Genevan colonists, was particularly fierce for obvious personal reasons. His response to Villegagnon was printed clandestinely by Conrad Badius who joined Richer in attacking him personally in his Comédie du Pape Malade where he was given the part of Outrecuidé.⁶⁹ It is clear that the pieces directed at Villegagnon, like those against Ronsard, were also targeted at the Sorbonne which was mocked for resorting to the services of a soldier:⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Frank Lestringant, L'Expérience Huguenote au Nouveau Monde (Geneva, 1996), pp. 55, 119, 125-6.

⁶⁷ Durand, Lettres du Chevallier de Villegaignon, sigs B3^{r-v}.

⁶⁸ Richer, La Refutation des folles resveries, sigs A4^v-B1^r; [Augustin Marlorat], La Response aux lettres de Nicolas Durant, dict le Chevalier de Villegaignon, adressées à la Reyne mere du Roy. Ensemble la Confutation d'une heresie mise en avant par ledict Villegaignon, contre la souveraine puissance & autorité des Rois (1561), sig. E3^r.

⁶⁹ Shaw ed., Comedie du Pape Malade, pp. 135, 151-2

⁷⁰ An., La Suffisance de maistre Colas Durand, dit Chevalier de Villegaignon, pour sa retenue en l'estat du Roy. Item, Espoussette des armoiries de Villegaignon, pour bien faire luire la fleur de Lis, que l'estrille n'a point touchée (1561), sigs b2^r, C5^r;

Que penseront ils là dessus, sinon qu'il est necessaire que les Sorbonnistes soient merueilleusement bestes, puis qu'il faut qu'un homme nouveau, vienne doutre mer pour maintenir leur cause? Et combien penses tu qu'on rie, quand on voit que toy Soldat, sers de docteur aux docteurs de la Sorbonne, & qu'ils te servent de soldats pour aller avec des sergeans, souiller ça & la ches les Imprimeurs pour voir silz trouveront qu'on imprime quelque chose contre toy.⁷¹

Turning the table on their adversary was characteristic of the Protestant polemic of this period, where each accusation found in Catholic sources is reversed and turned against Catholics. A good example of this phenomenon is des Gallars's answer to de Mouchy, where he follows the original Catholic pamphlet point by point, and systematically inverts the argument. In response to accusations of conducting orgies and sexual improprieties, des Gallars accuses the Catholics of the same crimes:

Il est vray que la plus grande partie d'entre vous jugez volontiers selon vos affections, & voulez mesurer chacun à vostre aulne: car tout ainsi comme loups qui cherchent la proye vous allez flairant où il y a quelque gibier, & avez vos brachets pour le suyure à la trace: les maquernelles ne vous defaillent point pour seduire les plus [belles] femmes de bien du monde. Et si vous les pouvez attraper en vos compagnies, ils faudra qu'elles soyent douées de grande vertu si elles s'en retournent nettes. Vous estimez que les autres n'en font pas moins.... Et puis vos creux , c'est à dire vos bordillons secrets, qui sont semez parmy vostre grande ville, par lesquels vous infestez tout de vostre puantise, ne sont-ils point ouverts à tous ceux qui y portent de l'argent? Vos maquernelles, qui ont

Richer, La Refutation des folles resveries, sigs D7^v, L5^r, N7^r, Q6^v; [Marlorat], La Response aux lettres de Nicolas Durant, sigs E3^r, C5^v; Tarbé ed., Recueil de Poésies Calvinistes, pp. 15-6.

⁷¹ [Marlorat], La Response aux lettres de Nicolas Durant, sig. C4^v.

l'apparence de femmes de bien en leur trongne, pour avoir plus facile entrée par tout, refusent-elles à nul qui leur porte, d'exercer le mestier que vous leur avez appris, & auquel les entretenez?⁷²

The same tactic is used to respond to accusations of sorcery and magic, which de Mouchy had also accused the Protestants of practising:

Quant aux sorcelleries, je ne say de quel avertin est poussé ce beau defenseur, d'amener ces choses hors de propos, sinon que Dieu le contraint de remuer les horribles crimes qui regnent sous ces tenebres de la Papauté. Car où est-ce que les magiciens, sorciers, charmeurs, necromanciens, devins sont plus soufferts & mieux favorisez qu'entre vous? Je ne dy point tant seulement de quelques curieux, mais des plus apparens, & mesmes de ceux du clergé, qui n'ont point honte de s'en mesler.⁷³

After the outbreak of the first War of Religion, numerous Catholic pamphlets were written on the theme of Protestant violence and particularly iconoclasm. Again, the Protestants return the accusation and charge the Duc de Guise of encouraging the sacking of houses and the killing of innocents:

Car s'il se trouve un populas au sac de quelque maison, les ministres de Guise sont là presens pour animer le peuple & crier, tuez tout, assommez tout. Si les desolez viennent puis apres tous meurdris & sanglans, volez & desheritez, demander justice au Connestable, il crie comme un diable infernal, que ce ne sont que coquins: il anime d'avantage les meschans à mal faire.⁷⁴

At the turn of the seventeenth century, Nicolas Vignier would turn many of the

⁷² [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie, sigs C6^f-C7^v.

⁷³ [Des Gallars], Seconde apologie, sig. B4^f.

⁷⁴ Advertissement a la Royne Mere du Roy, sigs c3^v-c4^f.

accusations which have been described in Chapter 2 against the Mendicant Orders:

Ne sont ils point loups, ravissans portans couvertures de brebis; qui contrefont en apparence exterieure l'austerité de vie; la chasteté, l'humilité, la sainte simplicité, & au dedans foisonnent en delices tres exquises, & abondance de diverses voluptez par dessus tous excez des mondains? Ne sont ils pas loups ravissans cachez sous l'image de brebis, qui à la façon des Prestres de Bel, devorent en secret les offrandes, se remplissans de vin & de friands metz; non pas avec leurs femmes, mais bien souvent pourtant avec leurs petis enfans, souillans tout par paillardises, de l'ardeur desquelles ils sont consumez?⁷⁵

The personal nature of the Protestant polemic after the failure of the conspiracy of Amboise and the outbreak of the first War of Religion contrasts with the earlier response which was centred on the comparison with the early Church. Apart from the noticeable exception of Conrad Badius's Comédie du Pape Malade, the personal tone of these attacks was discouraged in Geneva. The bulk of the most adversarial Protestant response was printed from within France or clandestinely in Geneva, without the approbation of the Conseil. The official Protestant response, which was articulated around the idea of martyrdom and relied on a comparison with the early Church, ran parallel to the polemic generated from within France. Although Jean Crespin relied on the testimony of the French exiles for the compilation of his Histoire des Martyrs, any adversarial or political comments on his part were carefully avoided.⁷⁶ The testimony of Nicolas des Gallars and Antoine de la Roche Chandieu was essential to Théodore de Bèze's account of the persecution in Paris in the

⁷⁵ Vignier, Legende Doree, pp. 126-7. For other examples of Vignier using the language of the Catholics see Chapter 4 above, pp. 153, 158.

⁷⁶ For example, Crespin does not mention the anecdote related in Chandieu's Histoire des persecutions, sigs x7^r-x8^r, about de Mouchy and the Cardinal de Lorraine gathering false witnesses to incriminate the Protestants in the eyes of the Queen see above pp. 64, 190.

Histoire Ecclésiastique (1580). But it could be argued that the inclusion of these testimonies in the official history of the persecutions by the Genevan Fathers came too late to serve as an adequate response to the Catholic polemic.

* * *

The originality of the official Protestant response was centred on the Catholics' determination to make a comparison between the Reformation and medieval heresy. This is an area in which the adversarial polemic generated within France was quite weak, and where the full array of scholarship available in Geneva could be used most effectively. This went hand in hand with a continued effort from the Genevan presses to fuel the Reformation in France with bibles and works of systematic theology. The argument which had been used at the outset of the persecutions by Nicolas des Gallars would be systematised and enlarged to include the medieval heretics. The idea that medieval heretics had been martyrs of the true Church, just as the early Church Christians had been, was an original and specifically Protestant innovation. Unfortunately, this idea was not put into practice until after the death of Jean Crespin when the Histoire des Martyrs was taken over by Simon Goulard. By this time, the period when an articulate official Protestant response from Geneva was most needed had passed, and the unofficial adversarial Protestant response from within France had failed.

The arguments for the inclusion of medieval martyrs of the true Church in the Histoire des Martyrs had been available to the Genevans from at least the beginning of the wars. As the previous chapter on the Albigensian Crusade has shown, Foxe's Acts and Monuments (1563) and Flacius Illyricus's Catalogus Testium Veritatis (1556) provided Crespin with precedents for including medieval heretics in a Protestant martyrology. The Albigensians and the Waldensians, however, were not included in the Histoire des Martyrs until Goulard's first edition of 1582. This calls into question why medieval heretics were included in Lutheran and Anglican martyrologies but not by Geneva until much later.

The support of secular rulers in the Lutheran and Anglican tradition played a considerable part in the elaboration of Protestant martyrologies. In these two

traditions, anti-Popery played a significant part in rallying the political élite to the Protestant cause. The reclaiming of medieval heretics as martyrs of the true Church went hand in hand with criticism of the papal monarchy with which they were contemporary. The rise of the papal monarchy, between the Popes Gregory VII (1073-1085) and Honorius III (1216-1227), had been resisted by secular rulers, notably by the English King Henry II. This period also coincided with a hardening of the definition of orthodoxy, epitomised by the third and fourth Lateran Council in 1179 and 1215. The Investiture Contest, the conflict between Pope and secular rulers over the control of Church appointments and revenues, was central to this conflict. With the support of secular rulers for the Lutheran and Anglican churches, Protestants authors drew on this period to legitimize the choice of their political patrons. According to this argument, spiritual as well as temporal authority had been taken away from medieval monarchs by the Papacy. Protestant rulers were exercising their right to choose the religion of their subjects according to the phrase cujus regio, ejus religio.

The same argument did not have as much force in France because of the specificity of the Gallican Church, bolstered by the Pragmatic Sanction of 1438 and the Concordat of Bologna in 1516.⁷⁷ The arguments against papal power did not strike a chord with the kings of France, who were free of the intervention of the Pope in the internal affairs of the Gallican Church. The anti-papal argument which pointed to the Pope as responsible for persecution was not valid either as in France it was the King who had orchestrated the persecutions. The medieval martyrs formed only an aspect of this anti-papal tradition which was used in the Lutheran and Anglican tradition, but it was difficult to resort to the one without the other. Antoine de la Roche Chandieu, Théodore de Bèze and Jean Crespin were primarily concerned with the persecutions of their contemporary co-religionists. The adoption of the Waldensians was inspired by the persecutions of Cabrières and Mérindol in 1545 shortly before persecution began in earnest in France. The geographical proximity of

⁷⁷ Note that the Concordat of Bologna transferred to the King the privileges that had been granted to the Gallican Church by the Pope in 1438, and thus partly annulled the Pragmatic Sanction.

the Vaudois to Geneva also plays a critical role in their inclusion in the ranks of Protestant martyrs by Crespin.⁷⁸

The Genevan tradition shared part of this legacy although it was unable to use the tradition of conflict between secular ruler and Pope to win the French kings to the Reformation. The specificity of the Gallican Church has already been acknowledged by historians as one of the reasons the Reformation did not do as well in France as it did elsewhere.⁷⁹ But it also deprived the Genevan Church of a battery of ready-made arguments which the Anglican and Lutheran tradition used profusely against their Catholic opponents. The Catholic comparison between the Albigensians and the Protestants went unchallenged for the better part of the French Wars of Religion despite the precedents provided by the Acts and Monuments. The fact that the Albigensians were included in the Histoire des Martyrs in 1582 might indicate that the Genevan Church was beginning to adopt the Anglican anti-papal tradition. But it is only when it was faced with the threat of the Counter-Reformation that the Genevan Church resorted to these arguments in full, in parallel to other Protestant traditions. The bulk of the anti-papal argument, centred on the Protestant interpretation of the Apocalypse, does not appear until the 1590s when it was used against the Cardinal Bellarmine.

The Genevan response to the arguments of Cardinal Bellarmine borrowed from the earlier Protestant tradition which relied heavily on the medieval arguments against the rise of the papal monarchy. Medieval chroniclers in the employ of secular rulers, notably Matthew Paris, denounced the rise of the papal monarchy and thus provided a precedent of anti-Popery which could be used by the Protestants. The use of Matthew Paris by John Bale and subsequently John Foxe in the Acts and Monuments allowed these authors to claim continuity with the Middle Ages. The Mendicant Orders were created to counter the spread of popular heresy, and the sending of the Inquisition to Languedoc announced the Albigensian Crusade. Both John Bale and Flacius Illyricus had described the creation of the Mendicant Orders as

⁷⁸ Cameron, The Reformation of the Heretics.

⁷⁹ Holt, The French Wars of Religion, pp. 10, 12.

a sign of the beginning of the reign of the papal Antichrist. The same arguments were used in the context of the controversy with Bellarmine, notably by Nicolas Vignier, who argued that the Mendicant Orders had been created to support the failing Papacy:

Comme, di-je, toutes choses fussent en ce pitoyable estat, s'esleverent Dominique & François, l'un Espagnol, l'autre Italien; lesquels non contens de la forme des voeux precedens que faisoient le autres Moines, prescrivirent à leurs sectateurs une façon de mendier qui n'avoit jamais esté veue en l'Eglise, accompagnée d'une doctrine par laquelle l'Evangile estoit renversé & destruit & le vray AntiChristianisme estably, lesquels se monstrans merueilleusement utiles à la Papauté, de laquelle l'autorité s'en alloit beaucoup esbranlée par la predication des Albigeois, obtindrent aussi for aisement confirmation de leurs regles par les Papes, mesmement à l'occasion du songe qu'eut le Pape Innocent que l'Eglise de S. Jean de Latran s'en alloit tomber si elle n'eust esté soustenue & soulevée du dos par S. François, ou comme d'autres disent par S. Dominique.⁸⁰

The arguments of Thomas Aquinas against the Mendicant Orders in the thirteenth century were recycled by the Lutheran tradition and used against monks and monasticism in general.⁸¹ They were also used by Nicolas Vignier: 'Or quoy que c'en soit, voicy que Thomas d'Aquin dit d'eux, C'est que ces Docteurs de l'université de Paris disoyent que les freres Mendians estoient Messagers de l'Antechrist'.⁸² It is likely that the medieval arguments against the Mendicant Orders

⁸⁰ Vignier, Legende Doree, pp. 32-3.

⁸¹ Geoffrey Dipple, Antifraternalism and Anticlericalism in the German Reformation: Johann Eberlin von Günzburg and the Campaign against the Friar (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 29-31.

⁸² Vignier, Legende Doree, p. 67.

were used by Nicolas Vignier in the context of polemic against the Jesuits.⁸³

What is remarkable, is that Nicolas Vignier argued that the persecution of the medieval heretics by the papal Antichrist were worse than those of the early Church:

Car depuis ces temps là qu'a on veu que des boucheries horribles, & persecutions trescruelles, exercees contre les Saints? Car de dire que ces persecutions ne sont point à comparer à celles de Neron, Domitian, Decius, Diocletian, il est vrai: Car ces persecutions là n'estoient que corporelles, celle-ci ont esté & spirituelles & corporelles. Celles-là estoient par intervalles, ne duroient que quelques mois, quelques ans. Celles-ci continuent depuis plusieurs siecles. Celles-là emportoient quelques milliers de martyrs. Celles-ci des multitudes innombrables. Et de faict Damase faict nombre de dix-sept mille Chrestiens tuez en un mois sous Diocletian. Et Bellarmin entre les prouesses de l'Eglise Romaine, nombre cent mille Albigeois tuez en un jour sous le Pape Innocent 3. Afin de ne représenter ici les execrables massacres esmeus pour la Religion en France & aux païs bas?⁸⁴

This marks a decisive shift of emphasis from the early part of the Protestant response which hinged on the comparison with the early Church martyrs. The insistence of Nicolas Vignier on the hardships of the medieval martyrs of the true Church reflects the impact that the Catholic comparison between Protestantism and medieval heresy had on Protestant culture. As we have seen, the bulk of these comparisons were made in the thick of the French Wars of Religion, with a second spell during the high water mark of the Catholic League. The official Genevan acknowledgement of the importance of the medieval martyrs of the true Church

⁸³ For an example of Vignier's controversy with the Jesuits see Vignier, Apologie Catholique which was written in response to the Jesuits Pierre Coton and Jaques Dinet, above p. 153.

⁸⁴ [Vignier], L'Antechrist Romain, pp. 159-60.

comes only after these events had passed, certainly not before 1572 and mostly after the end of the Wars of Religion. In this respect, Nicolas Vignier's Recueil de L'Histoire de l'Eglise (1601), is the first Reformed history of the true Church to break from this tradition in acknowledging the importance of the medieval persecutions of the papal Antichrist.⁸⁵ This line of argument was developed in his later works, notably the L'Antechrist Romain (1606) and the Legende Doree (1608) to the point where he argued that the medieval persecutions had actually been worse than those of the early Church.⁸⁶

Claiming medieval heretics as martyrs of the true Church hinged on the dismissal of their heretical characteristics, and the idea that they had been declared heretics by the Papacy because of their opposition to the papal monarchy. In this respect, Nicolas Vignier relied on the earlier Protestant tradition which made extensive use of medieval arguments against the rise of the papal monarchy. In the twelfth century, St Bernard de Clairvaux had elaborated a theory of papal supremacy which made the secular arm a tool of spiritual government in the hands of the Pope. The 'doctrine of the two swords' (Luke 22.38), as it was known, held that the spiritual sword of excommunication and the temporal sword of the secular rulers were both wielded by the Pope. This doctrine was instrumental in the systematic persecution of heresy which emerged in the course of the thirteenth century. The doctrine of the two swords was used by Heinrich Bullinger, for example, to identify the Pope as the Antichrist:

Il dit que ceste seconde beste avoit deux cornes.... Le seigneur signifie par cela la prestrise & le royaume, lesquels les Papes ont usurpé, affermans que puissance leur a esté donnée au ciel & en la

⁸⁵ Vignier, Recueil de L'Histoire de l'Eglise pp. 374-541; this section of this folio edition is devoted exclusively to the medieval persecutions of the papal Antichrist between 1159 and 1335.

⁸⁶ [Vignier], L'Antechrist Romain, pp. 159-60; Vignier, Legende Doree, pp. 75-6. See also Vignier's discussion of the Albigensian Crusade above, Chapter 3, pp. 116-7.

terre, tans és choses spirituelles que temporelles.... Toutes les histoires racontent de Boniface 8, qu'il institua le premier Jubilé, & monstra ouvertement en iceluy une Majesté pontificale & imperiale, quand en un jour il se monstra en habit de Pape, en l'autre en ornemens d'Empereur avec une cotte d'armes. Davantage, on portoit deux glaives devant luy: & luy crioit, Voici ici deux glaives, comme s'il monstroit au doigt à tout le monde que luy & aucuns de ses predecesseurs, & tous ses suyvens estoyent la beste à deux cornes.⁸⁷

The image of Boniface brandishing the two swords was also used by François du Jon in his sermons on the Apocalypse (1592) to identify the Pope as Antichrist:

Voire mesme en despit de Philippe le Bel Roy de France, il comparut publiquement en une feste solennelle portant en chacune main une espee nue, pour représenter par ce signe visible ses deux dominations pretendues, qu'ils appellent encores aujourd'huy le glaive temporel & le spirituel.⁸⁸

For the Protestant apocalyptic tradition, the reign of Boniface VIII marked the end of the reign of the papal Antichrist in the year 1294, when he excommunicated Philippe le Bel. Nicolas Vignier wrote in 1606 that 'Le Pape Boniface 8. n'escrivoit-il pas à un Roi de France, Nous voulons que tu saches que tu nous es subject aussi bien au temporel qu'au spirituel?'.⁸⁹ The French King had even been accused of being Manichaeism by Boniface VIII for defending the separation of the two principles of the secular and religious sovereignty. Manicheism which is the belief in two irreconcilable principles, good and evil, was indiscriminately used by the

⁸⁷ Heinrich Bullinger, Cent Sermons sur l'Apocalypse de Jesus Christ, revelée par l'Ange du Seigneur, veue & écrite par S. Jean Apostre & Evangeliste (Geneva, François Jaquy, 1564), fol. 244^v.

⁸⁸ Du Jon, Apocalypse ou Revelation, p. 207.

⁸⁹ [Vignier], L'Antechrist Romain, p. 217.

Papacy against the opponents of the doctrine of the two swords.

This was crucial to the rehabilitation of the Albigensians by the Protestants, since they had also been accused of Manicheism. It was argued that the Albigensians had been accused of Manicheism for the same reason as Philippe le Bel. As early as the 1540s, Bale had argued that papal persecution of the Cathars was provoked by their resistance to the rise of the papal monarchy. John Foxe systematically included passages of Matthew Paris's Chronica Majora in the 1570 edition of the Acts and Monuments despite the unfavourable account he gave of the Cathars.⁹⁰ The same logic had led Jean Chassanion in 1595 to ignore the Catholic depiction of the Albigensians as Manichaeans: 'Les Albigeois ont esté faussement chargés de plusieurs damnables opinions. Je n'ignore pas ce qu'aucuns ont écrit des Albigeois, qu'ils nioient la resurrection des corps, tenoient la transmigration pythagorique des ames, & qu'il i avoit deux principes l'un bon & l'autre mauvais, qui avoit esté l'erreur des Manichéens'.⁹¹

Nicolas Vignier used the same arguments in his Recueil de L'Histoire de l'Eglise (1601) to explain why the Albigensians had been accused of being Manichaeans:

D'autant que ce sont poincts totalement repugnans, de rejeter le vieil Testament & approuver le nouveau, & en l'approuvant constituer deux Dieux Createurs, l'un benin & bon, & l'autre malin, menteur, homicide, traistre, cruel, à qui le vieil appartient, comme le nouveau à l'autre, qu'ils disoient avoir eu des femmes Colla & Colliba, desquelles il avoit engendré fils & filles. Outreplus de nier la resurrection des Corps; d'estimer S.Jehan Baptiste n'avoir esté Prophete, ains tres malin, & d'appeller Marie Magdaleine Concubine de Jesus Chirst. Toutes lesquelles resveries neantmoins sont par les Auteurs alleguez attribuees aux

⁹⁰ Foxe, Acts and Monuments, (1563), fol. 71^v. See above, Chapter 3, pp. 105-6.

⁹¹ Chassanion, Histoire des Albigeois, p. 51.

Albigois.⁹²

Ironically, it seems that the Albigensians were indeed dualists and believed in two irreconcilable principles, a true god of light and spirit, opposed to a dark god of matter, the God of the Old Testament, who had created the world. This philosophy is akin to Manicheism and to Gnosticism which had originated in Alexandria in the third century.⁹³ The false analogy which was made between Manicheism and the opposition to the doctrine of the two swords, reflects a very superficial understanding of this philosophy. The fact that Philippe le Bel was accused of Manicheism by Boniface VIII shows how carelessly this accusation was used against opponents of the Papacy. It may explain why almost all heretical groups in the Middle Ages were indiscriminately accused of being Manichaeans and indeed why it was used against Protestants. In the case of the Albigensians, however, the accusation of Manicheism, although imprecise, might have been justified. This argument was nonetheless used by Goulard to show that the accusation of Manicheism against the Albigensians, reflected their opposition to the papal monarchy:

Aussi est-il aisé à tout homme versé es histoires avec quelque jugement, de voir d'où ces blâmes ont prins leur origine: car on fait que ce ce mesme temps les Papes avoyent publié pour article de foi, que quiconque voudroit maintenir que l'Empereur eust receu sa puissance immediatement de Dieu, sans estre sujet au Pape, seroit tenu pour Manicheen: comme s'il soustenoit qu'il y eust deux principes, ou deux souveraines puissances, dependantes immediatement de Dieu. Or comme les Albigois maintenoyent ouvertement cest doctrine, ce frere Pierre des Valles, & plusieurs autres caphards apres lui, pour obeir à l'ordonnance susdite du Pape, prindrent de là occasion de les accuser d'estre Manicheens, &

⁹² Vignier, Recueil de L'Histoire de l'Eglise, pp. 407-8.

⁹³ Nelli, La philosophie du catharisme, p. 9.

d'establiir deux principes.⁹⁴

The Protestant response to the Catholic comparison between Protestantism and medieval heresy was centred on the idea of the medieval precedents to the Reformation. The conceptual framework for the rehabilitation of medieval heretics as members of the true Church had been provided by Flacius Illyricus's Catalogus Testium Veritatis (1556). Anti-Popery was central to the Lutheran and particularly Anglican tradition of rehabilitation of medieval heretics. The main argument which motivated the inclusion of the Waldensians and Albigensians in the Protestant martyrologies was their resistance to the rise of the papal monarchy. In France, the political specificity of the relationship between the Crown and the Papacy was not conducive to the use of the anti-papal arguments by the Reformers. This may explain why adoption of medieval heretics as forebears of the Reformation and martyrs of the true Church did not appear in Geneva until the 1580s. It could be argued that, by then, it was too late to serve as an effective and immediate Protestant response to the Catholic comparison with medieval heresy which had appeared from the outset of the Reformation. The fact that anti-popery was used by Geneva at this time may be attributed to the involvement of the Papacy during the latter part of the Wars of Religion.

Whereas in the case of the Lutheran Reformation, Protestants clearly had the upper hand in the polemical debate with Catholicism, this is not true of French Calvinism. Luther has been described by Reformation historians as a broker of modernity and often praised for his efficient use of the printed word in the vernacular. Catholics, on the other hand, are often depicted by the same historians as unable to exploit this new medium.⁹⁵ Although this may have been true of the first half of the century, it no longer applies to the latter half where Catholicism had had the time to catch up and strengthen its defences. By the time Calvinism started making inroads into France, the use of the vernacular and printing as a way of

⁹⁴ Crespin, Histoire des Martyrs (1619), fol. 23^r.

⁹⁵ Mark Edwards, Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther (London, 1994), pp. 76-81.

reaching the wider audience of those not literate in Latin was well established. Calvinism built on the strength of the Lutheran Reformation but its opponents had had more than 30 years to accommodate to the new medium of religious discourse. Although, from the point of view of systematic theology, Calvin's Institutes remained in a league of its own, Reformed polemic was far behind what the Sorbonne was able to produce.

* * *

There is a noticeable difference between the polemic which was produced in Geneva, and that produced within France. Although the Conseil might have turned a blind eye once in a while, adversarial and personal responses to Catholic polemic were not usually encouraged. The polemic which was produced from within France is marked by its immediacy (it was usually produced very quickly) and its personal and defensive adversarial tone. Virulent Protestant defences often followed the original Catholic text closely, which were answered in turn by their authors, and so on. This was the case of Artus Désiré's famous satire of the Huguenot Psalter which was answered in turn by a Protestant version and with poems written against specific individuals.⁹⁶ The same applies to the polemical exchange between Nicolas des Gallars and Antoine de Mouchy and the polemic which was produced on both sides of the confessional divide around key events.⁹⁷

The official Protestant response which was issued from Geneva is striking by its literary character, as shown by the example of the controversy between Théodore de Bèze and the poets of the Pléiade.⁹⁸ The bulk of the Genevan response, however,

⁹⁶ Andrew Pettegree, 'Huguenot Voices: The Book and the Communication Process during the Protestant Reformation' (unpublished conference paper given at the Reformation Colloquium, Wadham College, Oxford, 30 March 1998), 26 pages; Tarbé ed., Recueil de Poésies Calvinistes, pp. 103-5; Du Val, Les contrarietez & contredictz. See above p. 175.

⁹⁷ See above pp. 43, 63, 153, 175-6, 178-9, 186-189.

⁹⁸ See below, Chapter 6, p. 220.

lies in its efforts to produce a history of the persecutions in France which culminated with Crespin's Histoire des Martyrs and the Histoire Ecclésiastique. This kind of enterprise was understandably much slower than the kind of adversarial polemic that was produced in France. But it is remarkable that arguments which had been available to the Genevans in the shape of the Catalogus Testium Veritatis or the Acts and Monuments were not used at the time they would have been most needed. It could be argued that the different political contexts of the respective Protestant traditions, Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed, prevented these arguments from being easily used. It is not before the turn of the seventeenth century, when the Counter-Reformation began to have an impact throughout Europe, that the different Protestant traditions made common cause beyond their political and doctrinal differences.

The political context of the different Protestant traditions may explain why the Protestant response to the Catholic assimilation of Protestantism to medieval heresy was slower in France than elsewhere. The institutionalisation of the Church of England, for example, intensified the need for proof of a visible Church in the Middle Ages. The Anglican tradition used the medieval martyrs of the true Church to create something akin to an apostolic succession of the true Church. This view was elaborated upon by James Ussher who argued in his De Christianorum Ecclesiarum successione for an unbroken historical link between the Apostles and Luther.⁹⁹ A later exponent of this tradition, Thomas Bray, took this view to its natural, albeit radical, conclusion and argued for an unbroken succession from the middle ages to the sixteenth century: 'And from the Holy Men of that Age the Lamp of pure Doctrine was handed down to Bertram, from him to Peter Bruis to Waldo, from Waldo, to Dulcinus, from him to Marsilius, from him to Wickliff, from him to Hus and Jerom of Prague, and from their Scholars, the Fratres Bohemi, to Luther and Calvin'.¹⁰⁰ This contrast markedly with the Genevan use of the medieval martyrs which merely testified to the continuing existence of the true Church even at the

⁹⁹ James Ussher, De Christianorum Ecclesiarum successione et statu Historica Explicatio (1613).

¹⁰⁰ Perrin, The History of the Old Waldenses and Albigenses, p. 73 note c.

persecution of the Antichrist. The lack of political patronage, and strict opposition to episcopacy, as well as the nature of Gallicanism, made these arguments unnecessary. It is only after the Genevan Church achieved a degree of political legitimacy within France with the Edict of Nantes in 1598, that the importance of these arguments was acknowledged.

Although French Catholics were incapable of competing with Calvin in devising theological treatises in French, their use of a less refined language allowed them to reach a wider audience. Authors, notably from the Sorbonne, who preferred Latin in works of theology did not refrain from using the vernacular in extremely crude attacks against Protestantism. In their own words, their use of the vernacular was justified by the need to reach the unlettered who could not understand the finer points of theology. Unfortunately for the Reformers, these crude attacks found a ready audience among the Catholic majority who remained insensitive to Calvin's Institutes or other works of systematic theology available in French. By contrast, Calvin and other prominent Genevan theologians, although very keen to use French in their works of theology, failed to respond effectively to these attacks. This task, which was deemed to be of secondary importance, fell to less prestigious members of the Company of Pastors, notably to the body of largely anonymous ministers who were sent to France. The situation is completely different from the Lutheran Reformation where it is the Reformers themselves who encouraged the production of polemical pieces and vicious attacks against the Papacy. In France, the roles were reversed and it was the Catholic theologians, notably from the Sorbonne, who spear-headed the polemical efforts to debase Protestantism. This reassessment of the respective merits of Catholic and Protestant use of the vernacular in print, puts into question the relevance of the German model to the Reformation in France.

Chapter 6: Polemic, debate and opinion forming.

In a seminal article, ‘The Advent of Printing and the Protestant Revolt’, Elizabeth Eisenstein argued that Protestantism had successfully harnessed the relatively new medium of printing, whereas Catholicism had not.¹ This model was borne out of work on the Lutheran Reformation, the conclusions of which were applied to the Reformation as a whole. This school of thought is represented by Jean-François Gilmont for whom, as it is shown in his dedication of La Réforme et le Livre, the specifically ‘Reformed’ book contributed to the ‘progress of humanity’:

A tous ceux qui ont oeuvré pour le livre de la Réforme,
 du grand marchand libraire/ au pauvre compagnon typographe,
 de l'éditeur humaniste
 au pressier ivrogne,
 de l'ouvrier âpre au gain
 au serviteur dévoué de la cause religieuse,
 tous, ils ont droit à notre reconnaissance
 pour leur contribution au progrès de l'humanité.²

This implies that Catholics contributed nothing to the book revolution, a view which has plagued the historiography of the Reformation since the Enlightenment and was particularly strong in the nineteenth century. The description of the Catholic party given by the Baron de Ruble, writing about the troubles at St Médard at the end of the last century, epitomizes this school of thought: ‘La Sorbonne, composée de docteurs vieillissés dans la scolastique, était peu redoutable par elle-même; mais elle régnait sur une armée d'écoliers et de suppôts (libraires, relieurs, parcheminiers,

¹ Elizabeth Eisenstein, ‘The Advent of Printing and the Protestant Revolt: A New Approach to the Disruption of Western Christendom’, in R. M. Kingdon ed., Transition and Revolution: Problems and Issues of European Renaissance and Reformation History (Minneapolis, 1974), 235-270.

² J.-F. Gilmont, La Réforme et Le Livre: l'Europe de l'imprimé, 1517- v.1570 (Paris, 1990).

etc.), toujours prêts à troubler la paix publique'.³

James K. Farge has noted in Le Parti Conservateur that the history of the Reformation in France had too often been written from the point of view of the agents of change, a point of view which was adopted wholesale by historians of the Enlightenment.⁴ This is also true of the historiography of the French printed book which is dominated by the role of Geneva and the Protestant movement. I should like to challenge Eisenstein's premise, at least as far as France is concerned, that the Protestants were better at harnessing the new medium of printing than the 'forces of reaction'. French Catholics were in a much better position than their Imperial counterparts to fight back against the Reformers. A very fierce campaign of anti-Protestant polemic in print was the Catholics' answer to what Robert Kingdon called 'the flood tide' of evangelical books from Geneva.⁵ French Catholic print in the vernacular has been understudied and underestimated by many historians of the French Wars of Religion. Its quantity and impact was considerable and it enabled French Catholics to compete on an equal footing with the Genevan Reformers.

The French Reformation has been described by Denis Crouzet, in his controversial Guerriers de Dieu, as a 'lost revolution'.⁶ Whether the French Reformation was revolutionary or not, the problem of 'why it failed' has not been addressed satisfactorily. To turn the question on its head, one might ask why Catholicism endured in France when it gave ground before the Calvinist assault elsewhere in Europe. The fact that the Reformation was publicized in the vernacular has been hailed as an important factor of its success in Lutheran Germany. By contrast, the use of the vernacular in France was not the sole prerogative of the Protestants, as French Catholics were not as reluctant to use the vernacular as their

³ Baron de Ruble, 'L'Arrestation de Jean de Hans et le Tumulte de Saint-Médard (December 1561)', BSHPIF, 13 (1886), 85-96, p. 87.

⁴ Farge, Le Parti Conservateur, p. 25. See above pp. 3, 30.

⁵ Kingdon, Geneva and the coming of the Wars, p. 93.

⁶ Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu, I. p. 713.

German counterparts. Probably the most important question raised by the use of the vernacular is the question of intended readership. As Peter Matheson aptly puts it: ‘there can be a chasm between the intentions of the writer, the presentation of the printer, and the reception by the reader’.⁷ Whether this polemic reached its intended audience, what impact it had, and whether this impact amounted to a success for the Catholic polemicists, are all questions which need to be dealt with here.

* * *

The target audience of vernacular polemic is unambiguous. The Catholic authors who wrote in the vernacular all justified their seemingly radical move from Latin by the need to reach, ‘les simples’. This justification is found on numerous occasions in the preface of Catholic vernacular books surveyed by Francis Higman.⁸ The argument ran that it was necessary to write in the vernacular so that the ‘simple’, who were most at risk from heretical conversion, would be instructed.

The choice, on Luther’s part, of the vernacular can be ascribed to anti-Scholasticism as German was not generally associated with university learning. Luther’s use of the vernacular was geared towards bringing his message to as many people as possible, but particularly to the unlearned, as a reaction to university learning. Scholars of the Lutheran Reformation have argued that, to a certain extent, the appeal to the unlearned was a rhetorical convention which was used by Luther in the face of the monopoly of the Church on learning.⁹ The words used in this context are problematic as the ‘unlearned’ points to illiteracy in Latin and not necessarily to lack of learning. As Peter Matheson has pointed out: ‘The very term “Laie”, “lay

⁷ Peter Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1998), p. 22.

⁸ Francis Higman, “‘Il seroit trop plus decent respondre en Latin’: les controversistes catholiques du XVIe siècle face aux écrits réformés”, *THR*, 326 (1998), 515-530.

⁹ Bob Scribner, ‘Heterodoxy, literacy and print in early German Reformation’, in P. Billen & A. Hudson (eds), *Heresy & Literacy 1000-1530* (Cambridge, 1994), 255-278, pp. 265-7.

person”, while deriving from the Greek *laos*, people, was understood in the medieval period not only to identify non-clerics, but to denominate the “illiterate”, those without Latinity’. The association between the laity and Latin ‘illiteracy’ justified the use of the vernacular in the eyes of the Reformers but was problematic for the Catholics who always felt obliged to justify their departure from Latin. The use of the vernacular in religious discourse was never intended for the illiterate (in the modern sense) but for the *illiterati*: an élite literate in the vernacular but not in Latin. Nonetheless, the paradigm remains in the historiography that the Reformation was somehow a liberating movement of the ‘masses’, a ‘democratization’ of religion: ‘The recourse to the vulgar language, the *lingua franca*, meant a break with an élitist view of education and religion and Church; there were no longer to be “two kinds of Christians”, “spiritual” and “worldly”, using two different languages’.

Peter Matheson also argues that the Reformation was a liberating movement for the common man and women and that polemic was the literature of the ‘underdog’.¹⁰ This idea reproduces contemporary rhetoric often found in Catholic polemic that the Protestants were catering to the unlearned and the ‘femmelettes’. It is clear that on the surface of things, both Catholics and Protestants were concerned by the impact of polemic on the ‘unlearned’. The fear of social upheaval dominates the Catholic criticism of the Reformation. From the Peasants’ War onwards, the spectre of a ‘revolution’, turning the world upside down, is brandished by the Catholics as one of the dangers of the Reformation: ‘The verbal uproar of polemic could quickly lead to social chaos. It had an incendiary dimension, and there is a sense in which the Peasants’ War was to be its step-child, although the radicals would rightly deny... the insurrection was God’s doing, not that of the books’.¹¹

In France, numerous pamphlets argued, especially after the conspiracy of Amboise, that the aim of the Protestants was to abolish the monarchy and establish a

¹⁰ Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation*, pp. 7, 22-3.

¹¹ Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation*, p. 25.

commonwealth where everything is made common (and first of all women).¹² Whether this was more than a literary and rhetorical device, the use of which can be traced back to the Middle Ages, remains to be shown. One cannot ignore, however, the concern for 'l'opinion du vulgaire' expressed on numerous occasions on both sides of the confessional divide.¹³ Unlike German Catholics, the French were quick to respond to Protestant material in the vernacular justifying their stance, like Antoine du Val: 'afin qu'un chacun, les simples ignorans principalement, ne soyent abusez par telz livres'.¹⁴

To what extent were the fears of the Catholics justified? A distinction should be made at this stage between Calvinism and Lutheranism as far as the use of the vernacular is concerned. The tone of the Calvinist writers contrasts with the very simple use of language that was made at the beginning of the Reformation in Germany. A significant, if not large, proportion of the French exiles who flocked to Geneva in the 1540s and 50s were authors and printers who had been involved on the literary stage in Paris before the beginning of the persecutions. None other than Théodore de Bèze had been a literary figure in Paris and had been valued as a poet and grammarian before he became the Reformer for which he is better known.¹⁵

This was a crucial time for the development of the French language, and various literary figures were debating how French grammar should be codified. De Bèze lived in Paris between 1539 and 1548 where he probably had met with Joachim du Bellay who contributed to this debate with his Defense et Illustration de la Langue

¹² Benoist, Brieve Response a quelque remonstrance, sig. A6^v; [Marlorat], Remonstrance a la royne mere du Roy, sig. B6^v.

¹³ Edmond Auger, Sommaire des Heresies, abus, impietez et blasphemes qui sont en la Cene des Calvinistes; & nouvelle Religion pretendue reformee (Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1568), sigs E4^{r-v}.

¹⁴ Du Val, Le Mirouer des Calvinistes, sig. A2^v.

¹⁵ See above, p. 209.

Française (1549).¹⁶ Théodore de Bèze's literary background is obvious in Abraham Sacrifiant where he attacks his former colleagues, Ronsard and du Bellay. De Bèze repents from having been part of the Parisian literary stage and criticises du Bellay for his attempt to codify French grammar: 'Les autres (du nombres desquels j'ai este a mon tres grand regret) esquissent un Epigramme trenchant a deux cotes, ou piquant par le bout: les autres s'amused a tout renverser, plutot qu'a tourner: autres cuidans enrichir notre langue, l'accoustrent a la Grecque et a la Romaine'.¹⁷ De Bèze also criticised Ronsard who was the chief expounder of the Italian school of poetry in France:

Que plut a Dieu que tant de bons esprits que je connai en France,
 en lieu de s'amuser a ces malheureuses inventions ou imitations de
 fantaisies vaines et deshonestes, (si on en veut juger a la verite)
 regardassent plutot a magnifier la bonte de ce grand dieu, duquel ils
 ont recu tant de graces, qu'a flatter leurs idoles, c'est a dire leurs
 seigneurs ou leurs dames, qu'ils entretiennent en leurs vices, par
 leurs fictions et flatteries. A la verite il leur serait mieux seant de
 chanter un cantique a Dieu, que de pretrarquiser un Sonnet, et faire
 l'amoureux transi, digne d'avoir un chapperon a sonnettes: ou de
 contrefaire ces fureures heroiques de ce monde, et immortaliser
 cestuy cy ou ceste la: choses qui font confesser au lecteur, que les
 auteurs d'icelles n'ont seulement monte en leur mont de Parnasse,
 mais sont parvenus jusques au cercle de la lune.¹⁸

This criticism of courtly love and secular poetry was aimed at the latest fashion at Court where the Italian poets were prized. Ronsard published numerous love

¹⁶ Pierre de Ronsard, Poèmes, ed. André Barbier (Oxford, 1972), p. x.

¹⁷ K. Cameron, K. M. Hall et al. (eds), Théodore de Bèze: Abraham sacrifiant (Geneva, 1967), p. 46.

¹⁸ Cameron, Abraham sacrifiant, p. 48.

poems where he followed the Italian school and notably Petrarch.¹⁹ In this light, the reference in de Bèze's preface is directed at this particular poetical school, of which Ronsard became the most celebrated example. The fact that both Ronsard and du Bellay later defended the Catholic cause was an added layer to a personal dispute which had started as a literary quarrel with Théodore de Bèze. This example demonstrates that Calvin drew his supporters from an extremely literary and élite background (among whom Cop and des Gallars) which contrasts with the general tone of the first Reformation.

The difference in tone between the Lutheran and Calvinist movement is also explained by a general shift in the Reformation's attitude towards university learning, which appeared after 1525. Lutheranism was at first imbued with anti-Scholasticism which was later associated with social protest especially after the failure of the Peasants' War.²⁰ There definitely was a revolutionary element in the Flugschriften, where the university-trained Catholic was confounded by the simplicity of the common man self-taught in the Scriptures. Here is the transcription of a dialogue published in 1524 by Hans Sachs, typical of the Flugschriften genre, between a Canon and a shoemaker:

Canon:... the laity shouldn't be dealing with Scripture... where do you lay folk want to learn all this? Most of you can't read.

Shoemaker: Christ says, John 6, 'They will be taught by God.'

Canon: There must be some sort of ability involved too, or what use would the universities be?

Shoemaker: Which university did John go to? And he wrote so well, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,' and so on. He was a fisherman, as it says in Mark 1.²¹

¹⁹ Ronsard, Poèmes, p. xi.

²⁰ Dipple, Antifraternalism & Anticlericalism, pp. 214-5.

²¹ Hans Sachs, Disputation zwischen einem Chorherren und Schuchmacher darin das

After the dramatic outcome of the Peasants' War in 1525 and the subsequent denunciation by Luther of radical movements such as the Anabaptists, the fashion of the Flugschriften had passed. Criticism of university learning was increasingly associated with the radical Reformation and was used by the Catholic opponents of Luther to drag the whole Reformed edifice down.²² Robert Scribner has shown that, to a certain extent, the 'man in the street' was a myth, a rhetorical device conjured up by the Lutherans to gather support among the semi-literate urban élite. Nonetheless it gave grounds for the Catholics to accuse the Reformation of being anti-intellectual, like John Eck in the Lieux Communs (1539): 'Il appert derechef des hereticques lutheriens, qui simulent cauteusement disputation: car ilz cherchent de disputer, non pas devant les doctes, & lettrérés exercés en theologie: mais devant les indoctes laics vulgaires, la capacité desquelz ne s'estend nullement à juger telz secretz de la foy'.²³

In reaction to this criticism, the Lutherans moved away from the Flugschriften and its connotation of radicalism in order to save the essential tenets of the Reformation. This change in tone is best shown in Geneva by the controversy surrounding Sebastian Castellio. Castellio had voiced criticism at the execution of Michel Servet and published De Haereticis an sint persecuendi (1554) which was condemned in Geneva.²⁴ His work still bore the mark of the first Reformation, which

wort gottes / und ein recht Christlich wesen verfochten würdt (1524). I am grateful to Fiona Campbell for this reference and the translation.

²² Carlos Gilly, 'Das Sprichwort "Die Gelehrten, die Verkehrten" in der Toleranzliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts', in Jean-Georges Roth & Simon L. Verheus (eds), Anabaptistes et dissidents au XVIe siècle, Actes du colloque international d'histoire anabaptiste 1994 (Baden Baden, 1987), 159-172.

²³ Eck, Les lieux communs, sig. D7^f.

²⁴ The response from Geneva was very fierce, notably Jean Calvin, Declaration pour maintenir la vraie foy... contre les erreurs detestables de Michel Servet (Geneva, Jean Crespin, 1554); Jean Calvin and Théodore de Bèze, Responses de Jean Calvin et Theodore de Bèze aux argumens et calomnies d'un qui s'efforce de renverser par tous moyens la doctrine de la providence secreete de Dieu (Geneva, Conrad Badius,

had been repudiated by the next generation of Reformers. In his translation of the Bible published in Basel in 1555, Castellio pitched the word of God against ‘worldly wisdom’ and resorted to the German proverb ‘Die Gelehrten die Verkehrten’:²⁵

Mais si quelcun veut obeir a sa volonté, e retenir la sagesse mondaine, c’ét-a-dire folle, sans renoncer a ses vices e pechés, e sans vouloir croire ni faire sinon autant qu’il plaira a son jugement e a sa chair, un tel homme étant aveuglé par son mauvais vouloir, ne verra point l’esperit de l’écriture, ains la tirera e tordra a sa fantaisie, e en tirera a tort e a travers, par tout ou il pourra, des excuses, couvertures e defenses de ses pechés, e parainsi n’en acquerra sinon un cuider savoir, sans rien savoir, par la quelle outrecuidance il deviendra de jour en jour tant plus savant tant plus méchant, comme dit l’Aleman.²⁶

The condemnation of Castellio is symptomatic of a clear demarcation from the first Reformation. The difference between these two different intellectual worlds was reflected in the use of language. As much as Luther had used the language of the ‘man in the street’ to disseminate his message, the language of Genevan Reformers was the language of the literate élite. Francis Higman has argued persuasively that the dissemination of Calvin’s vernacular writings contributed to the codification of modern French.²⁷ By modern standards, Calvin’s French is remarkably concise and easy to read, compared with that of other contemporary authors. But this reflects our own perceptions rather than contemporary ones, as Larissa Taylor has suggested: ‘Modern readers have more in common with educated sixteenth-century humanists than with “le menu peuple”’.²⁸ The linearity of Calvin’s French, which has been

1559).

²⁵ On the use of that saying see Scribner, ‘Heterodoxy, literacy and print’, p. 266.

²⁶ Quoted in Gilly, “‘Die Gelehrten die Verkehrten’”, p. 169.

²⁷ F. Higman, ‘Linearity in Calvin’s thought’, *THR*, 326 (1998), 391-418.

²⁸ Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in the late medieval and Reformation*

observed by Francis Higman, heralds the predominance of our own written culture. The written facilitates the construction of linear, rational thoughts which dominate our own mental world. But as it is indicated below, sixteenth-century media were still dominated by the oral and the written was only starting to change the way people formulated thoughts.

The strength of the Calvinist movement lies in the use of an excellent French in works of systematic theology and the effective dissemination of this message in print. The argument that the use of the vernacular allowed the Reformation to reach a wider audience, however, should be moderated in the case of the Genevan productions. The fine language of Calvin and de Bèze, no matter how modern we perceive it to be, was definitely not the language of ‘the man in the street’ but rather that of the literate élite. Although French humanists in Geneva emulated the German Reformation dialogue, like Antoine Marcourt or Conrad Badius, it is the exception rather than the rule.²⁹ Pierre Viret is a notorious exception and his work is characterized by the use of simple and sometimes crude language, but he was frowned upon by Geneva for being too controversial.³⁰

The use of the vernacular ‘for the sake of simple folk’ was therefore an intention shared by both Protestants and Catholics in France. Whether it was a rhetorical convention, as Scribner has suggested, or not, ‘the man in the street’ had been the target audience of the Flugschriften genre. The association of this populism with the radical Reformation by the Catholic reaction spread to the side of the Reformers themselves who slightly changed their tack after the failure of the Peasants’ War. In the period which concerns us, the association was still made by the Catholics although it is clear that the Genevan Reformers were not catering for the

France (Oxford, 1992), p. 228.

²⁹ [Antoine Marcourt], Le Livre des marchans, fort utile a toutes gens pour cognoistre de quelles marchandises on se doit donner garde d'estre deceu [Geneva], (Jaquy, Davodean and Bourgeois), [1557]; Shaw ed., Comedie du Pape Malade.

³⁰ Viret, De la vraye et fausse religion.

uneducated majority. The Catholic reaction in France was more constructive than in Germany as a number of authors, led by Nicole Grenier, responded in kind by writing works of theology and polemic in French. The target audience of these men was allegedly the same as that of the Reformers: 'les simples'. Whether the Catholics were more successful in reaching this target than the Protestants is the question to which we must now turn.

* * *

Catholics clearly misunderstood and overestimated the impact of the Protestant printed book on the 'masses'. It was the literate élite which were most at risk of being converted to Protestantism. Nonetheless, following the rhetoric which had been employed in the Lutheran Reformation, French Catholics justified their use of the vernacular, maintaining that they wished to appeal to 'the lay common folk'. It is very difficult to gauge the impact that printed polemic had on 'the population at large'. By all accounts, printed books had only a small audience predominantly composed of the urban élite. Estimates of literacy and population given by Sawyer indicate that by 1615, 'the most popular pamphlets might have reached the hands of 1% of France's urban population'.³¹ This does not mean, however, that the ideas contained in those books circulated only within these circles. What Robert Scribner has written about early modern Germany is here particularly relevant: 'Printing was, in fact, an addition to, not a replacement for, oral communication. Indeed, it was as likely as not that most people would have experienced the printed word only indirectly, by having it read aloud to them'.³²

The relationship between written and oral in the sixteenth century was much greater than today. We live today in a culture in which the dissemination of information is dominated by the printed word. The early-modern period, on the other hand, was predominantly oral, and information was passed from word of mouth. It is likely that what could be read in print was probably heard in sermons as well. The

³¹ Sawyer, Printed Poison, p. 48.

³² Robert Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk (1981), pp. 2-3.

sermon was probably to the sixteenth century what television is to us today: it provided information as well as entertainment, and enjoyed considerable popularity.³³ The analogy could be carried further by saying that sermons provided topics of conversations for days to come for those who attended. Although I have found no written evidence that the content of polemical material was also used in sermons, other works suggests that it probably was. Barbara Diefendorf, for example, has studied the impact of key preachers on the population of Paris and suggests that printed material reproduced sermons: ‘the treatises and sermons published by Parisian preachers are similar in their rhetoric and in the ideas that they advance’.³⁴ Although one cannot say that everything preached was also printed, one can safely say the predominant ideas found in sermons were also disseminated in print, sometimes by the same person. The case of René Benoist, who was dubbed ‘le pape des halles’, immediately comes to mind as he was a prolific writer and a notorious preacher.³⁵

In our age of information technology which is dominated by the printed word, it is difficult to think back to a time where the bulk of information was transmitted through the spoken word. Reformation historians have all acknowledged the role of preaching as the predominant mode of communication for religious messages in the sixteenth century. Nicolas Pasquier, quoted in Sawyers, warned against the dangers of successful preachers after the assassination of Henri IV:

The ability of a preacher to speak well is an attractive and valuable gift.... But, if he decides to abuse the sweetness of his language, there is no more terrible plague on a Kingdom than this well-spoken preacher... his tongue becomes a weapon of violence on which depends the life or death of those for whom and against

³³ Taylor, Soldiers of Christ, p. 229.

³⁴ Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 146.

³⁵ Taylor, Soldiers of Christ, p. 150-1.

whom he uses it.³⁶

These observations are no doubt valid for the preceding period, during the League, but also at the outset of the French Wars of Religion as Larissa Taylor and Barbara Diefendorf have shown. Larissa Taylor has argued in Soldiers of Christ that preachers such as François le Picart commanded large audiences.³⁷ Popular preachers were hugely influential in disseminating specific religious or polemical messages. Vigorous preaching during this period often resulted in outbreaks of popular violence on both sides of the confessional divide. Numerous examples of preaching resulting in massacres and acts of iconoclasm abound in the work of Denis Crouzet and others.³⁸ Preaching was also the preferred medium for the venting of contentious opinions, and several preachers thus ran afoul of the Crown during the French Wars of Religion. Barbara Diefendorf mentions in Beneath the Cross the example of Simon Vigor and Pierre Dyvollé who preached on several occasions against the policy of conciliation of Catherine de Médicis.³⁹ Another notorious example is provided by Jean de Hans whose sermon provoked the disturbance at the Church of St Médard in 1561, and who was subsequently arrested.⁴⁰

The overlap between the written and the oral is illustrated by the performance of one of the authors mentioned here, Antoine de Mouchy (alias Demochares ‘pleasing to the people’ in Greek), at the Council of Trent. This formidable insight in the rhetorical conventions of the time is provided by the diary of an Italian cardinal, who calls de Mouchy ‘ce bon vieux’. According to Alain Tallon, author of a recent study of the Council:

³⁶ Sawyer, Printed Poison, p. 18.

³⁷ Taylor, Soldiers of Christ.

³⁸ Denis Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu; Christin, Une révolution symbolique.

³⁹ Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, pp. 147-50.

⁴⁰ Ruble, ‘L’arrestation de Jean de Hans’.

L'hésitation entre oral et écrit, récitation de mémoire ou lecture, est encore très forte chez les pères conciliaires français... Les règles de l'éloquence admettaient mal que l'orateur ne soit pas capable de pérorer de mémoire. En revanche, un théologien capable d'user de toutes les techniques rhétoriques et en même temps de faire comme s'il lisait suscite l'admiration. Calini est enthousiaste devant l'intervention de Démocharès, qui parle pendant deux heures d'affilée 'sans même cracher'. Le théologien français sait tirer toutes les divisions et subdivisions de son raisonnement sans perdre le fil, 'comme s'il avait récité d'un écrit les choses qu'il disait'. Démocharès ne se veut pourtant un orateur à la mode... S'il faut faire la part de la convention rhétorique, il n'en reste pas moins que les interventions de Démocharès, par ce qu'en laissent transparaître les résumés des actes conciliaires, n'ont rien de très littéraires. Mais il semble que le théologien parisien a su donner à ses raisonnements toute la force d'une habileté oratoire acquise en enseignant et en prêchant.⁴¹

It should be noted that Antoine de Mouchy is one of the most violent polemicists who disseminated the rumour that the Protestants of the rue St Jacques were conducting an orgy. Another such author, Robert Ceneau, was also at Trent and is described by Tallon as a 'staunch defender of the Gallican liberties' and a 'good son of the Sorbonne'. Also noticed at Trent for his verbal excellence was Simon Vigor who was nearly arrested in Paris in December 1561 for 'seditious preaching' and turning 'les petits' against 'les grands'.⁴²

Peter Matheson and Robert Scribner have emphasized the role of the visual as well as the oral in relations to print, in what McLuhan called 'hybridisation of

⁴¹ Tallon, La France et le Concile de Trente, pp. 735, 741-2.

⁴² Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, pp. 153, 157; Tallon, La France et le Concile de Trente, p. 735.

media':⁴³

Slogans chanted in the streets one day would garnish the front page of a pamphlet the next.... It was a time when the boundaries between the oral and the written word, the literary and the visual, the Latinate and the vernacular, the literate and the semi-literate were extraordinarily fluid.⁴⁴

Concentration on the printed word alone thus offers only limited access to the process by which the new movement was spread to the people. We must, rather, see print in relation to oral and visual forms of communication.⁴⁵

It is, of course, almost impossible to have access to what people heard or said, save for reports of conversations or sermon notes which are extremely rare. Orality, however, pervaded the written word and it is possible to find its traces in the printed texts. Visual material is extremely rare in French printed books but this does not mean that the visual is entirely absent from them. We know that theatricality formed an important part of sermon preaching. Each sentence or example would have been punctuated by broad gestures and the facial expressions which accompanied the verbal delivery. There is no reason this trait could not have been shared with reading, as early modern readers often read aloud. Furthermore, Catholic polemic often provided its readers/listeners with vivid images, such as the orgiastic scenes described in Chapter 2. The style of Catholic polemic is often marked by orality following the criteria that have been identified by Peter Matheson in The Rhetoric of the Reformation: rhythm, repetition, alliteration, antithesis, and parallel.

So the most important factor in determining the impact that this printed

⁴³ Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York, 1964).

⁴⁴ Matheson, The Rhetoric of the Reformation, p. 37.

⁴⁵ Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk (1981), p. 3.

material really had on the population at large is the interaction between written and oral. The extent in which this material spread through the illiterate population 'orally' would determine the success of such and such an idea, opinion, rumour expressed in print. This is not simply a one-way phenomenon, the flowing of ideas from printed page to oral discourse, but a reciprocal relationship. The ideas found in print probably owed as much to the welling-up of oral discourse into the literate world as the reverse.

Clearly, the material found in print flowed into the oral discourse of every day life through various means. Both Matheson and Sawyer who have studied the impact of print in two different contexts (Reformation Germany and early seventeenth century France) have expressed the same idea:

Many of the concepts contained in the pamphlets would have been received at second or third hand, either through listening to them being read out, or by reference to them in conversations, sermons, informal meetings.⁴⁶

Although clearly the primary audience, the literate public was not the sole consumer of pamphlet literature. The content of printed material was passed along second- and thirdhand, through sermons, town meetings, and everyday conversations in the marketplace.⁴⁷

There is no reason why France in the second half of the sixteenth century, almost exactly in between chronologically, should be any different. There is of course an evolution between 1520s Germany and early seventeenth century France as print entered in a symbiotic relationship with its readership. For example, the conspicuous absence of woodcuts in this period in France has theological reasons, the Calvinist distrust of images, which had already been noted by Scribner:

Significantly, there is little of the popular propaganda surveyed

⁴⁶ Matheson, The Rhetoric of the Reformation, pp. 20-1, 37.

⁴⁷ Sawyer, Printed Poison, p. 69.

here that came from the Zwinglian or radical traditions. Clearly, this was because of the hostility of these traditions to images, compared with the qualified acceptance of them in the Lutheran tradition. This alone probably ensured that the visual propaganda of the first half century of the Reformation would be overwhelmingly Lutheran.⁴⁸

But Robert Scribner also indicates that woodcuts were gradually superseded by print by the middle of the sixteenth century in Germany as well.⁴⁹ This suggests that there are deep rooted structural reasons for this evolution unrelated to the confessional background:

This points unequivocally to the long-term triumph of printing over the print as a major form of mass communication, a fact of which there could be no doubt by the middle of the sixteenth century. Not that there was necessarily any great leap forward in literacy, and so less need to provide information to the unlearned by visual means. It may simply indicate that publishers now had a sufficiently large market among a reading public to dispense with the task of combining woodcuts with movable type. No doubt readers were also more accustomed to absorbing information

⁴⁸ Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk (1981), p. 249.

⁴⁹ French exceptions include Luther and Melanchthon, De Deux monstres prodigieux, a savoir, d'un Asne-Pape, qui fut trouvé à Rome en la riviere du Tibre, l'an 1496. Et d'un veau-moine nay à Friberg en Misne, l'an 1528 (Geneva, Jean Crespin, 1557) printed in Gothic font which is extremely unusual in itself as the great majority of French printing was done in Garamond font; another exception is reported by Philip Benedict, 'Of Marmites and Martyrs: Images and Polemics in the Wars of Religion', in The French Renaissance in Prints from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (exhibition catalogue of the Grunwald Centre for the Graphic Arts, Los Angeles, 1995), 108-137.

through print alone.⁵⁰

This example shows that the readership had an impact on printing as well as the reverse. The symbiotic and interactive relationship between printing and its readership created a new phenomenon in the sixteenth century, which can be called 'public opinion'. As Jeffrey Sawyer has said: 'There was a public, and it had opinions. But what did it matter? The history of pamphleteering helps explain at least part of the story. For roughly three hundred years pamphlets were a principal vehicle for public political discourse in Old Regime France'.⁵¹ Public opinion played an increasing role in determining the content of books. To make an analogy with the laws of supply and demand, the creation of a new product created a new market. As this market evolved, the relationship between supply and demand became fluid, as a one way relationship became interactive. 'Public opinion' is the product of this interaction between media and public. But as Peter Matheson observed, 'this new public opinion... did not emerge overnight... it was strongly lay and civic in ethos'.⁵²

Much work still needs to be done before any clear-cut conclusions can be drawn from these remarks. I lack both competence and data to be authoritative and it is necessary to fall back for now on the conclusions of others more qualified. Traces of this evolution can nonetheless be found in the sources studied here, and it is possible to single them out. The work of Robert Darnton has shown that the revolutionary movement in France was greatly facilitated by a dense network of 'news gatherers' who travelled the width and breadth of the country disseminating rumours which had been heard in the 'salons' of Paris or at Court.⁵³ If anything, this pattern must have been even stronger at the time of the French Wars of Religion. The language of pamphlet literature is dominated by the oral, and Jeffrey Sawyer has

⁵⁰ Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk (1981), p. 7.

⁵¹ Sawyer, Printed Poison, p. 13.

⁵² Matheson, The Rhetoric of the Reformation, p. 34.

⁵³ Robert Darnton (unpublished conference paper given at the Society for the Study of French History annual conference, Birmingham, Spring 1997).

indicated that the 1614-5 pamphlet war was dominated by ‘bruits’ and ‘rumeurs’. The same can be argued for the polemic of the French Wars of Religion which was motivated, respectively, to add credence or to deny ‘rumours’ which circulated about the Protestants.

* * *

The question of the aims of the printed polemic is a very difficult one which nonetheless needs to be addressed. The avowed aim of Antoine du Val’s Mirouer des Calvinistes, for example, is unambiguous: ‘Nous t’avons recueillz ce petit livret, pour t’asseurer & armer à l’encontre d’eux. Lequel lisant, t’enseignera & descouvrira leurs faulses doctrines, leur vie, & jargon diabolique, estre contraire à leur babil & beau langage’.⁵⁴ The use of the rhetorical convention of the mirror in the title is itself significant; upholder of the truth, the mirror represents things as there are, without deformation. Ten years later, Arnaud Sorbin would make good on the play on words between ‘Reformation’ and ‘deformation’ by calling the Calvinists ‘noz modernes deformez’.⁵⁵ Unequivocally, the pamphlets are designed to convince public opinion that Calvinists are ‘faux prophetes, seducteurs, & hypocrites, qui viennent à nous en habit de brebis: mais au dedans sont loups ravissans’.⁵⁶

Historians who have worked on mass persuasion in the twentieth century argue that the Reformation was a milestone in the elaboration of modern ideological warfare:

Au XVIe et XVIIe siècles, la Réforme entraîne de grands bouleversements en Europe. Cette fois, la lutte religieuse se déroule entre frères ennemis, chrétiens les uns et les autres. Elle est d’autant plus furieuse. Elle est l’occasion de mettre au point des techniques et tactiques spécifiques des conflits idéologiques. Le

⁵⁴ Du Val, Mirouer des Calvinistes, fol. 3^f.

⁵⁵ Sorbin, Histoire des albigeois (Paris, 1569), sig. a4^v.

⁵⁶ Du Preau, Des faux prophetes.

débat théologique, la critique et la justification des thèses, les réfutations et condamnations des hérétiques prennent, bien entendu, une importance considérable.⁵⁷

Is this to say that printed polemic of the French wars of the religion can be described as propaganda? Historians of early modern polemic, namely Scribner, Matheson and Sawyer, are not unanimous on this question. Robert Scribner, for instance, does not hesitate to use the word ‘propaganda’ to describe the material analysed in For the Sake of Simple Folk:

A basic technique of propaganda is pretended discourse.... One method of creating this ‘dialogue’ is to contact its audience through images and symbols familiar to both, and then to transform these on the propagandist’s terms. By a process of amplification and reinforcement, a gradual shift from one ‘symbolic universe’ to another is brought about.... We may certainly see its effects in broad cultural traces, such as the acceptance of certain words or phrases into common usage.⁵⁸

Peter Matheson, agrees with Scribner on this point but is unhappy with the term ‘propaganda’ for the very same reason:

Perhaps enough has been said to demonstrate that sixteenth century processes and networks of communication are markedly different from those of our day, and that we have to be circumspect about describing sixteenth-century communication in modern categories of mass persuasion.... There are strong arguments for avoiding the term ‘propaganda’ altogether in relation to the pamphlet, in view of its modern associations with massive media penetration and a

⁵⁷ Maurice Prestat, ‘De la Guerre Psychologique à la Guerre Média-tique’, in Gérard Chaliand ed., La Persuasion de Masse: Ses origines contemporaines (Paris, 1992), 23-81, p. 27.

⁵⁸ Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk (1981), p. 9.

manipulative ethos. Propaganda involves the systematic and often cynical propagation by an interested party of tendentiously presented views. The aim is simply to influence public opinion, to 'sell' ideas. The function of the recipient is a purely passive one.

Matheson argues that the polemic of the German Reformation hardened into propaganda by mid-sixteenth century through a process of 'gradual declension of Reformation rhetoric' where 'opponents were bestialised, Jews transmuted into well-poisoners, the Papacy depicted as the gaping arse of Hell'.⁵⁹

So Scribner and Matheson agree, although they differ about the term 'propaganda', that the polemic of the German Reformation was a two-way process and that it changed considerably around 1550: 'The second half of the sixteenth century saw a noticeable deterioration in technique, which robbed the woodcut of much of its simplicity of line and so of its effectiveness.... Meanwhile, it was printing which gained dominance as the chief means of non-oral communication'.⁶⁰ At the other end of the chronological spectrum, Jeffrey Sawyer has no doubt that the material he is dealing with is propaganda.⁶¹ All agree that this material was designed to achieve the specific aim of influencing the thoughts and actions of its audience:

propaganda is a deliberate attempt to influence people's opinions and actions⁶²

It is thought tailored to action. It may educate and divert; but its primary concern is to challenge its readers' assumptions, to inculcate specific attitudes and to encourage particular

⁵⁹ Matheson, The Rhetoric of the Reformation, pp. 26, 44-5, 249.

⁶⁰ Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk (1981), p. 7.

⁶¹ Sawyer, Printed Poison.

⁶² Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk (1981), p. 8.

commitments or actions⁶³

By definition, rhetoric was the strategic use of language for the purpose of achieving a desired impact on one's listeners or readers.... Pamphlets often targeted well-defined groups for political mobilization. They used specific rhetorical forms in an effort to motivate these groups into action or to placate them into passivity.... A primary purpose of public discourse was to generate power by influencing organized violence.⁶⁴

The aim of Catholic polemic was either explicit, as in the case of Antoine Du Val cited above, or implicit, as in many works which purported to be works of theology for the layman, but were in fact polemical tracts.⁶⁵ The boundary between avowed aims and hidden agendas is sometimes thin. It is difficult to call this material 'propaganda', as the word implies knowing manipulation of people's perceptions, when a great deal of this material is unsophisticated and unsubtle in its techniques. Yet it is equally difficult not to call it 'propaganda' according to criteria which have been laid out in Norman Davies' Europe: A History:

- 1) The rule of 'simplification': reducing all data to a simple confrontation between 'Good and Bad', 'Friend and Foe'.
- 2) The rule of disfiguration: discrediting the opposition by crude smears and parodies.
- 3) The rule of transfusion: manipulating the consensus values of the target audience for one's own ends.
- 4) The rule of unanimity: presenting one's viewpoint as if it were

⁶³ Matheson, The Rhetoric of the Reformation, p. 6.

⁶⁴ Sawyer, Printed Poison, pp. 9, 16.

⁶⁵ F. Higman, 'Les genres de la littérature polémique calviniste au XVIe siècle', THR, 326 (1998), 437-448.

the unanimous opinion of all right-thinking people: drawing the doubting individual into agreement by the appeal of star-performers, by social pressure, and by ‘psychological contagion’.

5) The rule of orchestration: endlessly repeating the same messages in different variations and combinations.⁶⁶

There is a sense that polemical authors were aware of the impact of their own writing and were even more worried about the impact that their opponents might have. This concern can be found among Protestant authors who wrote ‘pour servir, en commun, à tout le peuple’ to dispel the false image of the Protestants that the Catholics are disseminating.⁶⁷ Thus Nicolas des Gallars accuses the Catholic of rousing the ‘commun populaire’ against the Protestants:

Ils [les supposts de Satan] s’attachent maintenant aux Rois, maintenant aux Evesques, maintenant aux Docteurs, puis au commun populaire, crians à l’aide & à l’arme, pour esmouvoir tout en rage, & enflammer les coeurs à l’effusion du sang des innocens.... Pource qu’ils voyent que gens de jugement ne se veulent plus laisser abuser par leurs crieries & vaines persuasions, & qu’on sonde tous les jours plus avant les choses, tellement que la plus grand’ part de ceux qui estoient aveugles commencerent à discerner, ils ne cessent de redoubler leurs mensonges pour esmouvoir ciel & terre, & sont apres le commun populaire pour l’abbreuver tousjours de leurs faussetez, afin de nous rendre si odieux, que ceux mesmes qui ne nous persecutent soyent hais & detestez, & qu’on s’esleve à l’encontre d’eux.⁶⁸

Antoine de la Roche Chandieu, for his part, denounces the false accusations

⁶⁶ Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (London, 1997), p. 500.

⁶⁷ Chandieu, *Histoire des persecutions*, sig. b1^r.

⁶⁸ [Des Gallars], *Seconde apologie*, sigs A2^v, D6^v-D7^r.

spread by the Catholics as responsible for the turning of the lower orders against well-born Protestants:

Je laisse à parler de la cruauté dont & grans & petis ont usé depuis vingt cinq ou trente ans en ça contre les enfans de Dieu: mais n'aguere a on apperceu comme ceste rage d'emflamme de plus en plus: ainsi que le populaire a bien monstré en la fureur dont il a esté esmeu contre hommes & femmes craignans Dieu, & mesme contre Dames & Damoiselles d'estat & renom, lesquelles autrement il n'eust osé regarder qu'avec crainte & reverence.⁶⁹

Although Chandieu does not mention any specific instances of violence, there was a number of incidents to which these lines might refer at the time of their publication in 1563. Chandieu is clearly accusing the Catholics of demagogy, of spreading false accusations among the 'populaire' and thus encouraging outbreaks of violence. The allegation that it is the 'vulgaire' whose opinion is being manipulated is made by the anonymous chronicler of the massacre of Cabrières and Mérindol, writing in 1555: 'Ils ont esté estimez du vulgaire, incestueux, sorciers, enchanteurs, & du tout dediez aux diables : faisans conventicules, tant pour exercer paillardises & autres choses execrables, que pour faire leur sabbath (j'use de leurs termes) avec le diable qui là se presentoit'.⁷⁰

Despite Matheson's reservations about the use of the word 'propaganda' in its modern acceptance, it seems to apply particularly well to the material laid out in this thesis. The polarisation and over-simplification of complex and ambiguous issues characteristic of propaganda pervades the material published on the eve and during the French Wars of Religion by Catholic authors. As one of these authors, Robert Ceneau, puts it, it is necessary to 'ou estre totalement calviniste ou estre entièrement

⁶⁹ Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions, sig. b2^v.

⁷⁰ An., Histoire memorable de la persecution & saccagement du peuple de Merindol & Cabrieres & autres circonvoisins, appelez Vaudois [Geneva, Jean Crespin], (1555), sig. *4^v.

fidelle, finalement ou tout blanc ou tout noir; car la foi nette et entière ne reçoit rien mixtionné'.⁷¹ Tallon argues that Ceneau represented the old Scholastic tradition, in opposition to Humanism, and was particularly adverse to the 'moyenneurs'.⁷² This polarization of issues is characteristic of propaganda as defined above.

Public opinion is known to us as the private sphere, either individual or collective, where one makes a choice between several options available. For Catholic authors, 'opinion' is simply synonymous with heresy, and indeed the Greek origin of the word means 'choice'. Robert Ceneau and others abhor the 'middle ground', specifically because it allows for the development of self-determination and choice. Everything has to be black or white. By polarizing the issues in this way, these authors were planning that their audience would stick to what they knew best, that is the old religion, and close the dangerous debate initiated by the Reformers. This standpoint has the unfortunate consequence of cutting out completely those who had already converted. The works studied here address themselves to Catholics. They do not seek to convince the heretics of their errors, and it is not until after the Edict of Nantes that any such efforts were made. The aim of the authors of Catholic polemic was 'containment' rather than 'roll-back', to use Cold War rhetoric. It was not until the Counter Reformation took hold in France, at the turn of the seventeenth century, that Catholic writers pursued a more positive policy of conversion and Catholic regeneration. It should be added that this change of tone in Catholic writings was the result of pressure from both the Court of the Bourbon, and the influence of the Council of Trent. It did not go without resistance, however, as a community of exiled (former Leaguer) Catholic propagandists out of sympathy with Henri IV pursued their agenda from the Spanish Netherlands.

Unlike the Reformers, the authors studied here did not seek to convince their audience of the validity of change but, on the contrary, of the dangers of straying from tradition. While the Reformers sought to motivate their audience towards change, these authors appealed to the wisdom of remaining faithful to the old

⁷¹ Ceneau, *Response catholique*, sig. A7^r.

⁷² Tallon, *La France et le Concile de Trente*, pp. 331, 432, 502-3.

religion. The nationalistic argument which was harnessed in the Lutheran and Anglican Reformations was turned against French Protestants. Nationalism seems to remain the prerogative of the Catholic authors who argued that heretics (by definition) could not be loyal subject and were by nature seditious. This paradigm changed during the League as the Catholic party split into Leaguers and Politiques, allowing for a 'third way' to emerge. It can be argued that Catholic polemic of the kind described here was relatively successful in convincing the Catholic majority to remain in the bosom of the Church. On the other hand it could do nothing to prevent the establishment of confessional plurality in the kingdom which was probably the one thing that its authors hated most.

In many ways, the political situation of the 1559-1564 period is similar to the regency of Marie de Médicis, during the minority of Louis XIII, which was at the origin of a pamphlet war analysed by Jeffrey Sawyer in Printed Poison. In agreement with Matheson, Sawyer emphasizes the opposition between oppression and manipulation (propaganda) and debate.⁷³ The work of Peter Matheson, Robert Scribner and Jeffrey Sawyer suggests that there was an evolution between the literature of persuasion at the beginning of the Reformation and the emergence of modern 'propaganda' towards the end of the sixteenth century. The Catholic tracts examined here would belong to a category in between. Although it is clear that this material had abandoned all idea of dialogue with the Protestant faith, it cannot be described as pure 'propaganda' even though it shares some of its traits.

* * *

The final question to be addressed is the thorny problem of reception and impact of the material and whether it was 'successful'. Insofar as one can make out the aims of the Catholic printed polemic, to what extent was it successful in influencing the thoughts and actions of its intended audience? Is it possible to determine whether popular perceptions about Protestants owed anything at all to the writings, and probably sermons, of Catholic authors? The interactivity between printed material and its readership outlined above suggests that it might be more

⁷³ Sawyer, Printed Poison, pp. 25-6.

productive to turn the question on its head: to what extent did the perceptions and portrayal of Protestants found in printed polemic reflect the concerns and fears of the intended readership? Robert Scribner argued that the relationship between pamphlets and their audience was a two-way process:

In general, propaganda is a deliberate attempt to influence people's opinions and actions, but by itself it provides access not to what people believed, rather to what the propagandist would have them believe.... It is true that a propagandist cannot aim his message too wide of the major concerns of his audience, and at best he may hope to exploit their fears and anxieties. Most propaganda, therefore, will probably reflect in some way the 'common opinion' of its age.⁷⁴

Not only did pamphlets have an impact on their audience but they also reflect its views. Oral discourse which, unless it leaves a written trace, is inaccessible to the historian can thus be grasped through written material which, allegedly, had such an interactive relationship with its intended audience. Matheson has argued that the success of pamphlets depended on how well they addressed the concerns of their audience and thus reflected their views:

Perhaps the pamphlet, however, is the most reliable evidence, like a periscope sticking out of the ocean, of that vast, submarine force of discussion and dissent, which we call public opinion.... Successful pamphlets are those which reflect and at the same time spread and modify the 'pulsations' of oral discourse.⁷⁵

Unfortunately the data are still missing to do a systematic study of the relative success of certain books as opposed to others, but some trends can already be

⁷⁴ Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk (1981), p. 8.

⁷⁵ Matheson, The Rhetoric of the Reformation, pp. 27, 32.

discerned from the sample collected here.⁷⁶ Although there are limits to what one can deduce from simply looking at book production, the relative success of certain topics might reflect the concerns of the readership. The violent polemic which has been outlined here responded to a certain 'demand' and the recurrence of certain ideas suggests that they enjoyed a relative success. In this way, polemical pamphlets can be construed as a gauge of 'public opinion', a recipient of influences coming from below, rather than as a purely 'top-down' phenomenon.

Matheson has argued that 'public opinion' emerged during the Reformation: 'The connection between theological faculties and religious leaders and this new animal, public opinion, is the event we call the Reformation'.⁷⁷ In France, 'public opinion' emerged during the Wars of Religion as a political force to be reckoned with, and it can be argued that the failure to recognize its political significance contributed to the downfall of Henri III. By contrast, the League was remarkably successful in imposing its vision of Henri III on the public, to the extent that it has remained in the French collective memory to this day. Sawyer suggests that this phenomenon was understood to a certain extent by Henri IV (whose popular legend is even more notorious) but that all its lessons were not drawn until the reign of Louis XIII:

Pamphlet authors and political leaders... worked hard to influence the general public's perceptions of the conflict.... Experienced tacticians... realized that the confrontation would actually be won in the sphere of public opinion before it was won on the battlefield.... Governments sought to control the printing press from the beginning. It is well known that this effort broke down in the sixteenth century, once pamphlets began to be used systematically as weapons in the arsenal of Protestant [one should add 'and Catholic'] reformers.... Effective control of the printing industry did not begin until the 1620s, when Richelieu was finally able to

⁷⁶ This is one of the aims pursued by the FRB.

⁷⁷ Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation*, p. 239.

enforce the law.⁷⁸

At the beginning of the French Wars of Religion, however, ‘public opinion’ was not wholly recognized either as a legitimate or desirable political force. Although its influence was acknowledged in passing, it was invariably described as a negative and dangerous entity. Words describing ‘public opinion’ are pejorative. This constitutes a small paradox as the authors who wrote in the vernacular to reach as wide an audience as possible, also despised those whose opinion they were attempting to influence. ‘Opinion’ does not have the meaning it has now and connotes an entrenched view closer to ‘belief’ or ‘doctrine’ than ‘judgement’ or ‘opinion’ in the modern sense. In the mouth of Catholic authors, ‘opinion’ is almost always synonymous with heresy:

Et pour aultre plus grand signe d’atheisme, contre eulx ne faut sinon noter le desordre & confusion qui journellement est entre eux par continuelles sedition, scismes et diversité d’opinions de toutes anciennes heresies.⁷⁹

Voiez combien les heretiques sont fertiles à porter & produire tousjours de nouveaux monstres: car à peine trouverez vous un seul de ceux qui ont mis en avant quelque nouvelle heresie (ou bien qui en ont renouvelé quelque une des anciennes, & de celles qui de long temps ont esté condamnées) qui ne soive tousjours accompagné de plusieurs erreurs monstrueux, & plusieurs prodigieuses opinions.⁸⁰

Je delaisse plusieurs autres opinions Heretiques qu’ilz soustenoyent

⁷⁸ Sawyer, Printed Poison, pp. 5, 25, 46.

⁷⁹ Gay, Histoire des scismes, p. 39.

⁸⁰ Hozius, Des sectes et heresies de nostre temps, p. 48.

pour n'offencer les oreilles Chrestiennes.⁸¹

For the Protestants, 'opinion' is a false accusation, a belief which was ascribed to Protestants by the Catholics to blacken their reputation:

Les Albigeois ont esté faussement chargés de plusieurs damnables opinions.⁸²

Ce petit livret fut d'un fruit inestimable: & osta à beaucoup de gens la mauvaise opinion qu'ilz avoient de noz assemblées.⁸³

Et m'esmerveille comment un Magistrat tant renommé, qu'est la Court du Parlement de Paris, permet, que si meschantes opinions soient publiées, voire avec privilege.⁸⁴

For the Catholics, 'opinion' is synonymous with heresy and discord, whereas for the Protestants it is synonymous with libel and defamation. In either case, there is no such thing as a 'good' opinion and diversity of opinion is clearly not an option. Nonetheless, there is a reluctant realization among authors that popular perceptions can be modelled and that this public voice somehow matters.

Furthermore, the material found in these pamphlets pervade the culture of sixteenth century France. The ideas the pamphlets use at once shape and are shaped by what Matheson has called 'this new animal, public opinion'. As Matheson has argued, 'the sixteenth-century pamphlet was written for an interactive situation'.⁸⁵ For Matheson, the Reformation was the result of a dialectic between established 'opinion-makers' and the emerging 'public opinion' evidenced in the Reformation

⁸¹ Saconay, De la providence de dieu, sig. F3^r.

⁸² Chassanion, Histoire des Albigeois, p. 51.

⁸³ Chandieu, Histoire des persecutions, sig. d1^v.

⁸⁴ [Marlorat], La Response aux lettres de Nicolas Durant, sig. E7^v.

⁸⁵ Matheson, The Rhetoric of the Reformation, pp. 20-1, 239.

pamphlets. For example, in the affair of the rue St Jacques, it is obvious that the idea that Protestants took part in orgies co-existed both in the oral and the written sphere. Feeding off each other, the rumours which spread by word of mouth in the streets of Paris were fuelled by written accounts disseminated by Catholic authors, and vice-versa. As well as playing an active role of propaganda, the ideas found in these pamphlets could not have been as pervasive in print if they had not somehow answered the expectations of a ready audience.

To use the analogy of disease, so prized among Catholic authors, ideas spread like viruses. The analogy is probably even more powerful today, deepened by our knowledge of how viruses actually work. A media analyst, Douglas Rushkoff, recently carried the analogy to its logical conclusion in Media Virus!. Like viruses, ideas travel in the 'datasphere' replicating themselves in as many ways as possible. This process has given rise to a neologism, 'meme', which describes an idea which spreads through the media like a virus in an organism:

As they are currently understood by the medical community, viruses... are simply protein shells containing genetic material. The attacking virus... latches onto a healthy cell and then injects its own... genes, inside.... A particularly virulent strain will transform the host cell into a factory that replicates the virus.

Media viruses spread through the datasphere the same way biological ones spread through the body or a community.... Once attached, the virus injects its more hidden agendas into the datastream in the form of ideological code-not genes, but a conceptual equivalent we now call 'memes'.⁸⁶

To carry the analogy further, 'memes' affect the collective organism, society at large, or for want of a better word 'public opinion'. Peter Matheson uses a similar analogy to describe the spread of the Reformation in print: 'universal access to public

⁸⁶ Douglas Rushkoff, Media Virus! Hidden Agendas in Popular Culture (New York, 1991), pp. 9-10.

media can carry the bacilli through the body politic'.⁸⁷ The themes, topoi or ideas identified in this thesis could be described as 'memes'. Their recurrence in so many different sources suggests they enjoyed a wide distribution not only in print, but also in the predominant medium of orality.

Catholic propagandists were successful in fostering an image of Protestants as dangerous and unreliable (untrustworthy) agitators, enemies of the state and the King as well as religion. Regardless of the reality and despite the efforts of the Prince de Condé to defend his good name, this is the image of Protestantism which stuck until far into the seventeenth century. It is true that these authors only encouraged what must have been a natural reaction to change: fear and distrust. They associated monstrous images with the Protestants, renewing medieval 'memes' such as the 'medieval Manichee' and incestuous orgies, infanticide and cannibalism.⁸⁸ Denis Crouzet is right to talk about 'une peur panique' but people were not exclusively or necessarily afraid of the Last Judgement.⁸⁹ Catholicism was predominantly associated, in the minds of the illiterate majority, with unity and tradition summed up in the inscription on the façade of the Hôtel de Ville: 'One king, one law, one faith'.⁹⁰ Protestantism challenged both unity and tradition and were hated for what they represented and for what they were perceived to be. The Catholic majority was first and foremost afraid of change, a break from the routine, and angry at those it identified as the 'troublemakers'.

The outbreaks of violence which shook sixteenth-century France can be ascribed to a number of factors which have been outlined in the introduction. The financial crises which punctuate sixteenth-century France were definitely an important factor and the source of much frustration. The events at Fumel in 1561

⁸⁷ Matheson, The Rhetoric of the Reformation, p. 28.

⁸⁸ On the 'medieval Manichee' see Moore, The Origins of European Dissent, pp. 9-20, 243-6. See above, Chapter 2, p. 49.

⁸⁹ Crouzet, Guerriers de Dieu.

⁹⁰ Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 159.

described by Denis Crouzet show clearly that social unrest transcended confessional differences.⁹¹ Unlike in Germany, however, this unrest was not channelled successfully by the reforming movement. The astonishing violence with which Protestants were killed and mutilated during urban massacres indicate that Protestantism was seen as a legitimate target against which one could vent anger and frustration. Although Protestants are not totally blameless, it can be argued that they were nonetheless picked as scapegoats for all the fear, anger and frustration which non-confessional economic and social issues raised among the Catholic majority. The process by which the Protestants were demonized in the pamphlet literature outlined here is crucial to the understanding of this phenomenon. Catholic authors, often high ranking theologians of the Sorbonne, teased their audiences, both in their pamphlets and their sermons, into believing that Protestants were the cause of all evils. Supporting their arguments with a long list of mythical heretics going back to the first Christian centuries, they argued for the ruthless persecution of heretics. Putting the Reformation, something the majority did not understand, into the context of past heresies allowed people to contextualize what was going on. This process was summarised by Larissa Taylor when writing about Le Picart's sermons: 'the present is shown to us by the past'.⁹²

Catholic authors added credence to their accusations by resorting to the ubiquitous 'rumour', like Robert Ceneau who writes: 'je nen scay rien que par ouyr dire'.⁹³ Des Gallars reported that this ploy had been used from the beginning of the Reformation:

... lors que plusieurs prescheurs avec quelque liberté descouvroyent les abus & manifestoyent au peuple le vray moyen de salut, vous eussiez veu moynes trotter aux escoutes, mouches voler, espies se contrefaire, bons supposts rapporter, & nos Maistres consulter: puis

⁹¹ Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu*, I. p. 515.

⁹² Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 213.

⁹³ Ceneau, *Response catholique*, sig. E1^r.

semer faux bruits, & abbreuver le monde de bourdes & mensonges.⁹⁴

The best example of the relationship between written polemic and the spread of rumours by word of mouth is provided by the affair of the rue St Jacques which was reported by Chandieu: ‘Cestui cy ne peust faire tant de mal, que l’autre, pour n’avoir la cognoissance de tant de personnes: mais toutes-fois il fut cause que le bruit courut incontinent, qu’il y avoit tesmoings deposans qu’on paillardoit aux assemblées’.⁹⁵ In 1562, in the wake of the massacre of Vassy, another anonymous Protestant author directly accuses Guise’s ‘ministres’ of encouraging violence among the ‘populas’:

Car s’il se trouve un populas au sac de quelque maison, les ministres de Guise sont là presens pour animer le peuple & crier, tuez tout, assommez tout. Si les desolez viennent puis apres tous meurdris & sanglans, volez & desheritez, demander justice au Connestable, il crie comme un diable infernal, que ce ne sont que coquins: il anime d’avantage les meschans à mal faire.⁹⁶

It is a shame the author is not more specific about ‘les ministres de Guise’ but it is tempting to think they were Catholic preachers sympathetic to the Guise’s political agenda. The Cardinal de Lorraine is also directly implicated by another anonymous author who accuses him of disseminating false rumours after the tumult of Amboise:

Parlons maintenant de l’autre poinct, qui est du tumulte d’Amboise: Voicy dont les adversaires de la Reformation pensent bien faire leurs choux gras. Car ils crient que ce sont les fruicts de noz Conventicules, de nous elever contre le Roy. De fait, le Cardinal de Lorraine en a fait courir ses edicts & remonstrances

⁹⁴ [Des Gallars], *Seconde apologie*, sig. D7^r.

⁹⁵ Chandieu, *Histoire des persecutions*, sig. x7^v.

⁹⁶ *Advertissement a la Royne Mere du Roy*, sigs c3^v-c4^r.

sous le nom du Roy, duquel il abuse coustumierement pour divulger ses menteries & desloyautez, donnant entendre que tout cecy est procedé d'aucuns Predicans envoyez de Geneve, qui de longue main avoyent fait leurs preparatives, pour attirer à leur parti ceux qu'ils cognoissoyent les plus propres à leur menée, & n'a point honte de dire, qu'on s'estoit armé contre le Roy.⁹⁷

The role of the Guise faction, which was implicated at every turn by the Protestant authors in this campaign of 'propaganda' against Protestants, still remains to be explored in full. Some examples can be drawn from a number of prominent anti-Protestant authors who participated to the Council of Trent under the auspices of the Cardinal de Lorraine. Antoine de Mouchy and Robert Ceneau participated in the Council of Trent and represented the 'parti conservateur' as it has been outlined by Alain Tallon: 'il semble bien que la plupart des théologiens français, jeunes ou vieux, aient bien représenté au concile le "parti conservateur", que la faculté de théologie incarnait dans le royaume'.⁹⁸ Furthermore, it seems that French Counter Reformation printers, such as Nicolas Chesneau, had close ties with the network of the Cardinal de Lorraine and some, like Guillaume Chaudière, played a significant part in the League.⁹⁹ The influence of the Cardinal de Lorraine was considerable, commanding printing presses in Reims and Verdun in collaboration with the Parisian printer Nicolas Chesneau and sponsoring the work of authors such as François le Picart and René Benoist.¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately the relationship of patronage and clientage between the Guise and the Parisian printers remains to be studied systematically.¹⁰¹ K. Cameron argued that the use of print for political purposes by the Guise dates from

⁹⁷ La Maniere d'appaiser les troubles, sig. C1^v.

⁹⁸ Tallon, La France et le Concile de Trente, p. 735.

⁹⁹ Pallier, 'Les impressions de la Contre-Réforme', pp. 250, 269, 272.

¹⁰⁰ Pallier, 'Les réponses catholiques', p. 337.

¹⁰¹ Stuart Carroll, 'The Guise affinity and popular protest during the Wars of Religion', FH, 9 (1995), 125-152.

the assassination of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587. As it is suggested above, the Guise did have formidable links with the printing industry in Paris and one could argue that their involvement in printed polemic predates this by 20 or 30 years.¹⁰²

* * *

This study reflects two communities talking past each other. There is evidence of cross-fertilization between the two discourses but there is no real dialogue. These factors may explain why the French Wars of Religion were so entrenched. Only when both parties agreed to disagree, reluctantly after numerous attempts at conciliation culminating in the Edict of Nantes, could the hatchet of war be buried. Even so, there is evidence that the polemical themes which developed during the French Wars of Religion survived long after the Edict of Nantes and its revocation. A pamphlet published in 1901, Ce que la France doit aux Protestants, identifying Catholics as ‘enemies of the Republic’, testifies to the themes’ longevity: ‘On sait que les ennemis de la République, coalisés sous le nom de nationalistes, et se couvrant du masque de la religion pour mieux tromper la foule, ont entrepris, sans motif avouable, une violente croisade contre les minorités religieuses, contre les protestants et les juifs’.¹⁰³ The ‘masque de la religion’ is a turn of phrase which was used on numerous occasions against Protestants during the French Wars of Religion:

Or je ne sçaurois dissimuler combien je hay ces malheureux hypocrites, libertins, qui se voilent & pretextent du manteau & voile de la religion Chrestienne, laquelle ils n’ont au coeur.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² K. Cameron, ‘La polémique, la mort de Marie Stuart & l’assassinat de Henri III’, in Robert Sauzet ed., Henri III et son temps (Paris, 1992), 185-194.

¹⁰³ Camille Rabaud, Ce que la France doit aux Protestants (Paris, 1901), p. 5. It should be noted that the title page of this pamphlet bears a list of bulk prices: ‘Prix: 50 Centimes, pour la propagande, Cinq exemplaires, 1 fr. 50; - dix, 2 fr. 50; - vingt, 4 fr.’.

¹⁰⁴ René Benoist, Brieve et facile refutation d’un livret divulgue au nom de Jean de l’Espine, se disant Ministre de la parole de Dieu: auquel violentant & detorquant

que ces gens tendent soubz pretexte de Religion a la subversion de ceste police & consequemment de la couronne de Vostre filz.¹⁰⁵

on voit clerement que par telles menées souz couleur & pretexte de Religion on cherche la mort du Roy, on aspire au Royaume.¹⁰⁶

This example shows how sound-bites which emerged during the French Wars of Religion made their way into French culture to such an extent that they were used in 1901 in the context of the separation between Church and State. Robert Scribner has argued that successful propaganda could be measured by its long term impact on the culture in which it emerged: 'we may certainly see its effects in broad cultural traces, such as the acceptance of certain words or phrases into common usage'.¹⁰⁷

There is a tendency among twentieth century historians to minimize the significance of the crude accusations which were targeted at Protestants. This topic is relegated to the 'banal' and 'predictable' and one is accused of 'enfoncer des portes ouvertes'. This contempt is probably due to the overload of horrors this century has produced, all the more horrific because they have been broadcast and documented in great detail. This may account for the relative indifference that the stereotyping and massacre of Protestants, pale in comparison with the genocides of this century, sometimes encounters among contemporary historians. Nonetheless, I should like to argue that the stereotyping of Protestants through print and pulpit on such a scale was unprecedented and had traumatic impact on the relatively new audiences the use of

l'escripture sainte, il blaspheme malheureusement le saint sacrifice Evangelique, dict vulgairement la sainte Messe (Paris, Guillaume Chaudière, 1565), sig. E1^v.

¹⁰⁵ Durand, Lettres du Chevallier de Villegaignon, sig. B7^v.

¹⁰⁶ Julius Poggianus, Oraison funebre, faite a Rome aux obseques & funerailles de feu tres-puissant & magnanime Prince, François de Lorraine Duc de Guise, par le commandement de nostre saint Pere le Pape PIE IIII (Reims, Jean de Foigny, and Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1563) sig. E2^f.

¹⁰⁷ Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk (1981), p. 9.

the vernacular were creating. As I hope to have shown, the *topoi* that featured in anti-Protestant polemic were not new. They had been used for more than a millennia against Christians, heretics and Jews. The wide dissemination of these stories in print, however, was unprecedented. Probably the most interesting aspect of the questions discussed here is the lasting impact this material had on the Protestants' own self-perception and identity.

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